

Kingston University

UKVI Sponsored Student Attendance & Engagement Policy

2025 - 2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy sets out the University's requirements in relation to the attendance, engagement, and visa compliance obligations of international students sponsored by the University under the Student Route. It should be read alongside other relevant Kingston University policies and UKVI guidance.
- 1.2. As a licensed Student visa sponsor, the University is required to fulfil a range of sponsorship duties in accordance with UKVI requirements. These include reporting changes to a student's enrolment status to UKVI.
- 1.3. In processing personal data for the purposes of this policy, the University acts in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and its Data Protection Policy. Personal data collected under this policy, including attendance records, passport and visa documentation, and immigration status, will be used solely for the purposes of fulfilling the University's UKVI sponsorship duties and will be retained in accordance with the University's data retention schedule and UKVI record-keeping duties.
- 1.4. This policy is subject to change in accordance with updates to UKVI sponsorship requirements and Home Office regulations. The University reserves the right to amend this policy at any time to ensure continued compliance with applicable immigration legislation and guidance. Students will be notified of any significant changes to this policy via their University email address where necessary.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 'AA' (Authorised Absence) is a formally approved period of absence from study during term time.
- 2.2 'Attendance' is defined as being present at all timetabled activities.
- 2.3 'Canvas' is the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) used by staff and students to access learning materials, submit coursework, and engage with course content.
- 2.4 'CAS' (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies) is a unique reference number assigned by the University to a student who has been offered a place on a course. The CAS is required by the student to apply for a Student visa.
- 2.5 'Checking-in via SEAtS' is defined as the process for registering your attendance at timetabled teaching activities by either tapping your student ID card onto the reader located in the room where the activity is taking place, or by logging into the system via the SEAtS App using your mobile device.
- 2.6 'Engagement' is defined as a student's active participation in all aspects of their studies. This may include, but is not limited to: attending required lectures, seminars or tutorials; undertaking required laboratory work; undertaking research or fieldwork; logging into Canvas for announcements, module learning materials and submissions; attending examinations; and attending supervision meetings.
- 2.7 'GIR' (Graduate Immigration Route) is a UK visa route that allows eligible students who have successfully completed a degree at a licensed Student sponsor institution to remain in the UK for work purposes.

- 2.8 'KU App' is the Kingston University mobile application that students use to access their timetable, campus information, and University services.
- 2.9 'OSIS' is the University's Online Student Information System, used to manage personal details and academic records.
- 2.10 'SEAtS' is the attendance monitoring system used by the University to record and monitor student attendance and a range of engagement activities.
- 2.11 'Sponsorship Duties' refers to the legal obligations placed on Kingston University as a UKVI licensed Student sponsor. A licensed sponsor is an education provider that has been approved by UKVI to recruit and sponsor international students under the Student Route. These duties include monitoring student attendance and engagement, maintaining accurate records, and reporting certain changes in student circumstances to UKVI.
- 2.12 'Student Route' is the UK immigration route that allows international students to come to or remain in the UK to study at a licensed sponsor institution. Kingston University is a licensed Student sponsor under this route. References to 'Student visa' throughout this policy refer to permission granted under the Student Route, including permission previously granted under the Tier 4 (General) route.
- 2.13 'UKVI' (UK Visas and Immigration) is the directorate of the Home Office responsible for the UK's visa and immigration system, including the regulation of Student visa sponsors.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all Kingston University sponsored international students. This includes students on Study Abroad (both inbound and outbound) or work placement. Some courses may have additional specific attendance requirements to meet professional body requirements. Where this is the case, this will be clearly stated in the programme specification or course handbook.
- 3.2 Students registered for a course delivered wholly or in part at a Partner Institution (i.e., not delivered on a University campus) will be subject to the attendance and engagement requirements of the Partner Institution, in addition to those set out in this policy.
- 3.3 Students studying at foundation (Level 3), including those at a Partner Institution, are subject to additional attendance monitoring requirements in accordance with UKVI sponsorship duties.

4. Student Reporting Obligations and Responsibilities

Students are required to notify the University promptly of any changes in their circumstances that may affect their visa sponsorship or enrolment status.

