# Engagement Monitoring for Tier 4 & Student Visa Holders – 2021/22

# 1. Principles and Purpose

1.1 The principles and expectations for student attendance and engagement are outlined in the University's [Ordinances](), [General Regulations for Students]() and [Taught Student Attendance and Engagement Policy]().

1.2 As a Student Sponsor License holder, the University is required to adhere to the [Student Sponsor Guidance]() published by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). This procedure describes how the University meets the duties prescribed in this guidance relating to monitoring engagement of students holding either Tier 4 or Student visas.

1.3 This procedure applies to all Tier 4 and Student visa holders studying at the University of Exeter. It does not apply to students who do not hold one of these types of visa.

1.4 As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic many students will spend periods of time studying remotely during the 2021/22 academic year. Any student studying remotely will be subject to this procedure if they hold a Tier 4 or Student visa. In such cases [UKVI's temporary concessionary guidance]() in response to Covid-19 will also apply.

# 2. Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students

## 2.1 Recording and Monitoring Attendance

2.1.1 Student engagement will be captured using data from:

- Assignments and tests submitted via eBart
- Log ons to the University's virtual learning environment (ELE)
- Access to scheduled sessions in Microsoft Teams or Zoom
- Attendance at group teaching sessions recorded through [Student Check-In]()
- Examination data entered into eBart

2.1.2 Scheduled welfare meetings which require the attendance of students, such as fitness to study meetings, can also be recorded as contact points.

2.1.3 Engagement will only be monitored during weeks in which a student is expected to be engaging with their programme. These are defined as any week:

- in term 1 or 2 or
- in which a student has a timetabled point or
- in which an eBART submission is due

## 2.2 Periods of Industrial Placement and Study Abroad

2.2.1   The University will normally continue immigration sponsorship of students during periods of industrial experience or study abroad. The University is therefore required to ensure that students holding Tier 4/Student visas are engaging satisfactorily with this element of their studies.

2.2.2   Attendance on periods of work placement which are part-time or which are less than 3 weeks in duration will not be monitored.  In such cases the university's standard monitoring process will be sufficient to demonstrate satisfactory engagement.

2.2.3   College based placement teams will contact employers within one month of the start date of the programme to obtain confirmation that the student is in attendance.

2.2.4   College based placement teams will contact students each month to ensure that they are continuing to engage with this element of their programme.

2.2.5   College based teams responsible for overseeing industrial placements must ensure a system is in place for employers to report instances where a student is absent from their placement to them.

2.2.6   The Immigration Compliance Unit will collect all documentation returned by host Universities and record these as contact points in LISA.

2.2.7   The Immigration Compliance Unit will identify all Tier 4/Student visa holders on work placements or studying abroad and will work with Hubs to ensure that sufficient contacts are recorded.

## 2.3   Taught Postgraduate Students Writing a Dissertation

2.3.1   Engagement of taught postgraduate students will not be recorded outside of term time. During term time, engagement will be recorded in line with what is outlined in 2.1 above.

## 2.4 Absence and Non-engagement

2.4.1   Where a student is unable to attend a timetabled teaching session through sickness or for another reason, they are required to notify their discipline via iExeter (My Course - absence reporting) or by the method prescribed in their student handbook. The Student Absence Procedure gives further information.

2.4.2   Hubs will decide whether the reasons presented for an absence are valid. Absences should be approved in line with the reasons listed in the Student Absence Procedure.

2.4.3   Where a Hub approves an absence request from a student, the absence will be classed as a mitigated absence.

2.4.4   Student Immigration Services will set a weekly engagement threshold based on the

data sources outlined in 2.1.1. Engagement data will be monitored on a weekly basis to identify any students who do not meet the prescribed engagement threshold during that week.

