# International Sponsored Student Policy and Compliance Procedures

# Index

# Document Version Control

| Document Version | Committee | Committee Action | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| | SMLT | Approved | 01 December 2021 |
| | | Amended | 19 May 2021 |
| | | Amended and approved by Chair's Action | 21 April 2022 |
| | | **Date in force** | **21 April 2022** |

This International Sponsored Student Policy and Compliance Procedures document will be reviewed bi-annually by our Senior Management and Leadership Team.  A review may also be carried out if there are changes to any legislative requirements.

# 1.      Introduction

This International Sponsored Student Policy and Compliance Procedures document sets out our procedures for the admission, monitoring and reporting of international students in line with the United Kingdom Visa and Immigration (UKVI) rules through their bi-annual policy updates.  Thus, this document should be reviewed twice a year after each UKVI policy release which is usually around April and November of each year.

This document is made available in the Quality Enhancement Manual (QEM) section of our website for public view, in addition to an International Sponsored Student Guide[1].  This document should be read in conjunction with our Admissions Policy[2].

An international applicant has been defined in two ways: 1) an applicant from another country who requires sponsorship under the student route to study in the UK and 2) an applicant who holds an alternative UKVI visa such as, but not limited to, indefinite leave to remain.

# 2.      International sponsored student policy

International applicants wishing to join Bloomsbury Institute may require sponsorship to support a visa application to enable them to study in the UK. The sponsorship is confirmed by the issuing of a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). International applicants are required to meet the standard published admissions criteria for our courses, as per our Admissions Policy, as well as any additional requirements for international students covered by the UKVI rules.  International applicants who do not require a student visa need to provide evidence that they have the right to study in the UK at the application stage in line with UKVI policy.  The applicant journey differs slightly at the initial stage depending on which application pathway is used to submit the application (see section 3.1 and 3.2).

## 2.1     Classification of risk

UKVI defines a 'low-risk' applicant as being from a pre-defined list of countries with which differential agreements have been established.  Please see the UKVI publication with regards to low-risk countries on the following link under "Eligibility Requirements for a Student" at paragraph ST22.1: Appendix Student[3].

When considering applications, we will apply the same risk-based consideration as determined by the UKVI definition.  Where a country is classified as 'low-risk' by the UKVI, applicants from that country will be subject to the 'low-risk' considerations set out below in section 2.1.1.  Where an applicant comes from a country not on the UKVI list of low-risk countries, they will be subject to the considerations for 'applications with inherent risk' as set out below in section 2.1.2.

### 2.1.1    Applications with low risk

Applicants from low-risk countries are covered by differential agreements meaning that they are subject to different evidential requirements when applying for permission to study in the UK.  This means they are not required to submit their academic and financial documents with their visa application however, they still need to meet the requirements.  While it cannot be guaranteed that all applications from low-risk countries are without risk, it is accepted that countries identified as low-risk have been done so for a reason.

Although applicants from low-risk countries will not automatically be subject to the same degree of checks as those from other countries, the UKVI may however, at any stage during the application

---

[1] https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/

[2] https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/

[3] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-student

process or at the UK port of entry request for these documents. It is therefore advised that applicants keep these documents to hand until they arrive in the UK.

We therefore reserve the right to apply additional checks to any application for which we deem necessary to do so by asking applicants to provide the same evidence as any other applicant (education documents, financial evidence, Secure English Language Test (SELT), passport, previous visas, etc.). As a responsible sponsor, we are committed to ensuring that applicants are genuine and conform to the requirements of the relevant rules in place at the time of their application.

## 2.1.2    Applications with inherent risk

Applicants not originating from any of the low-risk countries will be subject to more stringent checks and verification than those from low-risk countries.

To ascertain that an applicant in the inherent risk category is suitable for sponsorship, we will check and verify their information whenever possible.

Key considerations for checking may include, but are not limited to:

- The applicant's previous UK immigration history.

- The applicant's English language ability.

- The applicant's qualifications used to support their application.

- The applicant's ability to study and progress.

- The applicant's genuine intention to study.

- The applicant's suitability as per other [UKVI requirements for international students](#)[4].

If any inconsistencies are identified amongst the submitted documents or information provided, they are referred to the applicant to rectify or resubmit.

## 2.1.3    Assessing an applicant's suitability

Applicants may be subject to further assessments. To ensure that the applicant meets the required criteria and is suitable for the course, we will conduct the following assessment for applications with inherent risk.

### 2.1.3.1  Informal interviews

Our Administrators will conduct informal interviews with applicants to verify their English language ability against their English Language qualification or other English language proficiency evidence, and talk to them about their qualifications, their commitment to the course and their potential to succeed on the course. Information on this can be found in our [Admissions Policy](#)[5]. These questions and their responses will help to provide us with a general appreciation of the applicant's academic background and intent to study with us before issuing a CAS.

We additionally require applicants to provide us with a summary of their UK immigration history to cover periods of previous permission to stay, the purpose of the stay and the level of the course (if the permission was awarded for study purposes). We will also confirm an applicant's immigration history with the UKVI Premium Service Team where applicable.

We will also conduct a general check of the applicant's file to ensure that it complies with the wider UKVI rules for migrants and to ensure full compliance before issuing a CAS.

---

[4] https://www.gov.uk/student-visa

[5] https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/

### 2.1.3.2 English language assessment

Applicants must prove their knowledge of the English language when they make their Student visa application (unless they are exempt**).

Applicants can prove their knowledge of English by achieving any English test or academic English qualification set out in the following document: **English Language Entry Requirements**.  For applicants from India, our policy with regards to the Indian Standard XII/Higher Secondary Certificate is set out below.