4.1 Notifiable Changes

Students are required to notify their Course Support Administration (CSA) team or the CAS & Visa Compliance Team promptly if any of the following circumstances arise:

- a) Any mitigating circumstances outcome or academic appeal that results in a change to the course end date, where the new course end date falls outside the expiry date of the student's current visa.
- b) Switching to a different visa category.

4.2 Contact Details and Personal Records

- 4.2.1 It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their contact details held in OSIS, including email address, contact telephone number, and term-time UK address, are accurate and kept up to date at all times. The University cannot be held responsible for any failure to communicate where contact details are incomplete or out of date.
- 4.2.2 Students are responsible for ensuring that all passport and visa documentation held by the University remains current. Any changes to passport or visa documents must be uploaded to OSIS promptly, and the CAS & Visa Compliance Team notified accordingly..

4.3 Re-enrolment

- 4.3.1 All returning and continuing students are required to re-enrol at the start of each academic year for their next stage of study, including where that stage comprises a placement year. Students on a single-year programme are not required to re-enrol unless otherwise notified by the University.
- 4.3.2 Prior to completing re-enrolment, students are required to ensure that any updates to their passport or visa documentation have been uploaded to OSIS and the CAS & Visa Compliance Team informed of the changes.
- 4.3.3 Students should be aware that the course structure, regulations and tuition fees applicable at re-enrolment may differ from those that applied when they first enrolled.
- 4.3.4 Students who do not complete re-enrolment by the date specified will be treated as having withdrawn from their course. The University is required to report this to UKVI, which will result in the cancellation of the student's visa sponsorship.

5. Visa Implications of Course Transfer

- 5.1 Transfer process: Students who wish to transfer to a different course should refer to the Academic Policy [AP13](#) for information on the process. In accordance with AP13, international students must seek advice from the Immigration Advice Team at immigrationadvice@kingston.ac.uk before requesting a course or mode of study transfer, as this may have implications for their Student visa.
- 5.2 Transfer with No Change to Course End Date: Where a course transfer results in no change to the course end date, no action is required from the student in relation to their visa.
- 5.3 Progression to Higher Level of Study: Where a student progresses to a higher level of study as part of an integrated programme for which they are eligible, the student may be able to apply for a visa extension from within the UK before their current visa expires.
- 5.4 Transfer Resulting in Later Course End Date: Where a course transfer would result in a course end date later than the current course end date, the transfer will not normally be permitted. Where exceptional circumstances apply, the student must consult the Immigration Advice Team before any transfer is processed. Where the transfer is approved, the student will ordinarily be required to leave the UK and apply for a new Student visa from their country of residence before the transfer can take effect.
- 5.5 Transfer to Part-Time Study: Student Visa holders are not permitted to transfer to part-time study.

6. Attendance and Engagement Monitoring

This section sets out the University's requirements in relation to the monitoring of student attendance and engagement, the registration of attendance, the reporting of absences, and the actions the University will take where a student fails to meet the expected standards.

Students studying at foundation (Level 3) are subject to additional attendance monitoring requirements in accordance with UKVI sponsorship duties.

6.1 General Expectations

- 6.1.1 Students are expected to attend all timetabled teaching activities and to maintain active engagement with their studies throughout their period of study.
- 6.1.2 Students are expected to use attendance and engagement monitoring systems honestly and accurately. Misuse of these systems, including registering attendance when not present or checking in and leaving before the end of a session, constitutes a breach of the Student Conduct and Behaviour Policy and will result in formal disciplinary proceedings.
- 6.1.3 Research degree students are expected to attend the monthly supervisor meeting and submit meeting records on Canvas. Check-in via SEAtS is not required.
- 6.1.4 Students on a placement year are expected to submit their Placement Module Monthly Log on Canvas by the deadline specified and engage fully with placement visits arranged by the Module Leader or Placements Team. Check-in via SEAtS is not required.

6.2 Registering Attendance via SEAtS

- 6.2.1 Attendance is required to be registered at each timetabled activity by tapping a valid University ID card on the reader located in the teaching room, or by checking in via the SEAtS App on a personal mobile device.
- 6.2.2 In the event of a technical failure or inability to check in by either method, students should contact KUCheckIn@kingston.ac.uk promptly to ensure their attendance is recorded accurately. It is the student's responsibility to ensure any missed check-in is resolved without delay.
- 6.2.3 Students are responsible for regularly reviewing their published timetable, as amendments may occur.

