

HE Withdrawal Procedure (Sponsored Student Exception)

Related Policies and Procedures

The HE Withdrawal Procedure (Sponsored Student Exception) is to be used in conjunction with the HE Withdrawal Policy, the HE Withdrawal Procedure and the Student Engagement in Learning Policy.

Scope

This is an exception to the HE Withdrawal Procedure, specifically aimed at withdrawing Sponsored Students with regard to UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) regulatory requirements.

Programme Teams are responsible for identifying students who are not engaging with their programme and informing International Office. The Head of School will submit the withdrawal request, informing Registry of the Sponsored Student status alongside the other information required for standard HE withdrawals.

International Office are responsible for the monitoring of Sponsored Students with input from the Programme Teams.

Registry will send specific Sponsored Student withdrawal correspondence to students.

Identifying Potential Withdrawals

The UKVI regulations apply rules according to the level of the programme.

For HE programmes leading to qualifications up to level 5, attendance must be monitored with minimum levels to be met by the student (see **Level 5 and Below: Attendance** section below).

For programmes leading to qualification at level 6 or above, academic engagement must be monitored with minimum standards met by the student (see **Level 6 and Above** section below).

Contact points must also be monitored at all qualification levels and failure to attend ten consecutive contact points must be reported to UKVI by International Office. At the fifth contact point missed, Programme Teams should identify the student as 'at risk' of withdrawal in order to review the attendance or engagement issues prior to mandatory UKVI reporting at the tenth missed contact point.

Programme Teams will advise International Office and their Head of School that a student is falling below the required standard. A formal letter advising that sponsorship may be withdrawn will be sent to the student by the Head of School.

Where the student's attendance or engagement improves to a satisfactory level no further action will be taken.

Where the student fails to meet the minimum standards or when ten consecutive contact points are missed, International Office will follow their process to withdraw sponsorship and the Head of School will submit the student withdrawal request, highlighting the Sponsored Student status. Registry will send a final letter advising that sponsorship has been withdrawn.

Level 5 and below

Attendance

Attendance will be monitored by Programme Teams and International Office via registers. Where student attendance falls below the required standard indicated below, Programme Teams will contact the student to discuss the issue, any mitigation (e.g., illness) will be recorded and International Office will be informed.

- Where the student has not reached 85% attendance of their classroom-based study in any given month, the sponsor must review the reason for the student's absence.
- Where a student's attendance falls below 70% for three consecutive months, the sponsor must withdraw sponsorship due to lack of academic engagement unless there are exceptional and evidenced reasons for the non-attendance (e.g., illness).

Contact Points

Contact points will also be monitored by Programme Teams. Where a student has missed five contact points, the student should be identified as at risk of withdrawal and a formal letter regarding attendance and engagement should be sent to the student by the Programme Team.

A contact point includes any of the following:

- attending formal academic or pastoral care activities including: - a lesson, lecture, tutorial or seminar
- a test, examination or assessment board

- a meeting with a supervisor or personal tutor
- a research-method or research panel meeting
- writing-up seminars or doctoral workshops
- an oral examination (viva)
- an appointment with a welfare adviser or international student adviser
- submitting assessed or unassessed coursework

Where ten consecutive contact points are missed, International Office must report this to UKVI.

Level 6 and above

Academic Engagement

Students studying programmes that lead to qualifications at level 6 or higher must show satisfactory standards of academic engagement.

Programme Teams are responsible for monitoring and recording engagement and attendance to allow them to identify where a student is not attending/engaging as described in the Student Engagement in Learning Policy.

Withdrawals should be identified in a timely manner. UKVI guidance states that the maximum period of non-engagement before intervention takes place should not exceed 60 days in duration. To meet this, Programme Teams should contact students within four weeks of non-engagement to request a formal meeting to discuss academic engagement.

Contact Points

Contact points will also be monitored by Programme teams. Where a student has missed five contact points, the student should be identified as at risk of withdrawal and a formal letter regarding attendance and engagement should be sent to the student by the Programme Team.

A contact point includes any of the following:

- attending formal academic or pastoral care activities including: - a lesson, lecture, tutorial or seminar
- a test, examination or assessment board
- a meeting with a supervisor or personal tutor
- a research-method or research panel meeting

- writing-up seminars or doctoral workshops
- an oral examination(viva)
- an appointment with a welfare adviser or international student adviser
- submitting assessed or unassessed coursework

Where ten consecutive contact points are missed, International Office must report this to UKVI.