



Brunel University of London Visa Sponsored Student Attendance and Engagement Policy

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Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1. Academic engagement and attendance at timetabled teaching are vital in contributing towards student retention, progression, and attainment. Additionally, in the case of students sponsored for a student visa, engagement must be monitored as part of Brunel University's visa sponsorship obligations. The University is required to notify UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) of students who are deemed to be non-engaged on their programme of study. This would result in a student's de-registration from Brunel University and eventual cancellation of their visa.
- 1.2. It is also recognised that poor attendance and engagement can be an indicator that a student is experiencing personal difficulties that are impacting their studies. Monitoring this gives the University the ability to provide more proactive support for students who may require it.

- 1.3. Brunel University also reserves the right to use the monitoring procedures outlined in this policy to escalate any potential concerns about a student's health or safety as outlined in [Senate Regulation 11 \(Extraordinary Support for Study\)](#).
- 1.4. This policy outlines the expectations of Brunel University in relation to engagement for all enrolled visa sponsored students studying at any level (Pre-sessional English, undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research). It includes those enrolled at our partner Brunel Pathway College (BPC) and Study Abroad exchange students. Unless otherwise indicated, further references to 'students' in this policy are those being sponsored for either a student or Tier 4 (General) visa.¹
- 1.5. It must be noted that some professional and accredited courses carry additional attendance requirements, which must be met to fulfil the standards of the degree award. Students are required to adhere to these academic attendance policies to meet any professional accreditation requirements, even where they may be stricter than what is outlined in this policy.

2. **Expectation**

- 2.1. **All** Brunel students (including those not sponsored for a visa) are expected to attend and engage with **all** academic activities for the course on which they are enrolled. This includes physical attendance at timetabled teaching sessions and exams held on campus, as well as engagement with other scheduled academic activities such as coursework, dissertations, and research activity. Where applicable they are also expected to engage with Brunel's virtual learning environment, such as Brightspace, and devote suitable time to their studies outside of these specific academic events. Students must make appropriate arrangements for their accommodation, travel, and any employment schedule to support this requirement. The University will not accept any of these factors as a suitable explanation to account for poor attendance or engagement.
- 2.2. In terms of physical attendance at timetabled teaching events, students must ensure that they register their attendance via the SEaTS system via the multiple methods available. Students who experience technical difficulties that prevent them from doing so must seek support as quickly as possible to resolve this. Information on how to do this is available at: [Register your attendance for all teaching events](#).
- 2.3. Attendance is expected at all timetabled sessions regardless of their size (number of students) or if the session is video recorded, such as lectures. Students are expected to arrive on time and remain present for the duration of any session. Partial attendance by arriving late or leaving before completion will be recorded as absence.
- 2.4. Students should contact their personal tutor or research supervisor in the first instance if they expect to be absent from any timetabled teaching for short period of time (typically no more than two weeks), who will then inform the senior tutor and programme lead. Students who require prolonged absences due to circumstances such as ill health are expected to take a formal period of abeyance. In addition, students are

¹ The Tier 4 (General) immigration category was disbanded in October 2020 and replaced by the Student Immigration Route. However, the regulations around visa sponsorship remain the same and some students who enrolled beforehand will still have Tier 4 visas.

advised not to leave the UK for any more than 10 days during term time except in exceptional circumstances.

- 2.5. Outside of scheduled teaching and assessment that takes place on campus, students are required to remain engaged via regular academic contact with the University as appropriate. This can include, but is not limited to, research supervision and fieldwork, work/Study Abroad placements and coursework/dissertation supervision.
- 2.6. A core principle of visa sponsorship is that students must be physically present in the UK to engage in all on-campus activities and use University facilities to support their studies. Students who plan to leave the country and return home to work on/complete academic activities that could be done remotely i.e., dissertation/thesis writing are required to inform their personal tutor/supervisor. In these instances, the University may be required to withdraw visa sponsorship, leading to visa cancellation.
- 2.7. Postgraduate Researchers who have submitted their thesis are expected to remain engaged with their supervisor by preparing for their viva. Once the student has attended their viva and has received the panel's recommendations, engagement will resume as outlined in paragraph 3.4.
- 2.8. Postgraduate Research students may be permitted to leave the UK and return to their home country to undertake data collection with the permission of their supervisor. The students must remain engaged with their programme while abroad as outlined in section 3 below.
- 2.9. Brunel University's preferred method of contacting students, including with regards to engagement, is by email. Email communication will be sent to a student's Brunel email account. Students are expected to check their Brunel email account regularly. Failure to check email will not be accepted as mitigation should disciplinary proceedings arise because of non-engagement.
- 2.10. Students are expected to act with honesty and integrity with the systems and procedures used to monitor their attendance and engagement. They must be aware that any attempt to manipulate or falsify data within these may be regarded as misconduct under [Senate Regulation 6](#), for which there would likely be an appropriate sanction if proven.

