

Tier 4/Student visa Engagement Monitoring guidance Temporary policy in response to Covid-19

Introduction

This guidance document sets out temporary concessions on Tier 4/Student visa engagement monitoring in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. Please note that UKVI have confirmed that these concessions will be kept under review and will be withdrawn once the situation returns to normal. However, UCL has received confirmation from UKVI that these concessions apply to all Tier 4/Student visa students studying in the 2021-22 academic year until 6 April 2022.

UCL takes its Tier 4/Student visa sponsorship duties very seriously and is committed to ensuring that those duties are adhered to. One such duty is the requirement to effectively monitor the engagement of those students who are sponsored on a Tier 4 visa. In order to comply with UKVI requirements, UCL must maintain robust evidence of Tier 4/Student visa student engagement records to demonstrate that engagement is recorded and that non-engagement is acted upon. Evidence should demonstrate academic engagement with the programme and as such, it is not expected that superfluous activities are created.

In addition to statutory requirements, UCL is committed to maintaining academic integrity and monitoring student engagement supports both student academic success and student welfare and wellbeing, which fosters a positive student experience.

Engagement

Departments are expected to be able to evidence weekly engagement for those who are registered on a Taught programme (i.e. a bachelors or masters degree). However during the masters dissertation period, monthly confirmation of engagement is permitted.

For Taught students, engagement evidence will be retained and monitored via RegisterUCL amongst other online teaching platforms. For those teaching spaces where card readers are installed, students will need to 'tap in' at all face-to-face teaching events with their Student ID card. This will ensure that their attendance is recorded.

Departments are expected to be able to evidence graduate research student engagement at least every 30 days in line with the UCL Doctoral School Code of Practice.

For PGR students, academic departments will retain evidence of engagement within the department.

Acceptable evidence

Acceptable evidence of a student's academic participation with their programme at a scheduled teaching event or meeting whether in-person or through remote means.

Types of acceptable evidence include:

- Logging on to the online learning portal, Moodle
- Evidence of attendance at seminars and tutorials (e.g. via Blackboard, Zoom, MS Teams)
- Evidence of attendance at lectures (e.g. Lecturecast)
- Online submission of coursework (e.g. via Turnitin/Moodle etc.)
- Confirmation of an academic meeting from personal tutor/departmental tutor/module convener

- Confirmation of an academic meeting from the student's supervisor or secondary supervisor
- Attendance at upgrade meeting
- Attendance at UCL Skills Development and Training events
- Records on the academic e-log to record supervisory meetings
- Annual progress reviews
- Viva
- Evidence of Skype or email engagement.

Non-engagement

UCL is required to demonstrate to UKVI that non-engagement is acted on swiftly and effectively. As such, students should make every effort to ensure they engage with all scheduled teaching events/meetings. Any Tier 4/Student visa student who fails to engage with any of their scheduled classes or meetings, without authorised absence or extenuating circumstances, risks their visa being withdrawn. Students should therefore contact their department if they are not able to attend scheduled teaching events or meetings. Should a student be unable to engage with their studies due to Covid-19, they must inform their department as soon as possible. UCL will not seek to withdraw visa sponsorship of any student who is not able to engage with their programme due to Covid-19. Departments must maintain records of students who are absent for this reason.

Please note: UKVI current rules state that if a Tier 4/Student visa student stops engaging with their learning for more than 30 days, whether overseas or in the UK, their sponsor must withdraw sponsorship.

As such, the Student Immigration Compliance will be informed of, and follow up on, a student's non-engagement if it is believed that the 30 day limit has been or may about to be breached and the absence is not due to Covid-19. The 30 days is counted from the first contact from UCL regarding a student's lack of academic engagement.

Any student found to have breached the 30 day limit with no extenuating circumstances will receive no further sponsorship from UCL; their Tier 4/Student visa will be withdrawn and they will be de-registered from their programme.

Links to UCL Support Services

[Wellbeing and Mental Health](#)

[Disability Support](#)

[Student Psychological and Counselling Services](#)

[Financial Support from UCL](#)

[Tier 4 Immigration Advice](#)

[Students' Union UCL](#)

Queries

Student queries: contact the Student Immigration Compliance Team via [AskUCL](#)