6.3 Reporting and Managing Absence

- 6.3.1 Where a student is aware in advance of an inability to attend a timetabled session, the absence should be logged in the SEAtS App prior to the session, supported by appropriate documentary evidence such as a medical certificate or an Authorised Absence Letter.
- 6.3.2 Where an absence is unplanned, the student should report it via the SEAtS App as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 24 hours after the missed session, together with a brief explanation. Supporting evidence may be required.
- 6.3.3 Students whose ability to attend is affected by disability, mental health conditions, or other personal circumstances should access the University's student support services at

kingston.ac.uk. Students are also required to notify the CAS & Visa Compliance Team at UKVIEngagement@kingston.ac.uk of any circumstances affecting their attendance or engagement.

6.4 Actions Taken for Low Engagement

The University operates a six-stage intervention process to monitor student engagement and attendance, in alignment with Kingston University Regulations and UKVI student visa sponsorship requirements. Where a student fails to engage with their studies without providing a valid and evidenced explanation, the University will escalate through the stages set out below. All communications issued under this process will be sent to the student's University email address.

- 6.4.1 Stage 1 — Initial Reminder: Where a student's attendance and Canvas engagement falls below the expected standard, the CAS & Visa Compliance Team will issue a written reminder via the student's University email address.
- 6.4.2 Stage 2 — Follow-Up Communication: Where attendance and Canvas engagement continues to fall below the expected standard following Stage 1, the CAS & Visa Compliance Team will issue a further written communication and signpost available University support services.
- 6.4.3 Stage 3 — Action Required: Where no measurable improvement is observed following Stage 2, the student's Personal Tutor will be notified. The student will be required to contact their Personal Tutor to agree a study plan.
- 6.4.4 Stage 4 — Compulsory Meeting: Where disengagement persists following Stage 3, the student will be required to attend a compulsory meeting with their Personal Tutor, Course Leader where possible, and the CAS & Visa Compliance Team.
- 6.4.5 Stage 5 — Formal Warning: Where disengagement continues beyond Stage 4, the University will issue a formal written warning under the University's General Regulations, setting out the options of interruption of studies or withdrawal from the course. The student will have ten (10) working days to submit a written request for review to the CAS & Visa Compliance Team.
- 6.4.6 Stage 6 — Final Decision: Where all preceding stages have been exhausted without sufficient improvement, the CSA team will process the student's interruption of studies or withdrawal from the course. Visa sponsorship will be cancelled in accordance with Section 12.

6.5 Visa Implications of Low Engagement

- 6.5.1 Reporting Requirements: Where a student is withdrawn or placed on an interruption of studies as a result of the intervention process set out in 6.4, the University is required to report this to UKVI within ten (10) working days in fulfilment of its Sponsorship Duties.
- 6.5.2 Sponsorship Cancellation: The student will be notified of the cancellation of their visa sponsorship via their University email address.
- 6.5.3 Visa Expiry: The Home Office will issue a revised visa expiry date following notification of sponsorship cancellation. It is the student's responsibility to ensure full compliance with this date.

6.6 Academic Considerations for Low Engagement

Students who are withdrawn from their course will be considered by the Programme Assessment Board for an exit award or a certificate of credit, where the relevant learning outcomes have been met.

7. Authorised Absence

An Authorised Absence (AA) is a formally approved period of absence from study during term time.

7.1 Term Time Authorised Absence

- 7.1.1 AA applies exclusively to absence during term time. All requests must be submitted and approved before travel or absence commences. Retrospective AA requests will not be accepted.
- 7.1.2 No authorisation is required for absence during official University holiday periods or after the student's expected course end date, as recorded in OSIS.
- 7.1.3 Absence during term time for leisure or non-essential purposes is not permitted. Any absence that has not been authorised in advance will be recorded as unauthorised and will be subject to the engagement monitoring process set out in Section 6.4.
- 7.1.4 Acceptable reasons for AA approval include:
 - a) Family emergency or bereavement.
 - b) Serious illness, supported by a medical certificate or equivalent documentation.
 - c) Visa extension application requiring travel overseas.The University reserves the right to request supporting evidence for all AA applications. The Course Leader will consider each application on its individual merits.
- 7.1.5 AA is granted for a maximum period of two weeks per academic year. Absence exceeding this limit may result in the student being placed on an interruption of studies and the cancellation of their visa sponsorship in accordance with Section 12.