For the IELTS Academic test, we accept the following scores for our courses:

- IELTS Academic 5.5 overall with all components at 5.5 or above (for all 4-year undergraduate courses)

- IELTS Academic 6.0 overall with all components at 5.5 or above (for all 3 and 2-year, 1-year undergraduate courses and 1-year MBA and MSc Management postgraduate courses)

Please note that all English tests must not have been taken more than two years prior to date of submitting the online Student visa application.

**Indian Standard XII/Higher Secondary Certificate**

**Undergraduate courses** – In addition to all the above qualifications, we also accept the following academic Indian Standard XII/Higher Secondary Certificates issued by Central Government Boards **only** with the required scores:

|  | Council for Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE) | Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) |
|---|---|---|
| **4-year undergraduate courses** | 65% | 65% |
| **3, 2 and 1-year undergraduate courses** | 70% | 70% |

Indian Standard XII/Higher Secondary Certificate issued by State Boards are **not** accepted.

**Postgraduate courses –** We accept a bachelor's degree qualification with a Medium of Instruction English obtained within the last 6 years **and** an Indian Standard XII/Higher Secondary Certificate with a 70% score from **any** board.

**Please note:**

For our undergraduate courses applicants must have obtained the academic English qualification within the last 5 years.

For our postgraduate courses, applicants must have obtained the academic English qualification within the last 10 years.

**The English Password Skills Solo Test\***

Our English Password Skills Solo test costs approximately £72 in total to take, but we make this payment on behalf of the applicant for their first attempt only, to support them through the application process.

For this reason, their test results cannot be used for admission to any other college or university.  If an applicant requires a second attempt, they will need to make a payment of approximately £72 to us and

we will provide them with the test details and access.  Please note that applicants will not be permitted to take this test more than twice in one academic year.  For more information on this test, please [click here](#)[6]

**Exemptions from providing an English language qualification\*\***

Applicants will be exempt from providing an English language qualification if they:

- completed a GCSE, A Level or Scottish Higher in English in the UK, which was commenced before they turned 18.  The qualification must be in English Literature or English Language and be issued by an Ofqual, SQA, Qualifications Wales or CCEA regulated awarding body in the UK.  Applicants must also have undertaken their education at a UK based school.

- previously completed an academic qualification equivalent to a UK degree which was taught in a 'majority English-speaking' country – see Table 1 below.

- are a national of a majority English speaking country – see Table 2 below.

- previously completed an academic qualification equivalent to a UK degree which was taught in a 'non-majority English-speaking country' and the qualification;

    o   was taught in English; and
    o   is equivalent to a UK bachelor's level degree or above; and
    o   is academic, not technical or professional.

- obtained an academic degree qualification from an educational establishment in the UK, which is a bachelor's degree or above.

More details about these exemptions can be found [here](#)[7].

**Table 1**

| A – H | I - P | Q - Z |
|---|---|---|
| Antigua and Barbuda<br>Australia<br>The Bahamas<br>Barbados<br>Belize<br>Dominica<br>Grenada<br>Guyana | Ireland<br>Jamaica<br>Malta<br>New Zealand | St Kitts and Nevis<br>St Lucia<br>St Vincent and the Grenadines<br>Trinidad and Tobago<br>United States of America |

**Table 2**

| A – H | I - P | Q - Z |
|---|---|---|
| Antigua and Barbuda<br>Australia<br>The Bahamas<br>Barbados<br>Belize<br>Dominica<br>Grenada<br>Canada<br>Guyana | Jamaica<br>Malta<br>New Zealand | St Kitts and Nevis<br>St Lucia<br>St Vincent and the Grenadines<br>Trinidad and Tobago<br>United States of America |

---

[6] https://www.bil.ac.uk/how-to-apply/international-students/english-language-requirements/

[7] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-english-language

Please note: if an applicant is an Irish national they benefit from the Common Travel Area (CTA) Arrangement, so they will not need to prove their English language ability to the UKVI.

To assess the equivalency of an oversees qualification, the applicant may be required to provide a [UK ENIC Statement of Comparability](https://enic.org.uk/Qualifications/SOC/Default.aspx)[8], and we may also still require them to take an English test.

Where an applicant may be exempted from providing an English language qualification on the basis that their qualification is equivalent to a UK degree which was taught in English in a non-majority English speaking country, we will take reasonable steps to verify the exact nature of the qualification to ensure that the qualification is not only equivalent to a UK degree course but that it was also taught in English and that it is an academic qualification (not technical or professional)[9]. This procedure includes the referral of academic qualifications to UK ENIC, which will provide confirmation of the same.

### 2.1.3.3 Pre-CAS interviews

All applicants will be required to complete an Extended Personal Statement as part of their application with us.[10]  If the information they provide us with in the statement is satisfactory, then they may not be required to attend a pre-CAS interview.  If, however, the information they provide us with in the personal statement is not satisfactory, then they will be required to attend a pre-CAS interview with the Compliance Manager.

A UKVI credibility interview is part of the Student visa application process, although not all applicants are selected for the interview.  The interview is conducted by a UKVI Officer to assess whether, *inter alia*, the applicant is genuine or not.  In order to assist applicants with preparing for this interview, the Extended Personal Statement is completed by applicants and the Compliance Manager may also conduct a pre-CAS interview to help reduce their chances of a UKVI credibility visa refusal.

If an applicant is invited to a pre-CAS interview, the interview will include questions about their intended course of study, their reason for choosing to study in the UK and with us, any study gaps they may have and their future plans after completing the course.  The interview will be held electronically or via telephone and will take approximately 30 minutes.  Feedback regarding the interview will be provided within 2 working days.

