Student Visa Engagement and Attendance Policy

The Student Visa Engagement and Attendance Policy applies to all students who are sponsored by the University on a Student Route or Tier 4 (T4) visa. Oxford Brookes also has a University wide [Student Engagement and Attendance Policy](#) which applies to all students. This Student Visa Engagement and Attendance Policy sits alongside the University policy to make clear the additional engagement requirements for sponsored students to meet the UKVI requirements.

1. What is engagement?

1.1. When we use the term engagement, we are covering a number of ways in which students can interact with their programme of study. Engagement opportunities will include attendance at lectures, seminars and other teaching, and/or assessment activities. It can include use of learning resources such as the library, virtual learning environment and electronic journals. It may also include taking opportunities to interact with tutors, Academic Advisors and/or Supervisors.

2. What is the purpose of an engagement policy?

2.1. We expect all students to engage with their programme of study. Regular engagement is an important aspect of learning and the wider student experience. Students who fully engage with all aspects of their programmes are more likely to succeed with their studies, and research indicates that engaging in their course is also a good way to connect with other students and to feel a greater sense of belonging with their University community. Programme handbooks (and individual module descriptions) will give guides as to the likely time that will be required to dedicate to various activities designed to meet the learning outcomes, but these will only ever be guides.

2.2. Everyone will approach their learning in the way that suits them best, and this may vary as learning techniques evolve over time. This is why we do not set a prescribed engagement measure to ensure success. Throughout this policy we will refer to minimum levels of engagement, and this should not be thought of as a minimum level that will ensure a passing grade, but a minimum level that we will use to identify where we may need to take action to support students.

2.3. For students who are sponsored by the University on a Student visa, we have a specific requirement to monitor engagement as part of our Sponsor Licence responsibilities. Where non-engagement is identified, we may ultimately need to withdraw visa sponsorship and report this to the UKVI. Our engagement policy allows us to support students by identifying instances where an intervention might be useful, but also serves the purpose of meeting our sponsor obligations.

3. What will we use to monitor engagement?

3.1. We will use a number of metrics to measure engagement and will make data available to those Academic and Support staff members, whose role it will be to support students. All information is stored and processed in line with the University's [Student Privacy Notice](#).

3.2. Data will be drawn from the following sources, but the exact contribution of each source to any final metrics may vary depending upon the nature of each programme and mode of study:

- **Assessment:** Completion of required assessment components, marks achieved, progression decisions;

- **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Interaction**: Time spent using and interacting with the VLE (both absolute and relative to other students on the same modules/programmes);

- **Library:** Electronic and physical usage;

- **Engagement with University processes**: Including but not limited to Exceptional Circumstances, Academic Appeals;

- **Attendance**: Attendance data taken from timetabled teaching sessions;

- **Interaction with Programme Staff and Faculty support processes**: Academic Advisors, Dissertation Supervisors, Module Leaders, Programme Leads, Subject Coordinators, Student Support Coordinators, Inclusive Support etc.

4. How will we determine what constitutes low levels of engagement?

4.1. The aim of this policy is to describe a level of engagement which is compliant with sponsored students' responsibilities under the terms of their visa. It

describes the ways in which we may determine that a minimum level, expected of every sponsored student, has not been met, and that some form of intervention is required. It should be noted that this policy does not in any way preclude or discourage support being offered to a student with any level of engagement, but sets a standard below which the University expects an intervention to take place, and, where appropriate, for action to be taken in accordance with this policy and with the University's responsibility as a sponsor.

4.2. The following levels of engagement must be met every semester in order to achieve a satisfactory level of engagement (or have successful Exceptional Circumstances outcomes to mitigate).

4.2.1. Students studying at academic level 3 (Foundation courses)

a. Sponsored students at this level are required to attend a minimum of 15 hours of daytime (08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday) classroom-based study per week. Attendance at these sessions will be monitored via class registers. Registers will be taken daily by the tutors and attendance will be monitored by the specific Programme Administrators with responsibility for these courses. Where the student has not reached 85% attendance of their classroom-based study in any given month, action will be taken as described in section 5 below.

b. Following those interventions, where a student's attendance falls below 70% for three consecutive months, the University will withdraw sponsorship due to lack of academic engagement unless there are exceptional and evidenced reasons for the non-attendance (e.g. illness).