3. Student Engagement/Attendance Monitoring

- 3.1. Brunel monitors student engagement and attendance in different ways depending on the level and structure of the course. These methods are broadly outlined below:

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Student Attendance and Engagement

- 3.2. Undergraduate and taught postgraduate students will have their attendance at all timetabled on-campus teaching monitored using [SEAtS](#) across all appropriate semesters.
- 3.3. The engagement of undergraduate and postgraduate students with non-teaching academic events will also be monitored i.e., exam attendance, coursework submission,

- 3.11. Students undertaking official roles as Sabbatical Officers at the Union of Brunel Students are subject to the Union's employee policy for attendance and leave. Although attendance is not specifically monitored, absence is managed according to this policy.

Brunel Language Centre and Brunel Pathway College (BPC) Students

- 3.12. Attendance of students enrolled at the Language Centre or BPC will be monitored internally by these departments, who have their own attendance policies and monitoring processes that differ from programmes delivered in the University's colleges. Attendance is typically monitored daily at most classes through the use of registers and measured by attendance percentages. Students are expected to adhere to these attendance policies at all times.

Engagement with other Visa Sponsorship Processes

- 3.13. In addition to continued academic participation, students are also expected to support Brunel's sponsor obligations by engaging with other procedures linked to the maintenance of an accurate student record. This includes timely registration and re-enrolment, prompt payment of tuition fees when required, and the maintenance of up-to-date UK address/contact details.

4. Student Non-engagement and Escalation Procedure

- 4.1. Brunel acknowledges that there may be instances of short-term absence due to ill health or other extenuating circumstances. Where evidence is available to support such absences, this will be accounted for when considering adequate engagement. However, students experiencing long term difficulties arising from changes in their personal, medical, or other relevant circumstances may be advised or required to temporarily withdraw from their studies (abeyance) and re-join when in a position to do so. Aside from extremely exceptional circumstances, the University is obligated to withdraw visa sponsorship of any student who cannot or does not engage with their studies for a period of sixty calendar days or more. However, escalation processes for non-engagement that have not been explained or authorised may be enacted in a shorter period, as outlined below.

- 4.2. Students should obtain evidence to account for any periods of non-engagement should they ever need to provide it to account for this. In cases where non-engagement is the result of a medical issue or appointment, the student should obtain medical evidence. The evidence must relate specifically to the time of the illness and must make clear that the student was medically unfit to engage with their studies at Brunel. It should confirm the date the student is fit to resume their studies. Letters from acupuncturists, herbalists or other alternative practitioners will only be accepted when supported by certification from GMC registered doctors. Medical evidence must bear appropriate authenticating features such the hospital or GP's practice stamp and/or letter headed paper.

- 4.3. Non-engagement can take different forms but will typically include one or more of the following patterns of student behaviour:

Persistent and/or prolonged absences (or a failure to register attendance) at timetabled

teaching events monitored using SEAtS. Students will be regarded as non-engaged where found to be absent without authorisation from a majority of timetabled events over a four-week period and/or where there have been prolonged periods of consecutive absences.

Routinely failing to complete scheduled assessed academic activities without accepted i.e. submission of coursework or dissertations or attend exams.

In relation to Postgraduate Researchers, non-completion of regular supervisory meetings or progression reviews

Failure to engage with any other scheduled forms of academic delivery i.e. work placements, dissertation supervision and Study Abroad Exchanges

- 4.4. Students can be deemed to be non-engaged at any point where Brunel's monitoring procedures identify this. In such cases, a student will be put through various stages of warning/intervention to improve their engagement. Students will be given the opportunity to provide reasons for short-term non-engagement and should be provided with appropriate pastoral support to rectify poor engagement.
- 4.5. However, students who fail to improve their engagement accordingly after intervention attempts and/or who fail to adequately account for this will be referred to the Compliance and Sponsorship Team for the final stage of escalation in accordance to [Senate Regulation 15 \(Immigration Compliance\)](#). This may lead to the de-registration of the student and the withdrawal of their visa sponsorship².

² For further details of these internal procedures, please refer to the 'staff policy': Visa Sponsored Student Engagement/Attendance Policy and Procedure