If selected for the pre-CAS interview, the applicant must pass it in order to be issued with a CAS. An applicant will be given two chances to pass the interview for each intake.  If they fail the interview for a particular intake they will be considered for the next available intake.

It is important to note that if an applicant receives a credibility visa refusal, any subsequent visa application may also be at a higher risk of being refused.  This is why it is important for an applicant to always take time to complete the Extended Personal Statement and (if selected) prepare well for our pre-CAS interview in order to do well in the UKVI credibility interview. For more information about pre-CAS interviews please click [here](https://www.bil.ac.uk/how-to-apply/international-students/pre-cas-credibility-interviews)[11].

### 2.1.3.4 Refusing a CAS application

We reserve the right to refuse an application at any stage if an applicant fails to satisfy any of the requirements raised above.  Applicants may also be denied a CAS:

- If they are unable to provide evidence within reasonable timeframes when requested to do so.

- If they are not able to satisfy any of the core requirements for applying for a student visa (English language proficiency, financial documents, academic progression, etc.).

---

[8] https://enic.org.uk/Qualifications/SOC/Default.aspx

[9] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-english-language

[10] Where we conduct interviews with applicants (e.g. on overseas recruitment missions), the interviewer may determine that the applicant is competent and therefore exempt the applicant from having to submit an Extended Personal Statement and having to attend a Pre-CAS interview.

[11] https://www.bil.ac.uk/how-to-apply/international-students/pre-cas-credibility-interviews/

- If there are any doubts about the validity and authenticity of any documents or evidence provided.

- Where doubts exist about the applicant's genuine intention to study.

- Where doubts exist about the applicant's current UKVI SELT/other English language proficiency evidence or any they have used to support a previous visa application.

- For any other reasons not listed above if the need arises, depending on the details of the case.

Applications with inherent risk will be assessed on a case-by-case given that some cases will hold more inherent risk than others. Provided we are satisfied that any risk has been addressed, we will sponsor the applicant. Where we have any doubt about the applicant, we will terminate the process, and the application will not be progressed any further.

## 2.2 Academic progression

The way in which academic progress is covered in the immigration rules has meant a significant change in the way in which applications are assessed. Its basic premise is to ensure that international students on a student visa are academically progressing on courses connected to their leave by applying for higher level courses after the successful completion of their previous courses.

A student does not need to show academic progress if their student visa application is going to be for retaking an exam/coursework or repeat a section of their course, or to complete their course where they need extra time because they needed to retake an exam/coursework or repeat a section of their course previously.

Although the UKVI state that applicants applying from outside the UK will also be exempt from academic progression, their application will still be assessed on credibility grounds. Applicants will still be required to submit evidence of the qualifications used to obtain a CAS and undergo an immigration history check. This essentially means the applicant will still have to evidence academic progression in their application.

For full information, see the [Student Route guidance](#)[12] (academic progression section).

## 2.3 Extension of Student visas

If a student has already been studying in the UK on a Student or Tier 4 visa, normally they will only be able to get a Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS) and apply within the UK for further permission to stay if they fulfil all the following criteria:

- They have successfully completed their course.

- There is not more than 28 calendar days between their current visa expiry date and the new course start date.

- They will be studying at a higher academic level than their previous course (for example if a student has successfully completed an undergraduate degree and will be starting a master's degree course).

If the student does not meet all three criteria, they must leave the UK and make their visa application from their country of nationality or residence.

For students studying a new course at the same academic level, to meet the academic progress requirement the course should either be connected to the previous course, which means it must be part of the same subject group or involve deeper specialisation; or in combination with the previous course, support their career aspirations

---

[12] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-finance

To prove successful course completion, students will need any of the following:

- A degree certificate and a final academic transcript.

- Formal written confirmation from the course organiser that they have completed or, based on all progress to date, are highly likely to successfully complete their course.

## 2.4 International applicants on 'other' visas

As a requirement of UKVI policy, it is important that we have a clear knowledge and understanding of applicants who are on other visas.

There are several visa categories including, but not limited to:

- Indefinite leave to remain (Settlement).

- Limited leave to remain.

- Dependent leave.

- Family reunion.

- Refugee.

Skilled Worker or Tier 2 (work permit) visa holders can also study for the validity period of their visas if it does not infringe on the requirements of their work sponsorship. It is important to ensure that we, through our internal admission processes, comply with UKVI rules by identifying applicants on alternative visas and checking their visa expiry dates. This is to ensure that the applicant is made aware at an early stage that they need to have a visa that covers the full duration of the course and if they do not, they will need to either extend their visa, or switch to another visa category if necessary.

Once the applicant's visa is provided and uploaded onto our system the application will be processed accordingly by the Admissions Department.

# 3. Application procedures

The application stage begins with the receipt of an application directly through our website or via UCAS, ending once all application conditions are satisfied, and an applicant is ready to have a CAS assigned to them.

## 3.1 Direct applicants

When applying to us directly, applicants will create an account and complete an application form online through Radius/Reach. At this stage, data is collected relating to the applicant's personal details, qualifications, English language ability and intended course of study. The information is then available to Admissions staff who can ensure that the information provided meets our course requirements and, if the requirements are met, an offer can be made. Offers made are conditional upon satisfaction of all academic and immigration requirements.

Applicants can manage their application through the Self-service Centre (SSC) where they can track their progress as well as upload scans of any required documents including academic qualifications, ID documents and any other evidence necessary to support their application. The SSC is also where, once all details are confirmed and a visa is obtained, they would enrol onto the course.

