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**[Title] Policy**

**Faculty Administrator Immigration Procedures (research programmes)**

1. **SCOPE AND PURPOSE**
	1. 1.1 These procedures are for BU staff dealing with Tier 4 (G) students whose are enrolled on a research programme***.*** The HOME OFFICE (HO) has a Tier system for their visas and the student route is called Tier 4 (G) student visa. These procedures are to ensure that the HO regulations for Tier 4 sponsors are adhered to whilst a student is on an official placement as part of their course, and should be used in conjunction with the [PBS immigration procedures](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/policiesprocedures/student/).
	2. If you would like this document in a different format, please email migrantreporting@bournemouth.ac.uk (MR@)
2. **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**
	1. Responsibility for the management and implementation of these policies and procedures lies with the Head of Student Services, who is also the HO Authorising Officer, with the day to day assistance of the Immigration Compliance Officer.
	2. All staff that deal with Tier 4 (G) students are responsible for ensuring this policy is followed in line with the procedures outlined in 3.
3. **LINKS TO OTHER BU DOCUMENTS**

[PBS immigration procedures](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/policiesprocedures/student/)

[Attendance and Withdrawals procedures](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/policiesprocedures/academicregulationspoliciesprocedures/)

[Admissions procedures](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/policiesprocedures/academicregulationspoliciesprocedures/)

[University Rules and Regulations](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/policiesprocedures/academicregulationspoliciesprocedures/)

1. **How to identify if your student is a Tier 4 (General) student**
	1. The myHub record will note Tier 4: Yes on the main information screen
2. **Process at enrolment**
	1. Doctoral College (DC)/ISST will check qualifications and immigration status at enrolment and tick off the ID, immigration and qualification tabs on the myHub enrolment checklist when required documents have been shown and verified

5.2 DC can only enrol Tier 4 students if these have been ticked

5.3 Tier 4 students must not be granted temporary enrolment. If they are not able to fully enrol by the enrolment deadline, in line with the [BU Enrolment procedure](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/pandptest/3n-enrolment-procedure.pdf), they must be directed to askBU for urgent immigration advice, as this will affect their visa conditions.

**6.0 What must be kept on file/accessible (hard copy/online/electronic)**

* Fully complete Application checklist
* Fully complete Enrolment checklist
* If applicable signed withdrawal form
* Application documents form, references, qualifications etc
* Record of all required academic engagements on Student Pad

**7. What must be printed and placed in the paper file for any students chosen for audit by the UKVI (if not available in any of the locations noted above)**

* Copies of any Attendance and Withdrawals letters
* Extension requests and outcomes (or accessible on shared file)
* Relevant emails to student’s studies/progress (or accessible on shared file)
1. **Monitoring Academic Engagement**

8.1 The HO requires that HEIs monitor that our students are engaging with their studies, and that this results in them academically progressing with their course. For this reason, the DC has declared the academic engagements that need to be monitored for PhD Students. These are outlined in Appendix 1, together with the process for monitoring these engagements

8.2 The required engagements, as noted in Appendix 1, must be recorded by academic supervisors and students via Research Pad. If a student misses a required engagement, or the academic supervisor has concerns about their engagement, then the Research administrator must be informed to instigate the Attendance and Withdrawals procedure (see 9.4 below)

8.3 A [sharepoint page](https://sasportal.bournemouth.ac.uk/ukba/default.aspx) has been created to record these non-engagements there is a spread sheet for each Faculty to record non-engagements. The minimum agreed format is in Appendix 3

8.4 If a student misses 2 academic engagements, the [A&W procedure](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/policiesprocedures/academicregulationspoliciesprocedures/) should be instigated and letter number SL1 issued. All A&W letters must be kept on the student’s file

8.5 The procedure and subsequent letters should then be issued if the student does not make meaningful contact

8.6 If a student is on a course longer than one year, then any 2 missed engagements over each academic year will trigger the A&W procedure. However, if in subsequent academic years, the student misses a further 2 academic engagements, the SLA&W should be issued, with non-meaningful engagement resulting in the third and final A&W letter being issued.

8.7 If SL1 and/or SL2 is issued and the student makes meaningful contact and resumes engagement, but then misses another required engagement, an interim letter must be issued, with the next step resulting in the final letter and withdrawal

1. **What needs to be reported to MR@**
	1. The following changes to the student record in SITS will result in an automated email to MR@. As the changes below must be reported to the HO within 10 working days, it is essential that SITS is updated as soon as the change takes place
	2. Failure to do so will result in BU not being compliant with the conditions of our Tier 4 sponsor licence.

9.3 No-show - If a Tier 4 student does not arrive to enrol by the enrolment deadline

9.4 Visa refusal - If a student informs you that their visa application has been refused, you need to direct them to askBU for urgent immigration advice

9.5 Thesis subject area change - If a student changes their thesis area, and the JACS code(s) changes, this must be reflected on SITS

9.6 Suspension or deferral of studies - If a student is authorised to suspend or defer their studies for any period of time this should be reflected on SITS with period of suspension noted . This will be assessed and if required, reported to the HO.

