

Tier 4 Engagement Monitoring Policy 2018-19

Introduction

UCL takes its Tier 4 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 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.

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.

Academic departments will confirm academic engagement to the Student Immigration Compliance Team via the UCL Portico engagement monitoring task and will retain evidence of engagement within the department.

Acceptable evidence

Primary evidence: acceptable evidence of a student's academic participation with their programme at a scheduled teaching event or meeting.

Types of acceptable evidence include:

- Record of attendance at a tutorial/seminar/lecture
- Textwall service
- Attendance at a laboratory session
- Confirmation/evidence from personal tutor/departmental tutor/module convener that a face to face meeting took place on UCL premises.
- Attendance at examinations/oral examination
- Submission of coursework (submission via Turnitin/Moodle is permitted when there are no scheduled teaching events)
- Confirmation of attendance at a face to face 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
- **PGT and PGR ONLY:** evidence of Skype or email engagement is acceptable during the months of July and August only.

Supplementary evidence: the following can act as supplementary evidence but cannot be relied upon as the only proof of engagement:

- Moodle log-in
- Email correspondence with supervisor regarding project (outside of July and August)

Unacceptable forms of recording engagement: evidence which does not show student participation with their programme.

The following are never considered acceptable forms of recording engagement and should not be used under any circumstances:

- Email confirmation from a student that they are engaged with their studies
- Registers that do not include the date and module title of the teaching event

Study away from UCL (Taught)

Graduate taught students on a 12-month programme are expected to be engaged with their studies for the full 12 month duration. This includes the dissertation period as this is not recognised as a vacation period.

However, in person engagement is not expected for graduate taught students who are collecting data or researching away from UCL. Monthly confirmation of engagement with their supervisor via electronic means such as email and Skype is acceptable during this period.

If a Tier 4 student wishes to study away from UCL on non-academic grounds (e.g. the student wishes to return home to write up their dissertation), Tier 4 sponsorship will be withdrawn and no further engagement monitoring will be required.

Please read the Study Away from UCL regulations for further information: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-3-registration-framework-taught-programmes/section-3-attendance-and-absence>

Students must apply to Study Away from UCL: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/student-status/changes-your-studies/study-away-ucl>

Study Leave (Research)

If a graduate research student plans to conduct research or collect data away from UCL for more than 4 weeks they must make an application for Study Leave. In person engagement is not expected for students who are on authorised Study Leave. Monthly confirmation of engagement via electronic means such as email and Skype is acceptable during this period.

Please read the Study Leave guidance notes for further information: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/status/research-students/studying-away>

Students must apply for Study Leave: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/status/research-students/studying-away>

Study abroad and work placements

Tier 4 students who are on a study abroad programme or who are on a work placement remain sponsored by UCL and therefore engagement monitoring will continue. Academic departments will obtain confirmation of engagement from either the partner institution/work placement supervisor or from the student directly. Students must respond to their department in a timely manner in order to retain Tier 4 visa status. Students will be contacted on a monthly basis and may be asked to produce evidence of registration at the partner institution, copies of any work submitted, tutorial notes and confirmation of successful completion of the study abroad or work placement.

Authorised absence

Continued Tier 4 sponsorship of a student who is granted a period of authorised absence may be allowed if the period does not exceed 60 days and the student will still be able to complete their programme within the validity of the current visa. During a period of authorised absence, it is expected that the student will not be able to attend teaching events. They should still remain in contact with their department on a weekly basis via email or Skype.

Taught students will need to apply for authorised absence via the process in 3.2 of the UCL academic manual: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-3-registration-framework-taught-programmes/section-3-attendance-and-absence>

Graduate research students will need to obtain approval from their supervisor and this approval must be sent to the Student Immigration Compliance Team: visacompliance@ucl.ac.uk

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 attend all scheduled teaching events/meetings. Any Tier 4 student who fails to attend their scheduled classes or meetings, without authorised absence or extenuating circumstances, risks their Tier 4 visa being withdrawn. Students should therefore contact their department if they are not able to attend scheduled teaching events or meetings.

Non-engagement must not exceed 60 consecutive days during term-time for undergraduates and 60 consecutive days across the duration of study for graduate taught and graduate research students (term times do not apply to these students, however this period does not include Christmas and Easter closures).

Faculties and/or departments will notify the Student Immigration Compliance Team if they believe that the 60 day limit may be breached.

Any student found to have breached the 60 day limit with no extenuating circumstances will receive no further sponsorship from UCL; their Tier 4 visa will be withdrawn and they will be de-registered from their programme.

Links to UCL Support Services

Wellbeing and Mental Health: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/wellbeing>

Disability Support: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/disability-support>

Student Psychological and Counselling Services: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/student-psychological-and-counselling-services>

Financial Support from UCL: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/funding/financial-support>

Tier 4 Immigration Advice: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/immigration-visas/tier-4-visas/tier-4-immigration-advice>

Students' Union UCL: <http://studentsunionucl.org/>

Queries

Student Immigration Compliance Team
visacompliance@ucl.ac.uk