

Student Route Academic Engagement Monitoring

1. Sponsor obligations

- 1.1 The University has been granted a licence from UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to sponsor international students to come to the UK under the Student route visa. Conditions of this license include the obligations and requirements to monitor the academic engagement of such students.
- 1.2 All Student Route sponsors are required to ensure that sponsored students are academically engaged in their studies throughout the period they are being sponsored. A sponsored student is considered to be academically engaging if they are actively and consistently following their course of study, for example, attending timetabled sessions and completing assessments.
- 1.3 As a sponsor, the University must have an academic engagement monitoring process that applies consistently to all sponsored students (at a particular level or in particular circumstances). The University must demonstrate that there is a robust system to identify any sponsored student who has ceased to engage with their studies, the action that will be taken to support the student to re-engage, and the circumstances under which a sponsored student will be withdrawn.
- 1.4 Sponsored students must meet the minimum engagement requirements set out in this supplement. Where a sponsored student stops engaging and fails to re-engage within sixty days of the first contact from the University about their low engagement, their sponsorship will be withdrawn.
- 1.5 This supplement sets out expectations for Schools in monitoring sponsored students' academic engagement. These requirements are **in addition** to those articulated in School attendance policies and in [Quality Handbook Supplement 14A](#). The principles in those policies apply to all students equally, including Student Route-sponsored students.
- 1.6 NTU primarily monitors the academic engagement of its Student Route-sponsored students through attendance at identified contact points throughout the teaching period. Unauthorised non-attendance at these events will result in the student being identified as having low engagement.
- 1.7 During the following periods, the University is not required to monitor the academic engagement of sponsored students in any way:
 - a. During any official break period;
 - b. During the post-study period; or

- c. Whilst the student is on a Doctorate Extension Scheme.
- 1.8 This supplement sets out the engagement or attendance monitoring requirements for the following:
 - a. Undergraduate and postgraduate taught sponsored students;
 - b. Sponsored students undertaking a Master's dissertation or Doctoral programme;
 - c. Sponsored students on placement or Students' Union sabbatical officer; and
 - d. Pre-Sessional English sponsored students.

2. Support for sponsored students

- 2.1 Sponsored students are encouraged by NTU to seek support at any stage of the academic engagement monitoring process or if they have concerns about their ability to engage in their studies.
- 2.2 Sponsored students can seek support from [International Student Support](#), and any visa-related written communications with students should reference the availability of this support.
- 2.3 Sponsored students can also seek independent advice from the Students' Union [Information and Advice Service](#).
- 2.4 Students may seek advice from their School, such as Course Leader, Module Leader or Personal Tutor.
- 2.5 Students can:
 - a. find out what support is available from [Student Services](#)
 - b. [speak with a support adviser](#)
 - c. get support from the [NTSU advice centre](#).
- 2.6 A sponsored student has the right to be accompanied by a friend, relative or member of NTSU to any re-engagement meeting detailed within this supplement. The student must inform the School that they will be accompanied at least two working days before any meeting.

3. Engagement monitoring process for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students

How engagement is monitored

- 3.1 For sponsored students on undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses, engagement is monitored in two ways:
 - a. Regular monitoring via monthly contact points; and a cumulative review of a student's attendance at all scheduled sessions across this time period; and
 - b. Longitudinal monitoring via a rolling record of contact point attendance across a student's academic year.

- 3.2 If a student provides prior notice and reasoning to the School that they will not be attending sessions, and those reasons are accepted, missed attendance will not contribute to the academic engagement monitoring process.
- 3.3 If a student is on any study abroad experience, regular monitoring processes should continue, and the School must coordinate contact points with the partner institution.
- 3.4 Students on a placement have monitoring processes as outlined in Section Five of this supplement.

Regular monitoring process

- 3.5 Regular monitoring is undertaken by a series of **monthly** contact points.
- 3.6 Contact points are attendance based and constitute being physically present at a **compulsory**, formal academic or pastoral care activity.
- 3.7 There will be a contact point in every **month** where a student is actively studying. The first contact point will be enrolment/re-enrolment and is monitored by Academic Registry. If a student does not complete enrolment or re-enrolment, their sponsorship will be withdrawn, irrespective of further academic engagement.
- 3.8 Subsequent contact points must be undertaken within every **month** during term time and are identified by the Schools.
- 3.9 Examples of in-person contact points include observed and recorded attendance at:
 - a. A **compulsory** taught session;
 - b. An 'on the day' assessment such as a test, presentation or examination;
 - c. A **compulsory** meeting with a personal tutor or supervisor;
 - d. An in-person submission of a particular assessment.
- 3.10 Sponsored students must not be made aware of **the date/time of** these contact points as this may influence the outcomes of the monitoring process.
- 3.11 There are two stages to the regular monitoring process. These are:
 - a. Stage one: email contact; and
 - b. Stage two: re-engagement meeting.