2.4.5 Students will receive email notifications if attendance and engagement data demonstrates that they have not been engaging to a satisfactory level. The email notifications will advise the student of the consequences for their immigration status of continued absence and outline sources of support in case the student has ongoing welfare issues. Action will be initiated or escalated and notifications, which will correspond with the warning stages outlined in the University's Unsatisfactory Student Progress and Engagement: Code of Good Practice, will be sent after the following periods of non-engagement:

- 3 weeks (initial warning)
- 6 weeks (second initial warning)
- 9 weeks (final warning)

2.4.6 Where a student fails to engage satisfactorily for a further 2 weeks (and therefore a total of 12 weeks non-engagement) they will be referred to the Dean of Faculty for withdrawal from his/her programme by the relevant College authority.

2.4.7 In cases of continued lack of engagement by a student who is studying remotely, engagement notifications will be sent in line with what is outlined in 2.4.5, but action will not be initiated or escalated under the University's Unsatisfactory Student Progress and Engagement: Code of Good Practice. Continued non-engagement will however trigger a withdrawal of immigration sponsorship, in line with the timeframe outlined in 2.4.5. and 2.4.6.

2.4.8 In cases where the University is aware that a student has serious ongoing health problems or there are other compelling personal circumstances, it may not be appropriate for students to receive notification emails. The University's Wellbeing Services will liaise with the Immigration Compliance Unit in such circumstances to determine an appropriate course of action, which may include mitigating absence.

2.4.9 The Immigration Compliance Unit will inform Wellbeing Services of any students who have declared a disability or have an Individual Learning Plan in place who have received a notification after 6 weeks of non-engagement.

## 3. Postgraduate Research Students

### 3.1 Recording and Monitoring Attendance

3.1.1 Registration will be recorded as a contact point for all postgraduate research Students

3.1.2 After a postgraduate research student has registered, his or her MyPGR record is populated with monthly contact points. These are scheduled across the year, apart from August and December. Less contact points will be scheduled for part-time students. These events are also recorded in LISA and are monitored as expected engagement points.

3.1.3    Any ad hoc contacts entered by students will also be recorded as engagement points.

3.1.4    All postgraduate research students are required to complete the Annual Monitoring Exercise.  This is also recorded as an expected contact point in LISA.

3.1.5    It is recognised that not all contacts between supervisor and student will be face to face. Research students are often required to conduct research in different locations so contacts will sometimes be by phone, email or Skype.  This still represents engagement with the requirements of their programme so recorded as a contact point in LISA.

## 3.2 Continuation Status

3.2.1    Students who have switched to continuation status (including those who are required to resubmit) are expected to maintain less regular contact with their supervisor.  The University retains its duties as immigration sponsor during this time however, so students will be required to complete at least one contact during each term.

3.2.2    After a student has submitted their thesis there will not be any expected contacts until their viva.  The viva will be recorded as a contact point in LISA.

## 3.3 Absence

3.3.1    Under the informal stage of the Unsatisfactory Student Progress & Engagement Procedures a student will receive a Progress Check letter from the relevant PGR Support team.

3.3.2    The Immigration Compliance Unit will monitor Tier 4/Student research student attendance data and will alert the relevant PGR Support Team in cases where there has been no student engagement during the past 3 months.  The Support Team will send The Support Team will send a Progress Check letter as appropriate.

3.3.3    If a student fails to engage for a further 3 months they will be contacted by their PGR Support Team in line with the University's Unsatisfactory Progress and Engagement: Code of Good Practice.

3.3.4    Where a student continues to fail to engage within no more than a further 2 months they will be referred to the Dean of Faculty for withdrawal from his/her programme by the relevant College authority

3.3.5    If it is considered appropriate for the student to be referred to the Health, Wellbeing and Support for Study procedure, MyPGR contact events will be mitigated in LISA for the appropriate period.

3.3.6    Where there are circumstances which affect a student's ability to engage on a longer term basis it may be appropriate for the student to request an interruption of studies.

## 4. Tier 4/Student Visa holder Responsibilities

4.1    All Tier 4/Student Visa holders are required to engage with the University's engagement and absence reporting procedures, as outlined above.

4.2    All students at the University are expected to demonstrate a satisfactory level of attendance and engagement. Failure to demonstrate this may result in action being taken under the Health Wellbeing and Support for Study procedure or the Unsatisfactory Student Progress and Engagement: Code of Good Practice and ultimately the University withdrawing Immigration sponsorship.