Canterbury Christ Church University
Immigration Compliance Procedures: Guidance for Staff

1. The University's Tier 4 Licence

The University has been granted a licence to sponsor overseas students requiring Tier 4 visas to come to the UK. A Tier 4 Sponsor has four main duties:

- To report to the Immigration authorities: i) when a Tier 4 student is not attending and thus in breach of their visa requirements, and/or ii) when a student has missed 10 consecutive absences (unauthorised), following which they will be withdrawn if they cannot be re-engaged.

- The University must also report to the Immigration authorities any change in circumstance relating to a Tier 4 student, including change of programme, interruption or early completion.

- The University must ensure that there is no gap of 60 days or more between expected learning contacts. Students working on dissertations or PhDs must have contact with their supervisor if they are still in the UK and this supervision must be documented on a monthly basis.

- The University must report to the Immigration authorities if a student on a Tier 4 visa does not arrive to register and/or start their studies, or if their travel is delayed.

The University must report to the Immigration authorities within 10 days of any such occurrence. Failure to do so could result in the University losing its Tier 4 licence and thus be unable to recruit and enrol international students. This policy sets out a procedure for ensuring that in instances where international students are in jeopardy of being reported as non-attending, they are identified, contacted, and investigated thoroughly in advance of withdrawal, giving ample opportunity to fully engage the student.

2. Definitions of a learning contact

A 'learning contact' for the purposes of attendance monitoring constitutes an attendance by the student at any single timetabled activity within a one week period of timetabled activities. Timetabled activities include seminars, lectures and practical sessions. Tutorials are not timetabled activities (and, therefore, will not appear on students' Individual Student Timetables - ISTs) as defined by the Timetabling and Rooming team. A timetabled week is defined as Monday to Sunday.

For most students, their timetabled activities will be shown in their IST. All undergraduate and post-graduate taught students should have an IST. A 'learning contact' applies to all students, regardless of whether they have an IST or not (usually post-graduate research students).

3. Responding to a Tier 4 student who is not attending or has a low percentage of attendance

Poor or non-attendance should be identified quickly so that the University can support

and re-engage the student. Withdrawing Tier 4 students for lack of attendance can have serious implications on the institution's Tier 4 licence and its ability to recruit students from overseas. Therefore early intervention is essential.

3.1 Procedure for Programme Teams

In the event of a Tier 4 student not attending or having poor attendance, the Immigration Compliance Office - ukba.registry@canterbury.ac.uk must be informed by the relevant Programme Administrator and copied in to all warnings sent to the student, as outlined in the following procedure. Those with low percentages of attendance should also receive written warnings in the same way that those with no attendance receive.

A student who has a pattern of consecutive missed learning contacts will receive two initial warnings from their Programme Administrator:

1. The first warning will be sent in the second week of absence (2nd missed learning contact).
2. The second warning (sent in week 3 of absence) will be sent with a request to meet with their Personal Academic Tutor.

If the student does not re-engage, a final warning letter will be sent by the Compliance Office.

The University would be expected to withdraw sponsorship of Tier 4 students at the point of missing 10 consecutive learning contacts (which would be a period of 10 weeks). However, it is expected that a student would not reach 10 weeks absence without having been contacted as per the procedures above, and having to account for their absence.

3.2 Withdrawal due to poor attendance

Depending on the individual circumstances of the student it may be considered appropriate to withdraw the student prior to reaching 10 consecutive missed learning contacts if the student is not engaging with the University in any respect. A decision to withdraw a Tier 4 student based on poor attendance would be taken by the Director of Planning and Academic Administration, based on a recommendation of both the Immigration Compliance Manager and the relevant Programme Director.

3.3 Role of the Personal Academic Tutor

The Personal Academic Tutor should encourage the student to fully engage in all their studies and ensure the student complies with recording their attendance at every timetabled session.