Standard requirements are added to the application for all direct applicants. If an applicant requires a Student visa to study in the UK the following additional requirements apply: financial evidence, UK immigration history and proof of English language ability. Additional documents may be required on a case-by-case basis. Any document uploaded by the applicant is checked against the UKVI published

guidelines to ensure compliance.  Where documents are not suitable or do not meet the requirements, the applicant's Radius/Reach record is updated, and applicants are emailed to submit documents that do meet the requirements.  It is important to note that for some countries, the UKVI will require extra documentation such as a Tuberculosis test certificate for the visa application, and we will include this as an additional requirement.

## 3.2    UCAS applicants

When applying via UCAS, applicants will initially engage via the UCAS system and submit their application following the standard UCAS procedure.

When a UCAS application is received, it is imported into Radius/Reach for us to manage the application in the same way as direct applications.  The overall requirements for a UCAS applicant are the same as for a direct applicant however, often a UCAS applicant's exam results can be verified via UCAS, as an additional verification check.

Once the Admissions Department is satisfied that the applicant meets the academic conditions for entry to the course, the applicant will be made an offer, conditional upon satisfying UKVI requirements.  The applicant will have access to our SSC in order to submit documentation to meet the UKVI requirements.

Where documents are not suitable or do not meet requirements, the applicant's Radius/Reach record is updated, and applicants are emailed to submit documents that do meet the requirements.

## 3.3    All applicants

While the initial engagement and management of requirements differs according to application pathways, the considerations when evaluating documents and progressing applicants remain the same. International applicants will have an immigration history check where applicable, undertaken by the UKVI Premium Service Team.  In cases where applicants have only recently turned 18, it may not be required as it is unlikely they would have a Student route or Tier 4 immigration history.

While looking at the evidence and documents supplied as part of an application, consideration is given to, and assessments made of the applicant's genuine intent to pursue their proposed course, the individual circumstances of the applicant and the risk involved in processing their application.

General guidance on the issuing of a CAS and how to apply for a student visa can be obtained from our Compliance Manager by emailing visa.compliance@bil.ac.uk or telephoning 020 7078 8790 [International: +44 20 7078 8790].

### 3.3.1    Financial requirement

Once the application has been progressed, communication between the student and the Compliance Manager then takes place via email (visa.compliance@bil.ac.uk) to ensure the receipt of further UKVI requirements.  As part of the document checking process, bank documents are evaluated to make sure that they show the required living costs for the appropriate duration (£1,334 x the length of course up to 9 months) plus outstanding course fees, if any.  Any money which is to be used for living costs and fees needs to be in the applicant's account for a full 28 consecutive days.  The bank document must not be more than 31 days old from the date of submitting the online visa application.

Applicants can also use bank documents in the name of either:

- their biological parent(s) or legal guardian(s)'s name; or

- any other person's name (provided they are also named as a joint account holder).

If they rely on money held in their parents(s)/legal guardian(s) bank account, they must also show that their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) have given their permission for them to use their money.  Applicants must therefore provide a letter from their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) confirming that they consent to the applicant using the funds in their bank account.

Proof of the relationship between the applicant and their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) must also be provided by issuing us with one of the following:

- Their birth certificate.

- A court document confirming legal guardianship.

- A certificate of adoption.

If the applicant relies on a joint account, they must provide a letter confirming that the other account holder(s) have given them their consent to use the funds in the bank account.

Applicants can also obtain a student loan or official financial sponsorship from bodies approved by the UKVI. They must provide either a loan letter or financial guarantee letter for the visa application and the letters must confirm how much money is granted to them for their living costs and/or course fees. Student loan letters and official guarantee letters can only be accepted in the applicant's name.

Where the funds are held in a foreign currency, this will be converted into British Sterling (GBP) using the spot exchange rate which appears on www.oanda.com for the date of the application.

All applicants need to ensure that they are providing bank documents from financial institutions where all of the following apply:

- The financial institution must be regulated by the appropriate regulatory body for the country in which that institution is operating.

- The financial institution must use electronic record keeping.

- The UKVI decision maker must be able to make satisfactory verification checks with the financial institution.

Further details can be found on the following link: Appendix Finance[13].

### 3.3.2 Deposit payment

The applicant must pay at least 50% of their tuition fees through a deposit before we are able to issue a CAS. The finance stage is another measure to assess the credibility of the applicant. It is important that the Compliance Manager liaises with the Finance team to make sure payment is received from the applicant.

### 3.3.3 Informal interview

Once all the documents have been received and checked, applicants who have not had an interview at the admissions stage may be required to undergo a one-to-one informal interview with a member of our academic staff. The need for an interview is considered on a case-by-case basis.

Our Administrators will conduct informal interviews with applicants to verify their English language ability against their English Language qualification or other English language proficiency evidence and talk to them about their qualifications, their commitment to the course and their potential to succeed on the course. Information on this can be found in our Admissions Policy[14]. These questions and their responses will help to provide us with a general appreciation of the applicant's academic background and intent to study with us before issuing a CAS.

These interviews will be conducted electronically or by telephone as applicants should not be based in the UK unless an applicant is visiting the UK before the commencement of the course and can attend a face-to-face interview.

---

[13] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-finance

[14] https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/

An added benefit of this interview is to provide an opportunity for applicants to find out more about our institution and the course for which they have applied.  If the interviewing staff member has sufficient concerns, the case should be referred to the Compliance Manager who will assess the concerns and communicate with the student to try and resolve the concerns if possible.  If the concerns are not addressed, the Compliance Manager may refuse a CAS for the international applicant.

## 3.4     Issuing a CAS for applicants

During the application process, the data required to issue a CAS via the UKVI Sponsor Management System (SMS) is captured on Radius/Reach and is then transferred to a rolling yearly tracker sheet. The information on the tracker sheet will be used to populate each field on the SMS when creating a CAS.  The tracker sheet holds all information regarding an applicant who will be assigned a CAS and is essential for the Basic Compliance Assessment (BCA).