7.2 Absence for Overseas Fieldwork

- 7.2.1 A longer period of absence may be approved where it is required for essential course-related activity. This provision operates separately from the two-week AA limit set out in clause 7.1.5. Eligible activities include:
 - a) Conducting research for a dissertation or thesis.
 - b) A short period of study abroad.
 - c) A short period of work abroad that forms part of the course.
 - d) Attendance at an academic conference.
- 7.2.2 All overseas fieldwork, including the proposed duration of absence and a study plan, must be agreed with the student's Course Leader or supervisor, and approved by the CAS & Visa Compliance Team, prior to departure.

7.3 Re-entry to the UK

- 7.3.1 Students are expected to depart on the date specified in their AA letter and to return to the UK on the approved return date. Any early return must be communicated to the Course Leader and CSA team so that records can be updated accordingly.

- 7.3.2 Where unforeseen circumstances prevent a student from returning on the approved return date, the student must notify their Course Leader, CSA team, and the CAS & Visa Compliance Team immediately. A request for an alternative return date must be submitted in writing, supported by appropriate evidence and is subject to approval.
- 7.3.3 Failure to notify the University may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised. An extended absence may result in the student being placed on an interruption of studies in accordance with Section 12.
- 7.3.4 Students are advised to retain their AA letter throughout their travel, as it may be requested by UK Border Force upon re-entry to the UK.

8. Work Placements

This section sets out the University's requirements in relation to work placements, including placement approval, visa requirements, monitoring, and changes to placement arrangements.

Students enrolled on courses with an integral compulsory practical placement are not covered by this section.

Postgraduate research students are also not covered by this section.

8.1 Overview and Eligibility

- 8.1.1 Students enrolled on a course with an integrated placement route are entitled to undertake a full-time work placement during their approved placement year, provided they have met all academic progression requirements and the placement has been formally approved by the University.
- 8.1.2 The work placement must conclude before the student's official course end date.
- 8.1.3 Students who are not initially enrolled on a placement route but subsequently secure and are approved for a placement, and have met all academic progression requirements, will have the placement year added to their current course.

8.2 Placement Approval and Visa Requirements

8.2.1 Postgraduate Taught Students

Where a postgraduate taught student's current visa does not cover the full duration of the approved placement year, the student is eligible to apply for a visa extension. A new CAS should be requested via OSIS within ten (10) working days of receiving written confirmation of placement approval and before the start of the placement.

8.2.2 Undergraduate Students

- a) Where an undergraduate student's current visa covers the full duration of the placement year, the student may proceed with the placement without applying for a visa extension.
- b) Upon returning from the placement year, if the student's visa does not cover the full length of the final year of study, the student will be eligible to apply for a visa extension. A new CAS should be requested before the current visa expires.

8.3 Monitoring and Engagement During Placement

- 8.3.1 Students undertaking a work placement as an assessed component of their course will be monitored through monthly submissions within the Canvas work placement module. Each month, students are required to complete and upload a Placement Module Monthly Log by the deadline specified by the Module Leader.
- 8.3.2 Placement visits will be arranged by the Module Leader or the Placements Team. Students are expected to engage fully with these visits.

8.4 Employment During Placement

Students are permitted to undertake part-time employment during the work placement period, provided that such employment complies with the conditions of their visa and does not conflict with the requirements of the approved placement.

