

Student Visa Holders Engagement Monitoring Procedures

Version 1 for Academic Year 2023/24

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This is an excerpt from the wider Sponsor Compliance Procedures and Processes document, available from the International Support and Compliance Team.

# Monitoring of Attendance and Engagement

**Senior Manager responsible for this process:** Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic

**Operational Responsibility: Head of** International Support and Compliance

Associated Regulation: General Student Regulations 2023-24

Section 1 – International Students; 5. After enrolment

## General

6.1 The monitoring procedures detailed in this document have been developed in accordance with [UK Visas and Immigration Guidance for Sponsors (July 2023)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-sponsor-guidance), and the University [Student Regulations](https://student.londonmet.ac.uk/your-studies/student-administration/rules-and-regulations/) and Engagement Policy.

6.2 These procedures will be reviewed regularly and are subject to change following guidance from the UK government or the wider University.

6.3 All teaching is expected to be on campus for all international visa students following the below procedures. Student visa holders will have access to online materials through Weblearn but this will not replace face to face teaching nor allow for any distance learning in accordance with UKVI Sponsor Guidance.

## Engagement Methods

6.4 All engagement activity will be monitored via access to registration data taken on a weekly basis.

6.5 Data from Weblearn for Tier 4/Student visa holders will be provided to the International Support team for review on a weekly basis as part of reporting from the Power BI suite of engagement reports.

6.6 Students who hold a Tier 4/Student visa in the UK will be expected to attend on campus activity unless there is good reason for them not to do so, such as illness or changes in personal risk factors where the Authorised Absence policy will come into force.

## Monitoring

6.7 Any student on a Tier 4 or Student visa in the UK must attend on campus teaching activity.

6.8 Attendance and engagement will be monitored on a weekly basis.

6.9 Students will be considered engaging where there is evidence of weekly activity. Engagement activities include, but are not limited to,

* Attending required lectures, seminars or tutorials
* Undertaking required laboratory work
* Undertaking research or fieldwork
* Submitting essays, assignments and attending examinations, on campus or remotely

6.10 Where a student is found to not be engaging, the International Support and Compliance team will reach out to students at the following points:

6.10.1 If a student has not engaged for two weeks without authorised absence or contact, we will provide a first formal warning, reminding students of their responsibilities and expect a response.

6.10.2 If a student has not engaged for three weeks without authorised absence or contact, we will provide a final warning and explain that at four weeks (30 days) we will be obliged to withdraw sponsorship

6.10.3 Once a student reaches four weeks of unauthorised absence or contact, they will be contacted by the International Support and Compliance team indicating the termination process will begin, including withdrawal of Student visa sponsorship.

6.11 Students completing the dissertation element of a taught post-graduate degree do not attend on campus lectures or activities in the same timetabled way as during taught lessons. However, they will be expected to remain engaged with their studies on a regular basis, and there should be engagement activity noted at least once every four weeks, including, but not limited to, meeting with a supervisor, visiting the library or other related activity. This will be monitored with gate access to the University and using the attendance systems in place at the University.

6.12 Students completing dissertations who do not demonstrate any engagement in four weeks, will be contacted by the University to remind them of their responsibilities.

6.12.1 At eight weeks of non-engagement, students will receive a first formal warning.

6.12.2 Once the student has reached 12 weeks of non-engagement, they will receive a second warning indicating the termination process will begin, including withdrawal of Student visa sponsorship.

6.13 Students completing an intensive programme of study, such as the Pre-Masters Programme, will be monitored in the same way described in this section, however, the outreach may take place earlier; first warning at one week of unauthorised absence and a second at two weeks, followed by review for termination. This is due to the intensive nature of teaching on the shorter programme and students are required to attend more regularly

6.14 Students following doctoral or post-graduate by research degrees will be expected to remain in contact with their supervisor as normal. They will be expected to engage directly with the University and their supervisor at least once every four weeks. This contact will be recorded using the attendance systems in place at the University.

6.14.1 Students following doctoral or post-graduate by research degrees (RQF 8) will be contacted at two months (eight weeks) of missed engagement or contact points and reminded of their responsibilities.

6.14.2 At 12 weeks without engagement, they will be contacted with a formal warning and reminded of their responsibilities

6.12.3 At 16 weeks of non-engagement, students will receive a final warning and the termination process will begin.

6.15 Students following doctoral or post-graduate by research degrees may, on occasion, request a period of overseas research. This period must be approved by the supervisor and notified to the International Support and Compliance team who will provide any required advice to the student. The student should continue to engage with their supervisor for the period of overseas research and will be subject to the same procedures as in 5.3.6.

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6.16 Students completing a period as Student Union Sabbatical Officers will be expected to remain in contact with their manager or supervisor in accordance to their role. The International Support and Compliance Team will request confirmation from the manager or supervisor that the Officer is engaging in activities as expected.

6.17 Where there is an instance of missing data for engagement monitoring, including, but not limited to, on campus registers or events, the International Support and Compliance team will reach out to relevant colleagues in Schools or professional services as required to request the necessary information to complete the above procedures, escalating as necessary through the management line until the situation is resolved and data obtained.

## Monitoring of Students on work placements

6.18 Guidance on work placements for Student/Tier 4 visa holders is detailed in the [Student sponsor guidance – Doc 2 para 6.4 to 6.23](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/939471/Student_Sponsor_Guidance_-_Doc_2_-_Sponsorship_Duties_2020-12.pdf).