4.2.2. Students studying at academic levels 4, 5, 6, and 7 (undergraduate and postgraduate courses, including postgraduate research courses)

a. Students' engagement with courses at these levels will be monitored by means such as those described below. In each case, the measures used will be appropriate to the nature of the student's course, and as such may vary between subjects, course types, and study levels. The measures used include, but may not be limited to:

- Attendance data taken from timetabled teaching sessions: if attendance is flagged as low compared to the course cohort, this will be flagged to the International Student Advice Team (ISAT)/ International Student Compliance Team (ISCT) for further investigation;

- An average of at least one substantial interaction per week over each semester interacting with the University's Virtual Learning Environment(s) (VLE): a "substantial" interaction will be measured by its comparison to the average length of time spent per VLE interaction by the cohort as a whole;

- The amount of time and/or number of interactions with the relevant VLE(s) across a semester/term or a part of a semester/term: in order to determine an appropriate level of engagement in each case, the number and length of VLE interactions will be monitored in comparison to the cohort as a whole, and action will be taken, as described in section 5 below, in instances where a sponsored student's engagement can be seen to be substantially below that of the cohort as a whole - for example, if sponsored students' interactions with the VLE are in the lower quartile of the cohort;

- Assessment: sponsored students must complete (where "completion" is defined as passing or attempting all assessment components for a module) at least one module credit in each teaching period;

- Assessment: sponsored students must submit or attempt all assessment components for modules on which they are enrolled. This may refer to a coursework submission, an attempt at a timed assessment or a presentation;

b. Where engagement levels on the above metrics flag low engagement, we may also consider other metrics, which may be appropriate, where available, to help determine an overall picture of engagement:

- Excessive use of "grace period" or self-certification extensions under the University's Exceptional Circumstances procedures;

- Outcomes of any conduct case investigations or Academic Appeals;

- Meaningful engagement with relevant academic staff, including but not limited to, Academic Advisors, Dissertation Supervisors and Research Supervisors. This applies both to teaching time and any time on field or research trips.

- Any specific Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements which are applicable to the student's course of study, as specified within the modules or Faculty/School attendance policy;

c. As a guide, if three consecutive measures of engagement are not met within a semester or other appropriate study period, after supportive interventions as described in section 5 below have taken place, and without exceptional circumstances such as illness being demonstrably present and relevant, the University will consider the withdrawal of its sponsorship. However, the threshold for taking such action may vary depending on the subject, type, and level of students' courses.

4.2.3. Students studying at academic level 8 (research degrees including PhDs)

a. Students' engagement with courses at these levels will be monitored by their Research Supervisor. Where supervisors report low levels of engagement or progression, the process outlined in section 5 will be followed. This includes time whilst collecting data on field or research trips. In each case, the measures used will be appropriate to the nature of the student's course, and as such may vary between subjects.

4.2.4. Students who are on a placement

When students go on placement, an agreement between Oxford Brookes University and the Employer is drawn up and signed. Where a Student visa holder is not engaging appropriately with their placement without explanation, the Employer will notify Oxford Brookes University so ISCT can take appropriate actions as detailed in section 5.

4.2.5. Students who are undertaking official roles as Students' Union sabbatical officers

The Students' Union will notify the International Student Compliance Team if a sabbatical officer on a Student visa is not engaging appropriately with their role without acceptable explanation so ISCT can take appropriate actions as detailed in section 5.

5. What might the University do when we have identified low levels of engagement?

5.1. Where we have identified what appears to be a low level of engagement as defined in section 4.2, or through other means that include, for example, liaison with faculty staff, library usage, meeting of enrolment and re-enrolment deadlines, and timely payment of fees, a student would be contacted by members of ISAT. A meeting to discuss Student visa holders responsibilities would be arranged. Students would be able to explain their personal situation. Appropriate support to enable re-engagement will be discussed at the meeting and an action plan to complete this will be agreed.

5.2. The action plan will be created on the basis of discussion with appropriate faculty staff and consist of actions, and deadlines agreed to complete these actions. The following are types of options which might be discussed as part of an action plan; applying for Exceptional Circumstances or Academic Appeals; taking Approved Temporary Withdrawal or leaving a placement/sabbatical early. Appropriate visa advice will be given for each option. A summary of the meeting will be emailed to

after the meeting.

6. What might the University do if a student does not engage with an action plan to support re-engagement?

6.1. In order to remain compliant with UKVI regulations, students will need to engage with the action plan and meet the deadlines. Failure to do so in an appropriate way without Exceptional Circumstances, means the University will consider the withdrawal of its sponsorship. The threshold for taking such action may vary depending on the subject, type and level of students' courses.

6.2. Where students are at risk of sponsorship being withdrawn, they will receive a written warning. Continued failure to complete the action plan or provide evidence as to why this is not possible, means a student would be excluded from the course for UKVI reasons and non-engagement reported to the UKVI within 10 days of the exclusion. The UKVI would then cancel the Student Visa and they would give 60 days to leave the UK.

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