8.5 Placement Route Changes

- 8.5.1 Transferring off the Placement Route
 - a) Where a student does not wish to proceed with the placement route, they may request a transfer to the non-placement route at any time before the placement submission deadline.
 - b) Where a student has not secured an approved placement by the placement submission deadline, the student will be automatically transferred to the non-placement route.
 - c) Where either of the above results in an earlier course end date, the early course completion process will apply in accordance with Section 13.
- 8.5.2 Change of Placement Employer
 - a) Students who are considering leaving their current placement or transferring to a different employer must consult with the Placements Team and the CAS & Visa Compliance Team in the first instance.
 - b) Where a student is unable to continue with an approved placement, a second placement may be secured, provided that it is formally approved by the University and commences within four (4) weeks of the student leaving the first placement. Students should confirm this timeframe with the CAS & Visa Compliance Team, as UKVI requirements may apply.
- 8.5.3 Leaving or Withdrawing from Placement
 - a) Once a student has commenced their approved placement, transfer to the non-placement route is not permitted.
 - b) Where a student is unable to continue with a placement after it has commenced, the student is required to submit a course withdrawal request via OSIS and notify both the Placements Team and the CAS & Visa Compliance Team immediately. The early course completion process will apply in accordance with Section 13.
- 8.5.4 Eligibility for the Graduate Immigration Route (GIR)

Students who are transferred off the placement route or who are unable to continue with their placement may still be eligible to apply for the Graduate Immigration Route (GIR), provided all eligibility criteria set out in Section 14 are met.

9. Pregnancy and Maternity

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students who wish to take a break from studies due to pregnancy or maternity should refer to Academic Policy [AP2](#) and contact the Immigration Advice Team at immigrationadvice@kingston.ac.uk in the first instance.

- 9.1 Where a student takes an extended period of maternity leave, they may be required to take an interruption of studies in accordance with Section 12.
- 9.2 Where a student takes a shorter period of maternity-related absence, they should notify their Course Leader and agree a formal study plan in accordance with AP2. As a minimum, students are required to take two weeks of compulsory maternity-related absence following the birth of a child.
- 9.3 Postgraduate Research students may take up to one year of maternity leave in accordance with the Postgraduate Research Regulations. Where leave does not exceed six (6) weeks, the student's visa status will not be affected. Where leave exceeds six (6) weeks, an interruption of studies must be taken in accordance with Section 12, resulting in visa sponsorship cancellation, a requirement to leave the UK, and the need to obtain a new CAS and Student visa upon return.

10. Research Degree Students: Holiday Period

Research degree students may request a holiday period if they wish to take time away from their studies. Holiday periods are not automatically granted and must be agreed with the supervisor in advance and formally authorised in writing. During an approved holiday period, the student's Student visa working hour restrictions are lifted.

11. Suspension for Non-Payment of Tuition Fees

Students who are suspended from their course due to [Poor Financial Standing \(Academic\)](#) will be treated as non-compliant with UKVI sponsorship requirements in accordance with University policies and regulations.

12. Visa Sponsorship Cancellation for Interruptions of Studies and Withdrawals

- 12.1 The CAS & Visa Compliance Team is required to report the following changes to a student's study status to UKVI, which will result in the cancellation of their visa sponsorship:
 - a) Taking an approved Interruption of Studies.
 - b) Withdrawal from the course
- 12.2 Where the University withdraws a student's visa sponsorship, the Home Office will cancel the student's Student visa and confirm a new visa expiry date in writing to the email address registered with the student's visa application. The student is required to leave the UK by the confirmed expiry date.
- 12.3 It is the student's responsibility to monitor their registered email address, including spam and junk folders, and to comply with the confirmed visa expiry date. The University cannot guarantee the timing of Home Office correspondence.
- 12.4 Overstaying a visa is a serious immigration offence. The University accepts no liability for any consequences arising from a student's failure to comply with their visa expiry date.

13. Early Course Completion

Where a student completes their course earlier than the expected end date stated in their Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) letter, the CAS & Visa Compliance Team is required to notify UKVI in accordance with its Sponsorship Duties. The visa sponsorship cancellation process will apply in accordance with Section 12.

- 13.1 Subject to the overall duration of the course, a period of extant leave will apply from the new course end date.
- 13.2 Students who are outside the UK at the time of receiving visa cancellation confirmation should be aware that their visa may expire with immediate effect and they therefore may not be permitted to re-enter the UK on that visa. Students should contact the Immigration Advice Team at immigrationadvice@kingston.ac.uk before making any travel arrangements after their new course end date.
- 13.3 Students who have been awarded a full degree may also be eligible to apply for the Graduate Immigration Route (GIR). Eligibility criteria and application requirements are set out in Section 14.