Once all the required documents have been checked to make sure that there are no outstanding issues (financial documents, passport, academic and English language qualifications, and previous visas if any etc.) a draft CAS is issued to the applicant to check and ensure that all the information completed on the draft CAS is correct before issuing the final CAS.  If the applicant identifies any errors or fields that require changing, they should notify the Compliance Manager immediately so that the amendments can be made.  A final check is then carried out by the Compliance Manager before the final CAS is assigned.

UKVI define a CAS as a 'digital document like a database record' of which the only element required for inclusion in a visa application is the actual CAS number.  A document is generated from the SMS once the CAS number has been assigned, which also contains the applicant's personal, course, academic, English language and fees details.  The applicant must use the exact details stated in this document when completing the visa application form, as well as submit all the supporting documents listed therein.  It is important to support the applicant with their visa application to ensure that they obtain a visa and enrol on the course.

Once a CAS has been assigned, UKVI compliance starts, and a paper file is created for all students who have had a CAS assigned to them in line with our record keeping duties specified in section 4.5 of this document.

A record of the applicant's information including digital copies of the documents provided for their CAS application are kept in our lead management system for admissions called Radius/Reach.  The Compliance Manager should update the visa fields in the application section on Radius/Reach with the required information for admissions purposes.

After the applicant obtains their visa and enrols onto the course, their documents are electronically copied and transferred to Oracle, our database for enrolled students.

If an applicant no longer wishes to study with us at any stage of the process, it is important for them to let us know as soon as possible.

### 3.4.1     Visa application management

The UKVI operate an online application system for student visas in most countries across the world. The applicant will be encouraged to complete the visa application themselves and is offered the opportunity for support throughout the application stages to ensure compliance with all requirements.

It is important that there is a continual line of communication between the applicant and the Compliance Manager for support and regular guidance.  This practice can increase our awareness of when the visa application has been approved, rejected or refused at the earliest opportunity.

### 3.4.2 Visa refusals and rejections

There may be instances where a visa application will be refused or rejected, and it is essential for international applicants to immediately alert us of this decision so that we can provide the appropriate support and guidance.

#### 3.4.2.1 Refused application

This is when an application has been processed but does not meet the student visa requirements. Reasons for not meeting requirements could be due to missing documents, not meeting the financial requirement, not submitting original copies when requested or providing false documents. The application may also be refused on credibility grounds if the applicant fails a UKVI credibility interview. It is therefore important that applicants are made aware of the implications of making mistakes on the visa application form, not meeting the requirements, or not adequately preparing for a UKVI credibility interview because it will count against them as a visa refusal. This may also affect any future applications they make.

Applicants must notify us of any visa refusals so that the Compliance Manager can assess the grounds of refusal and provide further support and guidance. If it is deemed that the visa application was refused in error, there may be a case to apply for an administrative review (AR). An administrative review is where a refused application can be checked for errors pointed out by the applicant. The applicant must apply for an administrative review within 28 calendar days of receiving the visa refusal and it will take up to 28 calendar days for a decision to be made.

If the visa or administrative review application is refused, there is no guarantee that we will be able to issue the applicant with an additional CAS to enable them to make another visa application.

#### 3.4.2.2 Rejected application

This is where the UKVI caseworker has found an anomaly in the application and has not processed the application. Unlike a refused application, this will be treated as a non-processed application and any payment will be refunded. It will be as though the applicant has not made an application. The reasons for rejecting an application could be because the student paid an incorrect fee, for example. Depending on the timing of the rejected application, the applicant may be able to re-apply if all issues are resolved, and the deadline for enrolment has not passed.

### 3.4.3 Considering metrics and visa applications

During the first intake period of a monitoring year (monitoring years run from mid-March to mid-March), consideration will be given to all applications with the aim of securing as many visa approvals as possible.

Straight forward applications will be offered the necessary amount of support they need to make sure that the visa application is processed smoothly and without issues.

If enough visa applications are approved, applicants with more complex or challenging cases will be considered while being offered additional support to mitigate the associated risk as much as possible.

During the second intake period of a monitoring year, the approach taken towards applicant cases will depend on the current statistics following the initial intake period. Where a high number of CASs were assigned, and the visa approval rate was satisfactory, challenging cases may be considered in the second intake period. Where a low number of CASs were assigned, or the refusal rates were causing concern after the first intake period, challenging applications could be refused for the second intake period unless there is absolute confidence that the application will be processed and approved by the UKVI.

## 3.5 Immigration Health Surcharge

All non-EU/EEA/Swiss nationals (and EU/EEA/Swiss nationals who do not qualify to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme) coming to the UK to study a course are required to pay the Immigration Health

Surcharge (IHS). The IHS payment is an embedded part of the visa application. It is recommended that the applicant makes the payment prior to making their visa application or when they book their appointment to ensure that their application will be processed. There could be an opportunity to pay for this charge after completing the application but its highly advisable that it is done before the application is submitted to avoid a potential refusal or any delays.

The amount to be paid will be based on the length of leave granted to an applicant and will be calculated automatically during the application process. The charge is £470 per year. More details can be found here[15].

# 4. Student procedures

Once an applicant has successfully made an application and has been granted a visa, we as a Sponsor have responsibilities with which we are required to comply. These are:

- ensuring that the student enrols on the course within the expected timeframe;

- upholding the sponsorship duties for an enrolled student throughout the duration of their course; and

- ensuring that the student completes their course.

Further sponsorship duties which the sponsor is obliged to carry out by UKVI over the duration of an international student's studies until they have finished their course or are withdrawn are outlined in Student Sponsor Guidance, Document 2[16].