6.19 Work placements for Student visa holders are permitted provided they are an integral and assessed part of the course. For London Met, this will be determined by whether the placement is compulsory to allow to practice in the profession e.g. Social Work (UG and PG), PGCEs/Teaching, Dietetics, Sports Therapy, Early Childhood Studies and MSc Computer Networking and Cyber Security (with placement) and these will be considered reportable under UKVI Sponsor guidelines. Students completing any other core or optional work placement modules will be able to do so under standard work allowance regulation. Further detail can be found in Appendix A – Categorisation of Placements.

6.20 No placement can be more than 50% of the total length of the course (in time) unless there is a statutory requirement. This will be detailed on the CAS.

6.21 For Student/Tier 4 visa holders completing a core work placement module, the International Support and Compliance Team will work with the Work Based Learning (WBL) team to ensure all are captured on a shared report.

6.22 The relevant placement team (for each School) and International Support and Compliance Team must be informed of the approved placement/experience before it starts, to facilitate timely reporting and monitoring activities required by Student Sponsor regulations. For reports and tracking of placement students – see section 9

6.23 The International Support and Compliance Team will maintain the attendance record for that module on a separate document based on timesheets or confirmations received.

6.24 Students completing work placement modules will also need to ensure they are engaging with the placement, whether this is in situ or remotely. Engagement will be monitored by

* completed weekly timesheets for all in situ external placements
* written weekly confirmation from the employer for all external placements taking place remotely and where the manager or supervisor is unable to provide a timesheet
* written weekly confirmation from the supervisor for students completing client briefs

6.25 Where a timesheet is submitted that indicates that a student has been absent from their placement for a full week the International Support and Compliance team and/or WBL team will contact the student to seek explanation and to instigate the authorised absence procedures where appropriate, seeking evidence if necessary.

## Absences

6.26 If a Student/Tier 4 visa holder is unwell or needs to self-isolate, they should follow London Met University processes and reach out to their Course Leader as well as visa.compliance@londonmet.ac.uk to inform the University they are unable to attend or engage in lessons.

6.27 The standard Authorised Absence policy will apply permitting absence of a maximum of three weeks in one term. Evidence may be requested to support the request. Satisfactory evidence could include but is not limited to:

* Doctor’s certificate or positive Covid-19 test
* Death certificate (as evidence of bereavement)
* Counsellor/Other health professional’s letter
* Hospital letter
* Police report

6.28 Where a student is unable to provide sufficient justification (which may include evidence as listed above) for an extended period of absence, this will be recorded and considered in regards to progressions and performance. If a student is found to have patterns of regular periods of unexplained absence, the International Support and Compliance team will review whether Student/Tier 4 visa sponsorship will be continued. (See section 9 Reporting).

# Appendix A

## Students visa holders on Work Based Learning Modules.

## Categorisation of Placements

The University is committed to providing all undergraduate students (and on certain postgraduate programmes) with the accredited Work Based Learning they need to help them become successful employees and/or employers in the future.

To ensure Student/ Tier 4 (General) visa holders are also able to enjoy this learning and remain compliant with the Home Office regulations on work placements, the following will apply. Work placements as defined by UK Visas and Immigration are those placements which are an integral and assessed part of the course.

1. **Compulsory placements** – All courses which include a compulsory placement module will be covered under this policy and defined as a UKVI reportable placement. A placement is compulsory if it is required to allow practice in the profession e.g. Social Work (UG and PG), PGCEs/Teaching, Dietetics, Sports Therapy, Early Childhood Studies and MSc Computer Networking and Cyber Security (with placement)
* Whether the placement takes place with an external company/institution or within London Met, they will be monitored for engagement and the International Support and Compliance Team will require evidence of engagement as described in section 6 of this document.
* Where the course placement is more than 50% of the total course length due to statutory requirement, this will be defined in the course specifications and will be included in the CAS when this is assigned to the student at admissions stage.
1. **Sandwich year placement modules** – Where there is an option to undertake a sandwich year Work Placement, these will be monitored as an external work placement (point 1), including the provision of timesheets and detailed placement information prior to the start of the placement.
* Students wishing to undertake a sandwich year work placement should be initially referred to the International Advice Service to provide the relevant advice to the student regarding the impact the addition of the work placement year may have on the student’s immigration status and visa.
* Students on approved placements will be expected to maintain contact with the University once every four weeks. This should be updated by the course or module leader on Evision and the details provided to the placement team for uploading to My Career. These placements will be reported to UKVI as in point 1 and section 6 of this document.
1. **Optional or Core Work Based Learning modules -**
* In any case where a student chooses to undertake an optional Work Based Learning module during their course, the placement cannot be more than 20 hours per week. This ensures that students are able to dedicate time to all other modules they are completing in the same semester.
* Students choosing this option will be expected to use their work allowance as indicated in the [Student Sponsor Guidance: Doc 2 Sponsor Duties](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/939471/Student_Sponsor_Guidance_-_Doc_2_-_Sponsorship_Duties_2020-12.pdf) and [Appendix Student of the Immigration Rules para ST26.1 -26.8](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-student). Therefore, these placements will not be reportable to UKVI.
* Student who will be undertaking a placement during semester time and not taking any other academic module will continue to be considered as being in term time (when the module is registered) and therefore the work allowance will be a maximum of 20 hours per week.
* Guidance will be given to students to ensure they have the information required to remain compliant under the obligations of their Student visa through University induction information, dedicated information in the course and module guidelines as well as information provided in a dedicated handbook for Student visa holders and through advisory communication at the start of every term for newly registered students.

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