14. Graduate Immigration Route (GIR)

The Graduate Immigration Route (GIR) allows eligible students who have successfully completed a degree at a licensed Student sponsor institution to remain in the UK to work or look for work following the completion of their studies. This section sets out the eligibility criteria and application requirements for the GIR.

14.1 Eligibility Criteria

Students may be eligible to apply for the GIR visa if all of the following criteria are met at the time of application:

- a) The student is present in the UK.
- b) The student holds a valid Student visa or Tier 4 General visa that has not expired.
- c) The degree has been formally awarded by the University and all academic completion requirements have been met.
- d) The CAS & Visa Compliance Team has reported the student's successful course completion to UKVI.
- e) The student has received confirmation from the CAS & Visa Compliance Team that UKVI has been notified of their eligibility.

14.2 Applying for the GIR

The GIR application must be submitted before midnight on the student's current visa expiry date. Students should not submit an application before receiving the confirmation referred to in clause 14.1(e). Students whose visa expiry date is approaching and who have not yet received confirmation should contact the Immigration Advice Team at immigrationadvice@kingston.ac.uk immediately.

14.3 Further Guidance

Students should be aware that the GIR may only be used once. Once a Graduate visa has been granted, it cannot be extended and a further Graduate visa cannot be applied for, even where the student undertakes additional eligible study following the expiry of their Graduate visa.

15. Contacts for further information and/or advice:

For queries relating to your Student visa and immigration status, please contact the relevant team listed below.

- Extend your current student visa: CAS@kingston.ac.uk
- Student Visa Obligations: UKVI@kingston.ac.uk
- Attendance Monitoring: UKVIEngagement@kingston.ac.uk
- Student Visa Immigration Advice: immigrationadvice@kingston.ac.uk

Annex A: Responsibilities

A1 Students are responsible for:

1. Understanding and adhering to the conditions of their Student visa.
2. Completing re-enrolment by the date specified by the University.
3. Attending and engaging fully with their studies in accordance with this policy.
4. Registering attendance via SEAtS at all timetabled teaching activities.
5. Maintaining active engagement throughout their period of study.
6. Ensuring that their contact details held in OSIS, including email address, contact telephone number, and term-time UK address, are accurate and kept up to date at all times.
7. Ensuring that all passport and visa documentation held by the University remains current and uploading any updates to OSIS promptly.
8. Reporting absences promptly via the SEAtS App and providing supporting evidence where required.
9. Submitting an Authorised Absence request in advance of any term-time absence required for an approved reason.
10. Notifying the CAS & Visa Compliance Team promptly of any circumstances affecting their attendance or engagement.
11. Notifying the CSA team or the CAS & Visa Compliance Team promptly of any changes that may affect their visa sponsorship or enrolment status.
12. Responding promptly to all communications from the University, and in particular from the CAS & Visa Compliance Team.
13. Completing and uploading monthly Canvas submissions (research degree and work placement students only).

A2 Personal Tutors are responsible for:

1. Making contact with students where notified of attendance or engagement concerns by the CAS & Visa Compliance Team.

2. Attending compulsory meetings with students at Stage 4 of the intervention process, alongside the Course Leader where possible and a representative from the CAS & Visa Compliance Team.
3. Referring students experiencing difficulties to appropriate University support services.

A3 Course Leaders are responsible for:

1. Ensuring students are informed of the importance of attendance and engagement at course induction and throughout the academic year.
2. Referring to this policy in course handbooks and other course documentation.
3. Reviewing and approving, where applicable, Authorised Absence requests from students on their course.
4. Attending compulsory meetings with students at Stage 4 of the intervention process where possible.
5. Reviewing and agreeing an expected return date for students where an interruption of studies is required.

A4 CAS & Visa Compliance Team are responsible for:

1. Ensuring the University is fully compliant with its Sponsorship Duties, including reporting all changes to student status to UKVI within the required timeframe.
2. Monitoring student attendance and engagement in line with the University's regulations and UKVI requirements.
3. Initiating and managing the six-stage intervention process.
4. Supporting colleagues on student visa-related matters as they arise.