## 4.1 Enrolment and student arrival

After an offer from the Admissions Department has been made to an applicant, three additional requirements are added to an applicant's file which are, to upload the applicant's;

- Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS);

- proof of Entry Clearance; and

- Biometric Residence Permit (BRP).

Once a CAS has been assigned the Compliance Manager uploads the CAS document to the applicant's file. If the applicant's visa gets approved, they should state their expected arrival date, and this should be by the last date of entry to the course stated on the CAS letter. It is necessary for the Compliance Manager to know if there is any delay in the student arriving in the UK so that the correct provisions can be arranged where possible.

It is only when the applicant has provided proof of their 30-day entry clearance vignette, that they are permitted to enrol provisionally on their course through Radius/Reach, the system used to make the initial application. A provisional enrolment is where a student enrols but is not yet entitled to become an unconditionally enrolled student due to outstanding issues. In this case, for an international student it is commonly because the student has not yet arrived in the UK to have a face-to-face enrolment. Provisional enrolments allow us to make provisions for students such as assigning them to a timetable group, their virtual learning environment (VLE) and orientation class with the expectation that any issues will be resolved by the end of the enrolment period. The importance of this is that an international student may arrive after the start of term and we would like to ensure that all relevant information is provided to the student, so that they can catch up and find appropriate support upon successful entry to the UK.

---

[15] https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application

[16] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/939471/Student_Sponsor_Guidance_-_Doc_2_-_Sponsorship_Duties_2020-12.pdf

When the student arrives in the UK, they should report to us as soon as possible before the end of the enrolment period to complete the onshore document verification of all admission documents such as their qualifications, passport, visa and UK proof of address.

The next step would be for the student to see a member of the Finance Department to sign a Tuition Fee Payment Plan (TPP) which is the last stage of the onshore verification before 'full' or unconditional enrolment. Unconditional enrolment is where the student satisfies all the visa compliance, admissions, academic and financial requirements to become eligible to access all student benefits such as bank letters. Lastly, the student will be provided with an induction pack which will have a copy of the International Sponsored Student Guide[17] outlining our expectations of the student, which is also sent electronically.

Once the last date of entry to a course has passed, the Compliance Manager must conduct an audit of all students who were assigned a CAS to determine the enrolment rate for the term. If any applicants are not yet enrolled and have not notified us of any delay, they will be followed up. If they cannot be contacted or they inform us that they no longer wish to enrol due to personal or other reasons, they will be reported to UKVI as a 'failure to enrol' within ten working days of the notification from the applicant.

## 4.2     Police registration

In some cases, students may be required to register with police.

If they need to register, they must do so within 7 days of either:

- arriving in the UK if they applied for a visa from outside the UK; or

- getting their Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) if they applied for a visa extension from inside the UK.

Further details can be found here: Register with the police[18].

### 4.2.1    If student applied outside the UK

The condition to register with the police will be stated on the 30-day entry clearance vignette (sticker in the passport). Students must register if it has 'Police registration' or 'Register with police within 7 days of entry' on it.

### 4.2.2    If student applied inside the UK

The condition to register with the police will be stated in the decision letter the student gets from the UKVI when their application gets approved.

If the student does not register, their permission to stay might be curtailed and they will have to leave the UK. This may also affect any future applications they make to extend their visa or travel to the UK in future.

## 4.3     30-Day Vignette and Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

The UKVI issue Biometric Residence Permits (BRP) to all non-EU/EEA/Swiss nationals (and EU/EEA/Swiss nationals who do not qualify to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme) coming to stay in the UK for more than six months. Successful applicants will be issued with a 30-day entry clearance vignette in their passport which entitles them to travel to and enter the UK within the 30-day validity period.

---

[17] https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/

[18] https://www.gov.uk/register-with-the-police

Once they arrive in the UK, the student will need to collect their BRP at the post office, usually before the 30-day entry clearance vignette in their passport expires or within 10 days of arriving in the UK, whichever is later. The address of the post office will be stated on the student's decision letter from the UKVI.

It is imperative that students obtain their BRP within the specified timeframe to avoid complications due to non-compliance with the terms of their stay in the UK. If students cannot collect their BRP from the Post Office within 10 days of their arrival in the UK, then they must collect their BRP before their 30-day entry clearance vignette expires in order to continue with their course. If the student's vignette expires and they have not yet collected their BRP from the post office, they will be followed up to do so. If the student still does not collect their BRP within the requested period, they may be required to stop attending their classes until they collect their BRP. Once the student collects their BRP they must bring it, along with their 30-day entry clearance vignette to the Compliance Manager for copies to be taken. The copies must be uploaded to our management systems and the student's paper file.

It is the responsibility of the Compliance Manager to ensure that any mistakes on either the 30-day entry clearance vignette and/or the BRP are reported to the UKVI. Reporting of errors can be done via the UKVI website on the following link: Report a BRP error[19]. Once a new BRP is obtained, a copy should be taken and uploaded to our management systems and the student's paper file by the Compliance Manager.

## 4.4 Monitoring duties

We have a range of monitoring duties under sponsor requirements once we issue a CAS to an applicant such as to report a visa refusal if the applicant's visa is not successful. If, however, the student's visa is successful, then we have a duty to:

- Monitor non-enrolments.

- Monitor attendance and engagement.

- Highlight patterns of non-engagement.

- Monitor authorised and unauthorised absences.

- Monitor discontinuation of studies (medical and other reasons).

- Monitor breaches to conditions of stay including working rights.

