AGENT FRAMEWORK

1. INTRODUCTION

The following document outlines Keele University's framework for working with international education agents.

2. PURPOSE

This framework sets out the criteria and procedures for appointing and managing international education agents, supporting prospective students for undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes. Sub-degree programmes (International Foundation year, International Year 1 and Pre-Masters Programmes) are delivered through our Keele University International College (KUIC) and are out of scope for this framework.

The framework aims to consolidate a range of principles and processes designed to ensure our international agent network act with professionalism and integrity whilst representing the University and are compliant with the British Council Guide to Good Practice for Education Agents and the Agent Quality Framework.

3. SCOPE

This document provides an overview of the procedures to be followed in the appointment and management of international education agents to represent the University in overseas markets.

4. FRAMEWORK

Keele's objective is to work with a portfolio of long-standing agent relationships in markets where we can provide sufficient support to be successful. Our decision to grow or reduce the number of agents we work with is based on individual market objectives, but approach to quality will not differ.

The Marketing, Global Recruitment and Admissions (MGRA) directorate has sole responsibility to appoint, manage and terminate agent contracts and have designed processes to ensure principles of continual and annual reviews are embedded in our work.

When looking to **appoint new agents**, a standardised process has been developed to assess an agent's track record from quality, compliance and commercial lens. The process includes several stages: research regarding the agent; initial contact and detailed discussions with the agent regarding roles, responsibilities and expectations; a detailed application process with the collection and review of Agent references; development of a clear business case for adding the agent to the existing portfolio in line with wider recruitment strategy; several step internal approval process; then contracting, onboarding and training.

The agent network is subjected to both **continuous and annual review**. Continuous review is developed through a variety of well-developed channels including: agent discussions, agent training, internal data analysis and regular meetings between Recruitment, Admissions and Compliance teams to highlight any areas of concerns / best practice. These regular touch points allow any areas of concerns to be addressed at an early stage, as well as influence future agent training schedules.

The main **annual review process** takes place in November after the September intake (with a second lighter touch review held in February / March after the January intake) and is primarily designed to assess: performance, compliance, competency, market insight, relationship and future potential. The assessment will result in one of 3 categories: Keep, Monitor, Terminate. It is expected (and has occurred historically this way) that each annual review (as well as in cycle where concerns are raised) will result in agents being allocated to all 3 categories.

Detailed processes are held with the Global Student Recruitment, Partnerships and Access Unit within MGRA.

The agent contract provides full detail regarding agent and university responsibility and aligns to the Agent Quality Framework. Agents are paid a commission for successfully enrolled students in line with the individual contracts held within MGRA.

The following webpage provides guidance for prospective students regarding agents, their function, how to select them, how to raise concerns of their quality and Keele's commitment to the standards outlined in the Agent Quality Framework: Applying with an agent - Keele University

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities outlined below specifically related to agent approval, review and ongoing management.

Role	Responsibilities
Chief People Officer	Institutional level UKVI sponsor
Executive Director Marketing, Global Recruitment and Admissions	Final approval for new agents as part of detailed contract approval Overview of all recruitment, admissions and marketing strategy

Associate Director Global Student Recruitment, Partnerships and Access	Approval of new agents prior to Director approval and setting of wider recruitment strategy and approach Approval of responses to the AQF and wider agent network strategy Work closely with Admissions and Compliance teams to highlight any potential issues / good practise regarding applications received through agents.
Head of International Student Recruitment	Approval layer below Associate for new agents, agent processes and final sign off regarding agent annual reviews Lead agent communications, training and ongoing agent management across the team including annual reviews
Country Manager	Finding and reviewing potential agents prior to making the wider case for contracting. Conduct annual reviews and deliver agent training / management throughout the cycle.
Agent Coordinator	Coordinates agent communications and payment of agent commission fees
Admissions team	Process applications from agents and direct students throughout the cycle. Work closely with Recruitment and Compliance teams to highlight any potential issues / good practise regarding applications received through agents.
Compliance team	Uphold requirements as outlined by the UKVI regarding visa issuance and international student monitoring. Work closely with Recruitment and Admissions teams to highlight any potential issues / good practise regarding applications received through agents.

6. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The agent framework is designed to align with the wider University policies and procedures. These include, but are not limited to:

- Admissions Policy
- Fitness to Practise Code of Practice
- University Regulations
- Student Terms and Conditions
- Student Protection Plan
- Anti-Money Laundering policy
- Anti-Bribery Policy
- Conflicts of Interest Policy

7. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

The Agent framework is reviewed bi-annually within Marketing, Global Recruitment and Admissions, although it will also be tabled at the UKVI Compliance group for information, as well as explanation of any changes made to the policy with rationale.

8. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

Document Name	Agent Framework
Owner	Associate Director - Global Student Recruitment, Partnerships and Access
Version Number	1.1
Approval Date	20th October 2024
Approved By	University Executive Committee
Date of Commencement	30 July 2024
Date of Last Review	06 November 2026
Date for Next Review	06 November 2028
Related University Policy Documents	a) Admissions Policy b) Fitness to Practise Code of Practice c) University Regulations d) Student Terms and Conditions e) Student Protection Plan f) Anti-Money Laundering policy g) Anti-Bribery Policy h) Conflicts of Interest Policy
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