Monitoring attendance or submission

- 3.12 Following a contact point event, the School must record the attendance/submission of the sponsored students at these contact points. **If absence at the contact point is authorised, this must also be recorded.**
- 3.13 Academic Registry will run attendance reports fortnightly, and if a contact point is missed, it triggers the monitoring process.

Stage one

- 3.14 All sponsored students who miss one contact point are contacted via email by Academic Registry and informed that they have missed a contact point. They are reminded of their enrolment conditions and the need to inform someone if they are

going to be absent for any reason. They are also advised to contact the School and/or Student Support Services if they are experiencing difficulties.

- 3.15 Academic Registry informs the School of action taken and a record of this contact is made on the student file by the School.

Stage two

- 3.16 All sponsored students who then miss a second consecutive contact point and have also attended less than 80% of their compulsory teaching activity across the previous four teaching weeks are required to attend a re-engagement meeting. They are contacted via email by Academic Registry and informed that as they have missed a second consecutive contact point, and have not achieved sufficient cumulative attendance, they must arrange to meet with their Course Leader, or nominee, in person to discuss their low engagement and jointly complete a re-engagement form within **ten working days** from the date the notification was sent.
- 3.17 Re-engagement forms are used to capture the reason for low engagement and any other relevant information. The form is completed jointly by the student and School. The meeting allows discussion of the reason(s) for missing a contact point, establishes whether there are circumstances affecting the student's engagement and determines whether any further support is needed. The student is also asked to provide evidence supporting their reasons for their missed attendance.
- 3.18 These meetings must take place in person and cannot be conducted online as the institution needs to ensure that the student is physically present and engaging with their studies. There may be some circumstances whereby a re-engagement meeting needs to take place online; this should be agreed upon in advance with the Immigration Compliance Team.
- 3.19 As part of the meeting, the Course Leader (or nominee) may want to review aspects of the student's engagement, for example assessment submission, Notifications of Extenuating Circumstances, etc, to inform the discussion.

Meeting outcomes

- 3.20 Based on the discussion at the re-engagement meeting, one of the following outcomes is agreed upon and recorded on the re-engagement form:
- The reasons for low engagement are accepted as being valid, and the student is expected to re-engage in their studies immediately; or
 - The reasons for low engagement are accepted as being valid, and the student is given a defined period of time (of no longer than **sixty days**), and support is offered before requiring to re-engage in their studies; or
 - The reasons for low engagement are **not accepted**, and the student is subject to immediate withdrawal.
- 3.21 A copy of the original re-engagement form and any supporting evidence must be sent to Academic Registry before the end of the **ten working day** period, and also retained on the School file.
- 3.22 If a student is given a defined period of time before requiring to re-engage, any contact points within this period will not count towards the academic engagement

monitoring process. Schools must mark any contact points within this period as an authorised absence.

3.23 If a student does not attend a re-engagement meeting within the required time frame they will be actioned as a withdrawal.

3.24 Where a student is being withdrawn, Academic Registry will action this and inform UKVI Visas and Immigration (UKVI) within **ten working days** of the re-engagement meeting deadline.

3.25 The re-engagement process does not replace the Notification of Extenuating Circumstances (NEC) process. Where a sponsored student requires additional consideration for assessment due to valid circumstances beyond their control, they should request an NEC and provide supporting evidence.

Longitudinal monitoring process

3.26 There is an expectation for sponsored students to engage consistently throughout their studies; therefore, it is important to take a longitudinal view of their engagement.

3.27 Academic Registry will track and monitor a sponsored student's attendance at contact points across their single year of study. The following processes will be undertaken where issues are identified with the consistency of a sponsored student's engagement.

Students who miss three contact points

3.28 Where a sponsored student fails to attend three contact points throughout a single year of study, regardless of whether this is consecutive or non-consecutive, they must attend a further re-engagement meeting as outlined in the regular monitoring process. This notification will be sent by Academic Registry.

3.29 At this re-engagement meeting, it must be communicated to the student by the course leader (or nominee) that missing any further contact points without authorised absence will result in their withdrawal.

Students who miss four contact points

3.30 Where a sponsored student has failed to attend four contact points (either consecutively or non-consecutively) throughout a single year of study, they will be withdrawn. Academic Registry will contact the student to advise that they have been withdrawn from the course and that a report will be made to UKVI within **ten working days**.