### 4.4.1 Attendance monitoring

Attendance monitoring is a continual process from the moment a student is enrolled to when they either finish their studies or are withdrawn. This withdrawal could be made by the institution or the student themselves. Attendance monitoring takes two forms, namely attendance on the course in line with their timetabled events and academic engagement as defined by the UKVI throughout each academic year. Academic engagement is defined by the UKVI as (but not limited to):

- Submission of coursework.

- Engaging with the Virtual Learning Environment.

- Sitting examinations either online or in person.

- Other formal assessment activities.

---

[19]https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/report-problem#:~:text=with%20a%20BRP-,Report%20a%20problem%20with%20your%20new%20BRP,your%20BRP%20does%20not%20arrive.

- Taking part in meetings relating to assessments.

We record attendance electronically using a swipe card system called Timing Data Service (TDS). The system enables us to access a student's attendance records across dates or specific modules. For international students, attendance monitoring is used to ensure that they are participating and to seek out any anomalies in attendance if, for example, they are consistently missing certain classes or days which could result in them breaching the conditions of their stay. Whilst international students' attendance for their timetabled events will be monitored every week from the beginning of the term, their academic engagement will be monitored every month. If there is a cause for concern that the student is not engaging with their studies within each monitored period, the Compliance Manager will send them communication via email to remind them that it is a requirement to attend classes and to seek out any issues. If a student continues to not engage academically within a 60-day period, we have the right to call a meeting with the student detailing action points. If the student does not fulfil the action points as required, they will be withdrawn from their respective course and have their sponsorship withdrawn. All attendance communication will be added to the student's file.

There is a range of reasons why students might miss classes for example illness, bereavement or being a victim of crime. International students can apply for authorised absence if they have documentary evidence as stated in our Engagement Policy[20]. Any authorised absence should be reported to the Administrators via our Student Self-service Portal[21] (SSP) with evidence for consideration. Despite international students being able to apply for an authorised absence, its approval must not result in students failing to academically engage.

## 4.5     Record keeping duties

While a student is sponsored by us, we are required to maintain a full and up-to-date record of them and their studies. Full details of record keeping requirements can be found in the UKVI document, 'Appendix D'. This can be accessed by clicking on the following link: Appendix D[22].

Appendix D includes all documents required for issuing the student's CAS such as passports, financial documents, academic documents plus UK ENIC statement of comparability, English language results, as well as post-CAS UKVI documentation such as the 30-day entry clearance vignette, BRP, up-to-date attendance records and UK contact details.

If a student changes their contact details in the UK, they must contact the Administrators to update their contact details on our student database Oracle. A note of the student's previous details must also be kept.

Contact details include:

- UK address.

- UK mobile number.

- Email address.

Where the UKVI have requested for the student to register with the police on either their entry clearance vignette or decision letter, we will ask the student to provide evidence of registration in the form of a police registration certificate.

The documents collected for Appendix D purposes are as follows:

- Application form.

---

[20] https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/

[21] https://ssp.bil.ac.uk/lsbm-ssp/auth/ssp/login

[22] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/970042/2021-03-16_Sponsor-guidance-Appendix-D-03-21_v1.0.pdf

- Personal Statement.

- Qualifications with UK ENIC comparison (if applicable).

- Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS).

- Passport/travel document.

- Verified UKVI SELT/Alternative English Language qualification.

- Financial documents.

- 30-day entry clearance vignette.

- Biometric Residence Permit (BRP).

- Police registration certificate.

- UK contact details.

- Finance Tuition Payment Plan (TPP)** (if applicable)

Other documents may be collected depending on the student's circumstance.

** Plan 1 – 100% full payment; Plan 2 - 50% payment and 6 instalments; Plan 3 – 50% payment and 1 instalment.

Current UKVI rules state that documents specified within 'Appendix D' must be kept for one year after the end date of the student's sponsorship. This requirement is reflected within our Student Records Policy[23]. After this period, the Compliance Manager has the power to discard paper files for these students only once all information is confirmed to be held on our student record systems.

### 4.5.1 Filing system

To ensure UKVI compliance for record keeping, we have a clear filing system in place. Once a CAS is assigned, a folder for the student is created with all relevant documents printed from Radius/Reach. The structure of the folder is ordered by the UKVI Student records file cover sheet.

We have four CAS folders that correlate with an applicant's and student's journey:

- New Applicants - For all applicants who have been given an active CAS.

- Refused – For all applicants who have been refused a student visa.

- Enrolled – For all students with a student visa who are enrolled on a course.

- Withdrawn –For all students who have withdrawn pre- and post-enrolment.

## 4.6 Reporting duties

In addition to maintaining a full record for international students, we are also required to comply with the sponsorship duties listed in the Student Sponsor Guidance[24]: Document 2 of the Sponsorship Duties document published by the UKVI.

---

[23] https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/

[24] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/939471/Student_Sponsor_Guidance_-_Doc_2_-_Sponsorship_Duties_2020-12.pdf

### 4.6.1 Student's change in circumstances/Sponsorship withdrawal

We are required to report any changes to a student's circumstances. The reporting must be made on the Sponsor Management System (SMS). The SMS is a UKVI online tool where we carry out our day-to-day sponsorship activities such as withdrawing our sponsorship. Any reporting must be done within ten working days of the change.

The changes may include, but are not limited to, a student changing immigration categories, a student's start date being delayed, a student deferring their course, a student completing their course earlier than expected, a student obtaining a visa refusal, a student's failure to enrol onto their course within the enrolment period and a student's failure to complete their course. The latter three specifically feed into the statistics of the Basic Compliance Assessment (BCA).

Here are some of the reasons we may have for withdrawing our sponsorship:

- When an application is refused by the UKVI - (this affects our refusal rate).

- When a student has not enrolled onto their course within the enrolment period (this affects our enrolment rate).

