

Addendum to Academic Engagement Policy- Interim procedures for London-based Student Visa Holders

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy sets out interim measures to ensure that Health Sciences University (HSU) continues to meet its obligations as a licensed Student sponsor under UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations. It outlines the expectations for academic engagement and attendance monitoring specifically for international students based at the London Campus and describes the procedures in place to ensure UKVI compliance.
- 1.2. The procedures set out supplements and takes precedent over HSU's institutional Academic Engagement Policy for these specific students, and will remain in effect until a revised institutional policy and procedure is implemented which includes campus-specific procedures.

2. Regulatory Context

- 2.1. This addendum has been developed in line with the requirements of the UKVI Student Sponsor Guidance: Document 2.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all international students studying at HSU's London Campus who are sponsored under the UK Government's Student visa route.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. **Contact Point:** A scheduled point of interaction that evidences academic engagement. Under this policy, one contact point is recorded per half day, once during the morning session and once in the afternoon.
- 4.2. **Authorised Absence:** An absence that has been approved by the University following the submission of valid evidence, such as a medical certificate or appointment documentation.
- 4.3. **Non-Engagement:** A failure to meet the expected contact points without appropriate authorisation or explanation.

Procedure

5. Attendance Monitoring

- 5.1. Student attendance will be formally recorded at scheduled engagement points each day. As a minimum, two contact points will be recorded: one in the morning and one in the afternoon, aligned with each course timetable and delivery model.
- 5.2. These contact points serve as UKVI-defined engagement markers. Some courses, particularly those with extended, intensive, or evening teaching schedules, may include an additional contact point to ensure that engagement is appropriately monitored across the full teaching day.
- 5.3. Attendance data is captured by designated academic or administrative staff using the University's approved systems. Where attendance is recorded via automated or student-initiated processes, staff are responsible for providing appropriate oversight and for following up on any anomalies. All records are securely stored and made available to the UKVI Compliance Team for audit and reporting purposes.

- 5.4. While attendance is the primary engagement indicator under the policy and this addendum, other forms of academic engagement, such as participation in supervision or the submission of assessed work, may also be considered, where appropriate, in line with institutional policy and UKVI guidance.

6. Authorised Absence

- 6.1. Students may be granted authorised absence from scheduled academic activities for up to 14 consecutive calendar days during term time where genuine and evidenced circumstances prevent attendance. Due to the intensive nature of block teaching in some courses (e.g., Health and Business School courses), authorised absence may be limited to a maximum of 7 consecutive calendar days. Exceptions beyond this period may be considered only where serious, evidenced circumstances apply. In such cases, students may be required to retake the missed unit in a subsequent cycle, without an assessment cap being applied, subject to academic approval
- 6.2. Authorised absence may be considered in the following circumstances:
- Short-term illness or injury, supported by a medical certificate or doctor's note
 - Hospital or medical appointments, with official appointment documentation
 - Bereavement, typically involving a close family member (evidence may be requested)
 - Serious personal circumstances, supported by appropriate documentation
- 6.3. Students must request authorised absence as early as possible, ideally in advance of the absence period. To do so, students are required to:
- Submit an Absence Reporting Form via the Student Portal
 - Notify both their Course Leader and Registry
 - Provide valid supporting evidence where applicable
- 6.4. Absences of up to 14 consecutive calendar days may be approved internally by the University. For courses delivered in intensive block formats, such as those offered by the Health and Business School (HBS), authorised absence is typically limited to a maximum of 7 consecutive calendar days due to the impact on academic progression. Absences exceeding these thresholds will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and may require a formal interruption of studies, which could affect visa sponsorship. In exceptional circumstances, students may be permitted to retake the missed unit in a future cycle without an assessment cap, subject to academic approval.
- 6.5. Where a student believes they attended a scheduled session that has not been recorded in the attendance system, they should contact Registry and provide any available supporting evidence of attendance, or communications confirming their presence. Registry will investigate and amend the attendance record if appropriate
- 6.6. Unauthorised absence or failure to follow the authorised absence process may be treated as non-engagement and referred to the UKVI Compliance Team.

7. Reporting Absence and Non-Engagement

- 7.1. Students are expected to report all absences via the absence reporting form on the Student Portal and must provide supporting evidence where required. If a student does not follow this procedure, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- 7.2. Where a student's attendance is recorded at less than 80% of scheduled sessions without authorised absence, they will be considered to have disengaged from their studies. In such cases, the matter will be escalated to the UKVI Compliance Team
- 7.3. Following UKVI's Student Sponsor Guidance, sustained non-engagement may result in the withdrawal of the University's visa sponsorship. This may subsequently lead to formal withdrawal from the course and notification to the Home Office, potentially resulting in the curtailment of the student's visa.

8. Student Support and Intervention

- 8.1. HSU is committed to supporting students experiencing difficulties that affect their engagement. In line with the overarching Academic Engagement Policy, a staged intervention process is in place. This may include informal check-ins, meetings with academic or student support teams, an immigration meeting with the UKVI Compliance Team and the development of personalised engagement improvement plans.

8.2. Students are encouraged to seek support proactively should they encounter challenges that may impact their attendance or academic participation.

9. Responsibilities

9.1. **Students** are responsible for attending all scheduled sessions, arriving on time, and reporting any absence through the appropriate channels.

9.2. **Academic and administrative staff** are responsible for facilitating the accurate recording of attendance using the University's approved systems and for flagging any concerns about engagement to the UKVI Compliance Team. Where attendance is captured through automated or student-initiated processes, staff are responsible for ensuring appropriate oversight and follow-up where necessary.

9.3. **The UKVI Compliance Team** monitors engagement records and ensures that any potential breaches of sponsor duties are managed following institutional policy and UKVI requirements.

10. Review and Revision

10.1. This interim policy will remain in force until it is superseded by an updated version of the Academic Engagement Policy, which will incorporate permanent, campus-specific procedures for Student visa holders.

Version	1.0
Approving body	Academic Board
Policy Owner	Academic Registrar
Date approved	11 June 2025
Effective from	May 2025
Review date	2025/26 [with full Academic Engagement Policy]
Target Audience	International students sponsored under the student visa route and enrolled at HSU's London Campus/ Staff
Publication	Website, SharePoint
Equality analysis	No significant impact, procedures can be varied as required