4. Engagement monitoring process for students on a Master's dissertation or Doctoral programme.

4.1 All students completing a Master's dissertation (with no additional teaching), or Doctoral programme, are usually expected to be in the UK if they have a Student Route visa. Students can be outside of the UK and continue to hold a Student Route in circumstances such as undertaking approved research abroad. If in doubt, the Immigration Compliance Team should be contacted for advice and guidance.

- 4.2 These students are monitored through **monthly** in-person monitoring events. These could include:
 - a. A meeting with a supervisor or personal tutor;
 - b. An in-person event that sponsored students must attend.
- 4.3 Contact points can be online, but only when the student is on an official period of studying away from the UK. Official periods of studying away must be agreed on in advance of leaving the UK by the Course Leader (or nominee), and the School must record evidence of this. In the instance that a student will not return to the UK following their official period of studying away, Academic Registry must be informed by the School administration team so that the student's sponsorship can be withdrawn.
- 4.4 All Schools (Master's dissertation) and the Doctoral School (doctoral candidates) must develop their own monitoring mechanisms for these events and record the attendance of sponsored students.
- 4.5 Every fortnight, all Schools (Master's dissertation) and the Doctoral School (doctoral candidates) will notify Academic Registry if a student has not attended a contact point.
- 4.6 The regular monitoring process for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students will be followed where there is one **or two** instances of a missed contact point.
- 4.7 The relevant longitudinal monitoring process for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students will be followed where there are **three or four** missed contact points.

Additional Doctoral candidate criteria

- 4.8 Doctoral candidates are expected to have one contact point every **month**, except when the student is on annual leave.
- 4.9 Contact points can be online, but only when the student is on an official period of working away or the doctoral candidate is in the period between submitting their thesis and waiting for their viva. The Doctoral School must record evidence of this. If the doctoral candidate will not be returning to the UK, the Doctoral School must inform Academic Registry, who will then withdraw the doctoral candidate's sponsorship with the Home Office.
- 4.10 If a doctoral candidate is required to action amendments or has to re-submit the thesis and be re-examined as an outcome of their viva examination, regular contact point monitoring must be reinstated.
- 4.11 If the Doctoral candidate's visa will expire during a period of post-examination amendments, they must contact the [International Student Support Team](#) for further information on how to request an extension to their visa. If the candidate wishes to conclude the thesis amendments outside of the UK, they need to discuss this with their supervisory team to seek approval from the Doctoral School. If the amendments can be completed outside of the UK, then the Doctoral candidate's sponsorship will be withdrawn.

5. Engagement monitoring process for students on placement or Students' Union Sabbatical Officer

- 5.1 There are separate monitoring processes for sponsored students on placement or a Students' Union sabbatical officer because contact points at in-person sessions are not applicable to them.
- 5.2 This monitoring mechanism is not required for work placements which are shorter than **four weeks**. If a contact point would have otherwise taken place during a student's placement, attendance at placement will be an acceptable reason for the regular engagement monitoring process not to be initiated.

Placements between 6 – 36 weeks in length

- 5.3 NTU monitors the academic engagement of these students through **monthly** in-person monitoring events. These could include:
 - a. A meeting with a personal tutor;
 - b. An in-person event that sponsored students must attend.
- 5.4 All Schools must develop their own monitoring mechanisms for these events and record the attendance of sponsored students.
- 5.5 Every fortnight, the Schools Administration Team will notify Academic Registry if a student has not attended a contact point.
- 5.6 The regular monitoring process for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students will be followed where there are **one or two** instances of a missed contact point.
- 5.7 The relevant longitudinal monitoring process for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students will be followed where there are **three or four** missed contact points.
- 5.8 Re-engagement meetings for students on a placement of this length can take place online if required.
- 5.9 Employers may also be present at re-engagement meetings to hear about any issues the student is going through and then take relevant action within the workplace. The student can request that the employer not attend.

Placements over 36 weeks in length

- 5.10 NTU monitors the academic engagement of these students through confirmation from the employer that the student is attending and engaging with their workplace.
- 5.11 The Employability Team will monitor and maintain a record of all sandwich placement and Students' Union Sabbatical Officer students' engagement at their workplace.

Monitoring engagement

- 5.12 Each month a student is in the workplace, they must submit a timesheet to the employer via the MyEmployability portal. The employer will then review this timesheet and confirm that:
- The hours are correct; and,
 - The student is engaging to a sufficient standard in that they will complete the placement period.
- 5.13 Employability will run monthly reports on students' engagement with their workplace via the MyEmployability portal that students and Employers complete. If low engagement is identified, it triggers the following monitoring procedures.