- When a student withdraws or is withdrawn from the course post enrolment (this affects our completion rates)

Here are some of the reasons a student may be withdrawn from the course post enrolment:

- Student is found to have not academically engaged within a 60-day period.

- Student is found to be in breach of their conditions of stay.

### 4.6.2 Academic Administrators

Academic Administrators provide a crucial link for the reporting of information once a student has become enrolled notably around withdrawals, changes of course circumstances and updating records of international students. See below for details.

- If a student decides to self-withdraw at any stage of their course, they must contact their Academic Administrator with the relevant withdrawal forms which can be found on our website: Student forms[25]. It is important that the Academic Administrators are aware of the student type (home student or international student) before processing the relevant forms. The Academic Administrators are then required to notify the Compliance Manager if a student is an international student.

- A student may be withdrawn at the end of any academic year of their course due to academic failure. Once the final examination grades are published, Academic Administrators should notify the Compliance Manager if any international students will be withdrawn from their respective courses.

- In instances where international students may be permitted to repeat modules or re-sit exams, the Academic Administrators should notify the Compliance Manager.

- In some cases, students may notify the Academic Administrators that they wish to change their course. The decision will be made on a case-by-case basis considering the UKVI progression rules, ability to map modules and the annual CAS allocations. The Compliance Manager should review the requests to ensure that the relevant rules are being followed.

---

[25] https://www.bil.ac.uk/student-portal/student-forms/

- Students must contact the Administrators throughout the year to update their contact details. The Administrators should update the student's current address on our student database Oracle and create a note of their previous details such as their UK address, email or telephone number.

### 4.6.3    Basic Compliance Assessment (BCA)

The Basic Compliance Assessment (BCA) is a UKVI application made on the SMS by sponsors, to enable the UKVI to assess whether they are adhering to their requirements on a continual 12-month basis. The BCA runs from mid-March to mid-March (the start date being one day after the BCA decision for the previous year) with information added to a rolling yearly tracker sheet. Click here[26] to view the document.

There are three core requirements that UKVI officials will check in a BCA assessment, which are the refusal, enrolment and completion rate.

Sponsors are required to maintain:

- a refusal rate of less than 10%;

- an enrolment rate of at least 90%; and

- a course completion rate of at least 85%.

BCA calculations are made as follows:

**Refusals**: Calculations are made based on all CAS's defined as being 'used' for a UKVI application, against the number that the UKVI has refused.

**Enrolment**: Calculations are made based on all applicants who have been granted student visas against those that enrol during the enrolment period.

**Course completion**: Calculations are made based on all students who enrol against those who complete their course. Note: the calculation will not include those who have switched institutions, switched to another immigration category or left the course and subsequently the UK.

# 5.    Sponsor's change in circumstances

As a sponsor, we are required to submit to the UKVI specific reports outlining changes to our circumstances. These reports must be made within 20 working days and would cover circumstances such as the following:

- Appointment of a new principal.

- Change of ownership (a new licence must be applied for).

- Change of address and/or adding or removing designated premises.

- Change of Authorising Officer or Key Contact and contact details of each.

- Substantial change to the nature of the institution.

- Involvement in a merger or taken over.

---

[26]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/9https://asse ts.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/988267/Student_Spons or_Guidance_-_Doc_2_-_Sponsorship_Duties_2021-05.pdf88267/Student_Sponsor_Guidance_-_Doc_2_- _Sponsorship_Duties_2021-05.pdf

- Cease trading or become insolvent.

- Change to Educational Oversight.

- Criminal prosecution /civil penalty.

## 5.1   Reporting third party organisations

We are not currently working with any third-party organisations in the recruitment of students however, should we do so in future we would be required to report to the UKVI any organisations within or outside the UK that support the recruitment of international students, for example recruitment agents.  All such reports should be made by email to SCOC@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

# 6.    Licence summary

To be able to sponsor students, we must have a registered licence with the UKVI.  The UKVI make it clear that sponsorship is a privilege and not a right.  A sponsor licence is valid for four years and we must renew our licence prior to its expiry via our SMS account.  Renewal applications can be made up to 3 months prior to the licence expiry date.

## 6.1   Renewals and allocations

### 6.1.1   Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) annual allocation

UKVI state that on an annual basis, institutions must make an application for CASs which indicate how many applicants they anticipate will become students on an annual 12-month basis through the SMS account.  Without an allocation, institutions are unable to assign CASs to applicants.  Our recruitment strategy will highlight the student number targets.

Although CAS allocation renewals can be applied anytime, we must however do this as soon as the window of renewal opens in the Sponsor Management System (SMS).  The opening of the window will depend on the expiring of previous allocations.  Generally, the allocations last for 12 months from the time of approval.

### 6.1.2   Renewal of licence

The details of our licence expiry can be accessed from the licence summary page in the SMS.  The renewal process is fairly simple and only requires adding the allocation confirmation through the section renewals of the licence in the SMS and should only be done by a SMS Level 1 user.

The statuses of the BCA and licence renewal applications appear in the "applications tracking" section in the SMS.  This section should be monitored for status updates until the BCA and renewal application processes are completed and the licence summary page is updated with new expiry dates.

# 7.    Reporting to SMLT

Highlights with regards to compliance with these procedures, including but not limited to the BCA stats (i.e. refusal, enrolment and completion rates) and internal audit reports must be reported to the SMLT monthly.

# 8.    Related documents

**Internal documents**

- Admissions Policy

- International Sponsored Student Guide

- Student Records Policy

**External documents**

- Student Sponsor Guidance Document 2: Sponsorship Duties

- Student Sponsor Guidance Document 3: Student sponsor compliance

- Immigration Rules Appendix Finance