9.7 Academic extension - Where an extension changes the end date of the course in any way, the new course end date must be reflected on SITS

9.8 Early completion - If a student completes their course more than a month earlier than the end date noted on SITS, the new end date must be updated on SITS following the final assessment board

9.9 Withdrawal - If a student decides to withdraw from the course, or is withdrawn by BU for any reason and the withdrawal must be updated on SITS from the date the student confirmed their withdrawal and reported to MR@. The end date should not be back-dated to when the discussions began, or the end of the previous academic year.

**10. Tier 4 student contact details**

It is a legal requirement to have a current local address and contact phone number for all our Tier 4 students. If you send a letter to a student that is not delivered, or try to call a student and the number is not correct, you need to make efforts to get updated information from them. If the HO audit, they will expect us to be able to make contact with any students they request.

**11. References and further information**

* 1. HOME OFFICE Tier 4 (G) Student Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa>
	2. HOME OFFICE Tier 4 (G) Sponsor Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsor-a-tier-4-student-guidance-for-educators>

**Glossary of terms**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CAS | Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies |
| ASSIGNED CAS | CAS created by BU but not used by the student to make visa application |
| USED CAS | CAS created by BU, and used by the student to make visa application |
| WITHDRAWN CAS |  BU withdraws CAS if we no longer plan to academically sponsor a student/applicant |
| U/F | Unconditional / Firm status on Unit E |
| HO | Home Office |
| SMS | Sponsor Management System |
| Refusal Notice | Document issued by the UKVI to confirm details of a refusal to grant a visa |
| BRP | Biometric Residence Permit – visa granted from within the UK |
| EC  | Entry Clearance- visa granted from outside the UK |
| ISST | International Student Support Team |
| Representatives | Agents |

**Monitoring of PGR Attendance to fulfil UKBA Requirements** *Appendix 1*

Throughout the duration of a student’s registration, we are required to ensure that our PGRs remain in regular contact with the university – their Supervisory Team, Research Administrators, DC This contact must be recorded and auditable – and on the whole is covered by the major progression milestones.

Due to the recent changes to the visa process, this is particularly important for overseas students whose residence status in the UK is based on them being enrolled as a full-time student in the UK, and as such we are legally obliged to inform the UK Border Agency (UKBA) should there be any lapse in attendance.

The key monitoring points for full-time PGRs would normally be as follows (**Bold** - formal monitoring points; ***bold italic*** – expected milestones; standard font – other engagement):

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** | **Year 4** | **Year 5** |
| 1 | Supervisory Meeting | 13 | Re-enrolment | 25 | Re-enrolment | 37 | Re-enrolment | 49 |  |
| 2 |  | 14 |  | 26 |  | 38 |  | 50 |  |
| 3 |  | 15 | Supervisory Meeting | 37 |  | 39 | ***Viva*** | 51 |  |
| 4 | **1st Review** | 16 |  | 38 | Supervisory Meeting | 40 | Supervisory Meeting | 52 | Supervisory Meeting |
| 5 |  | 17 |  | 39 |  | 41 |  | 53 |  |
| 6 | Supervisory Meeting | 18 | **Transfer** | 30 |  | 42 |  | 54 |  |
| 7 |  | 19 |  | 31 | Supervisory Meeting | 43 | Supervisory Meeting | 55 | Supervisory Meeting |
| 8 |  | 20 |  | 32 |  | 44 |  | 56 |  |
| 9 | Supervisory Meeting | 21 | Supervisory Meeting | 33 |  | 45 | ***Award*** | 57 |  |
| 10 |  | 22 |  | 34 |  | 46 |  | 58 |  |
| 11 |  | 23 |  | 35 | ***Submission*** | 47 |  | 59 |  |
| 12 | **Annual Monitoring** | 24 | **Annual Monitoring** | 36 | **Annual Monitoring** | 48 | **Annual Monitoring** | 60 |  |

Should the student fail to engage as expected, the follow steps should be taken:

1. Informal attempts to make email / telephone contact by Supervisory Team / Research Administrator and resolve situation at an early stage.
2. Formal letter [*PGR SL Attendance 1*] to request contact be made by the PGR detailing reason for lack of contact
3. Formal letter [PGR SL Attendance 2] to further request contact be made by PGR.
4. Formal letter [PGR SL Attendance 3] to inform that steps will be taken to withdraw the student within 5 working days.
5. Failure on the part of the PGR to respond to the third letter will trigger the withdrawal procedure.

The PGR is entitled to appeal against this decision and must do so in writing to the Registrar within 10 days of the final notification. Where there are visa implications, MR@ should be informed asap.

This procedure will be clarified in the Codes of Practice 2013. Templates of standard letters in stages 2-4 available from *\\Bournemouth.ac.uk\data\Staff\IntraStore\Doctoral College\Collaborative\RESEARCH DEGREES POLICY & PROCEDURES\Research Degrees Attendance Letters*, which offer appropriate text for Home/EU or Overseas students, and may be adapted to suit individual situations.