Re-engagement meeting

- 5.14 Where a student insufficiently engages with their workplace for a single month, they are contacted via email by Employability administration. The email informs them that their engagement is below expected levels, and they must meet with their Placement and Business Adviser (or nominee) to discuss their low engagement and complete a re-engagement form within **ten working days** of receipt of the email.
- 5.15 Re-engagement forms are used to capture the reason for low engagement and any other relevant information. The form is completed jointly by the student and Placement and Business Adviser (or nominee). The meeting allows discussion of the reason(s) for low engagement, establishes whether there are circumstances affecting the student's engagement and determines any further support that is needed. The student is also asked to provide any evidence to support their reasons for insufficient engagement.
- 5.16 Re-engagement meetings for sandwich placement students can take place online if required.
- 5.17 Employers may also be present at re-engagement meetings to hear about any issues the student is going through and then take relevant action within the workplace. The student can request that the employer not attend.
- 5.18 As part of the discussion, the Placement and Business Adviser (or nominee) will review the student's engagement with their workplace across the entire period. Where there is evidence that the student's engagement is insufficient, and there is no evidence to support their claims in relation to insufficient engagement, the matter is referred to the relevant Head of Department.

Meeting outcomes

- 5.19 Based on the discussion at the re-engagement meeting, one of the following outcomes is agreed upon and recorded on the re-engagement form:
- The reasons for insufficient engagement are accepted as being valid, and the student is expected to re-engage in their studies immediately; or
 - The reasons for insufficient engagement are accepted as being valid, and the student is given a defined period of time (of no longer than six weeks), and support is offered before requiring to re-engage in their studies; or
 - The reasons for insufficient engagement are **not accepted**, and the student is subject to immediate withdrawal.

- 5.20 Original documentation of the re-engagement form and any supporting evidence is kept on file by Employability, with copies sent to Academic Registry and the student's School.
- 5.21 If a student is given a defined period of time before requiring to re-engage, any engagement points within this period will not count towards the academic engagement monitoring process.
- 5.22 If a student does not attend the re-engagement meeting within the required time frame, they will be recommended for withdrawal by the Placement and Business Adviser.
- 5.23 Where a student is being withdrawn, Academic Registry will action this and inform UKVI Visas and Immigration (UKVI) within **ten working days** of the re-engagement meeting deadline. Employability should also inform the employer.

Longitudinal monitoring process

- 5.24 There is an expectation for sponsored students to engage consistently throughout their placement; therefore, it is important to take a longitudinal view of their engagement.
- 5.25 Employability will track and monitor a sponsored student's attendance and engagement across their placement. The following processes will be undertaken where issues are identified with the consistency of a sponsored student's engagement.

Students who have two instances of insufficient engagement

- 5.26 Where a sponsored student has two instances of low engagement throughout their placement period, they must attend a re-engagement meeting.
- 5.27 At the second re-engagement meeting, it must be communicated to the student that further low engagement will automatically result in their withdrawal. Their previous low engagement will also be considered as part of the meeting.

Students who have three instances of low engagement

- 5.28 Where a sponsored student has three instances of low engagement throughout their placement, the student will be contacted to advise that they have been withdrawn from the course. A report is made to UKVI within **ten working days**.

6. Engagement monitoring process for students on Pre-session English courses

- 6.1 Sponsored students on Pre-Sessional English for Academic Purpose (PEAP) courses are subject to different monitoring requirements than those studying at degree level or above.
- 6.2 Sponsored students on PEAP courses are required to attend a minimum of 15 hours of daytime classroom-based study per week with a minimum of 85% attendance.

Regular monitoring process

- 6.3 The School monitors the attendance of PEAP students using registers at taught sessions. The School administration team will run an attendance report every month.
- 6.4 The regular monitoring process for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students will be followed where there is less than 85% attendance across all sessions in the previous month.

Longitudinal monitoring process

- 6.5 There is an expectation for sponsored PEAP students to engage consistently throughout their studies; therefore, it is important to take a longitudinal view of their engagement.
- 6.6 Where a sponsored PEAP student has less than 70% attendance across three consecutive months, the School must inform Academic Registry, who will action the withdrawal and inform UKVI Visas and Immigration (UKVI) within **ten working days**.

7. Appealing a withdrawal decision

- 7.1 A sponsored student has the right to appeal against any withdrawal decision made under this supplement. Due to the timeframes in which withdrawals must be reported to UKVI, no extensions can be granted to this process.