3.4 Role of the Immigration Compliance Office

The Immigration Compliance Office will offer advice and recommendations if the student fails to fully engage but is still attending. Consideration will be given to the percentage of attendance.

4. Students registering attendance through electronic Attendance Monitoring

It is important that programmes whose students are recorded by the electronic attendance

monitoring system ensure students are properly recorded by having them tap-in to all their timetabled sessions. Furthermore, in order that attendance percentages are recorded accurately, programme teams must ensure their students are enrolled on all their modules and fully allocated in Student Allocator.

5. Procedures for students who do not have Individual Student Timetables and, therefore, are not monitored by Electronic Attendance Monitoring

If a student does not have an Individual Student Timetable (IST) showing their timetabled activities, they are expected to engage with the local arrangements for registering attendance (ie. paper register, excel spreadsheet etc).

The University expects all Tier 4 students who are undertaking dissertations or PhDs to have monthly supervisions which must be recorded and sent to the Graduate School.

The procedure outlined in section 3 will apply to students registering by manual methods.

6. Communication of Attendance Monitoring Arrangements

The UKVI Compliance team are responsible for providing general guidance to Tier4 students on visa and attendance monitoring. Programme teams are responsible for communicating to students how their attendance will be monitored, either electronically or manually, and what will be monitored (eg. lectures, seminars) through the Programme Handbook and other means. Programme Directors or their nominees are responsible for reporting non-attendance by initiating action as outlined in section 3.

7. Students on Collaborative Programmes

Collaborative Partners who recruit Tier 4 students will register such students on their own Tier 4 licence. Collaborative Partners are, therefore, responsible for their own attendance monitoring and compliance within Immigration authorities' regulations and agreements as set out in the Collaborative Agreement(s) with that partner. Procedural variation in terms of attendance monitoring systems may be permitted, but all partner institutions will be expected to have an appropriate process or system in place for recording student attendance.

Responsibility for reporting non-attendance to the Immigration authorities will rest with the institution who has sponsored the student's visa.

8. Work placements for Tier 4 Students

Where a programme includes a placement, the relevant Programme team must establish a procedure for the recording, monitoring and reporting of non-attendance at the placement. Failure to do so could put the University's licence at risk.

9. Combined Honours Programmes

The Programme team whose programme is studied in combination with another programme should use a shared mechanism to record and monitor attendance. This is vital to ensure that responsibility is taken for low or non-attendance and is reported to the Compliance Office.

10. Attendance Monitoring Record Keeping

The Programme team is responsible for ensuring that records of attendance are available at all times for internal and external scrutiny and that they are accurate and up-to-date. Auditors from the Immigration authorities will expect to see attendance records for all Tier 4 students recorded from the start of their programme. They will also require evidence of the action taken where poor attendance and non-attendance has been identified.

10.1 Retention and Disposal of Hard Copy Registers

10.2 Retention and Disposal of Electronic Data

This section applies to electronic data from both the electronic attendance system, locally stored excel documents, and any other electronic attendance data stored.

11. Extensions of Visa with Poor Attendance

Should a Tier 4 student need to repeat a year they may be required to make an application to the Immigration authorities for an extension of their visa. The University is obliged to review the student's attendance record prior to issuing a Confirmation of Acceptance of Study (CAS) to extend their visa. If poor attendance has been recorded, the University will no longer be able to sponsor the student further to repeat the year of study. **Early capture of poor attendance is therefore essential** to ensure the student has every opportunity to complete their studies.

12. Change of Circumstances

If a change is agreed or occurs, the Programme team is responsible for ensuring this is reported immediately to Planning & Academic Administration, who will update the student's record and inform the Immigration Compliance Manager. The Immigration Compliance Manager will report to the Immigration authorities within 10 working days of the date of the change.

Who do I contact for further advice or support?

For any further advice or information relating to Tier 4 students please contact the Immigration Compliance Office in Planning & Academic Administration on ukba.registry@canterbury.ac.uk, or 01227 782297.

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