Submitting an appeal

- 7.2 A Student Route Withdrawal Appeal must be submitted in writing to Academic Registry within **five working days** from the notification of withdrawal.
- 7.3 Appeals can only be submitted on the following grounds:
 - a. The student believes there has been a material error or irregularity by the University in the Student Route Academic Engagement Monitoring process; or
 - b. The student has additional material information which could not have been made previously available for consideration.
- 7.4 Where a student submits on the ground (a), they must indicate where they believe the University has failed materially to follow its procedures and provide evidence for consideration.
- 7.5 Where a student submits on the ground (b), they must include the evidence and explain why this information was not previously available for consideration.
- 7.6 Upon notification, Academic Registry will confirm receipt of the appeal to the student within **two working days**.

Consideration of the appeal

- 7.7 The entire appeals process will last no longer than **ten working days** following submission.

- 7.8 The appeal will be initially considered by the Appeal Investigator, who will be the Academic Registrar or a nominee from within Academic Registry. The Appeal Investigator will consider the appeal to determine if it falls within the permitted grounds.
- 7.9 If the appeal does not fall within the permitted grounds, this decision and its reasons will be communicated to the student. If the Appeal Investigator decides that the appeal has not been made on any permitted grounds, the decision is final, and there is no right to appeal within the University's process.
- 7.10 Whether a Student Route Withdrawal Appeal is upheld or not upheld, the Appeal Investigator shall provide the student with a Completion of Procedures Letter.

Investigating the appeal

- 7.11 If the Appeal Investigator considers that the Academic Appeal is submitted within permitted grounds, they will review the evidence and case submitted.
- 7.12 The Appeal Investigator may consult with the School and other departments to gain further information on the student's case. This can include but is not limited to their full academic record, any contact with Student Support Services, information retained by Academic Registry, and NTU Dashboard data.
- 7.13 The Appeal Investigator will consider all evidence, once collated, and reach any of the following decisions:
- a. The appeal is rejected;
 - b. The appeal is upheld. The student will not be withdrawn from their course and is expected to re-engage immediately; or
 - c. The appeal is upheld. The student will not be withdrawn from their course and is given a defined period of time (of no longer than **sixty days**), with support offered by the University, before they are expected to re-engage.
- 7.14 Academic Registry will notify the student, School and Employability (where applicable) of the decision. The decision of the Appeal Investigator is final, ending the University's procedure.

Third-party appeals

- 7.15 The University will only accept an appeal from a third party where the student has provided written authority for them to do so. Where consent is provided to and accepted by the University, all communications relating to this process will still be copied to the student to ensure they are informed. The University reserves the right not to engage with a third party if, in the view of the University, they do not behave in an acceptable manner.

8. Evidence

- 8.1 Sponsored students are responsible for providing appropriate evidence to support their reasons for low engagement/non-attendance. This requirement is communicated to students via guidance on Student Hub and through direct communications. The University reserves the right to verify any evidence submitted and, where it is not possible to authenticate the evidence, to deem this insufficient to support the claim.

- 8.2 Where evidence has already been provided to support a Notification of Extenuating Circumstances claim, this can also support reasons for low engagement/attendance. The evidence should be downloaded from the NEC Portal by the School administration team and copy stored on the student file. If no evidence has been submitted to support the original NEC, then this cannot be considered at the re-engagement meeting and evidence will need to be provided. Whether the evidence is acceptable is in line with the same measures as outlined within [Section 17A: Notification of Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).
- 8.3 Evidence submitted must:
- be written by appropriately qualified professionals who are independent of the student, including, for example, medical practitioners, personal tutors, Halls of Residence wardens, Student Support Services and other professionals.
 - be on official paper and signed and dated by the author. Email evidence may be accepted if it has been sent by the author from the official domain name of the author's organisation.
 - confirm that the circumstances were witnessed on the relevant date and are concurrent with the low engagement/attendance period.
 - be in English or be accompanied by an official translation into English.
 - be original or scanned copies of original documents.
- 8.4 Access Statements are not in and of themselves sufficient evidence to support low engagement or attendance and must be accompanied by supporting evidence to indicate why the conditions detailed in an Access Statement resulted in low engagement/attendance at a particular point in time.

9. Support for monitoring

- 9.1 Support and guidance are available from Academic Registry via ImmigrationCompliance@ntu.ac.uk.
- 9.2 Please refer students with questions about their immigration status to International Student Support at int.support@ntu.ac.uk.

Policy owner
CADQ

Change history			
Version:	Approval date:	Implementation date:	Nature of significant revisions:
Sept 2023	14.09.23	01.10.23	New policy.
Feb 2024	19.02.24	19.02.24	Update to monitoring process and frequency of contact points.

Equality Impact Assessment		
Version:	EIA date:	Completed by: