



REGULATION A1: VISA AND IMMIGRATION

(formerly Regulation 6: Visas and Immigration)

1. Abbreviations and definitions

- Academic Engagement: UKVI consider you to be academically engaging if you are actively and consistently following your course of study. Academic engagement is indicated by activities such as:
 - i. Attending required lectures, seminars or tutorials
 - ii. Undertaking required laboratory work
 - iii. Undertaking research or fieldwork
 - iv. Submitting essays, assignments and attending examinations.

This is not an exhaustive list and not all courses will contain all these elements

- CAS: Confirmation of Acceptance of Study, an electronic document sent from the University to the Home Office containing information about you and your chosen course, required for a Student Visa Application.
- ICA: Immigration, Compliance and Advice
- KDA: Keele Doctoral Academy
- Procedural Irregularity: Where university procedures have not been followed correctly.
- Programme of Study: This is the course or degree you are studying.
- UKVI: United Kingdom Visas and Immigration

2. Visa Compliance and Sponsorship

2.1 Keele University as Student Visa Sponsor

Our designated UKVI 'Authorising Officer' is responsible for students sponsored by the University. They must ensure that students and staff comply with United Kingdom Immigration Law, and meet the requirements set out in the [UKVI Sponsor Guidance](#).

2.2 Applicants' Suitability to study

2.2.1 In order for Keele University to provide Student Visa sponsorship, you, as an applicant must provide evidence that you are suitable for sponsorship and are able to fund your

studies. If you are a new applicant, you will have to pay a tuition fee deposit, if you are extending your current programme might have to pay a proportion of your tuition fee for the next or current academic year (as appropriate); before sponsorship is confirmed.

2.2.2 The University will not sponsor a student who is or has been an overstayer in the UK or may fall under the 'general grounds' for refusal in part 9 of the UK Immigration Rules. It is your responsibility to provide independently verifiable evidence that you are eligible for sponsorship.

2.3 Right to study checks

All students must evidence their right to study in the UK by providing one or more (as required) of the following documents:

- i. a passport;
- ii. valid visa ;
- iii. Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) Certificate or
- iv. any other documentation at enrolment, or at any other time as requested by the University.

2.4 Student Engagement

2.4.1 Keele University, as a Student Visa Sponsor, has an obligation to UKVI to monitor and record Student Visa holders' academic engagement with their course and will do so in line with the University's [Student Attendance and Engagement Policy](#). and the requirements set out by UKVI that student should have their studies terminated if they have not attended for a period of 60 calendar days.

2.4.2 You should live within a reasonable travelling distance of the University. Travelling distance is not an acceptable reason for failing to engage with your studies. The maximum travel time from the University should be no more than ninety minutes by public transport.

2.4.3 You must respond to communication from the University promptly and within the time frame specified. Communications regarding immigration status and visas will be sent to your Keele University email account in the first instance.

2.5 Length of Student Visa sponsorship

2.5.1 Keele University Student Visa sponsorship will last for your expected period of study, as defined when admitted, plus the period granted by UKVI, as defined in the [Immigration Rules Appendix: Student](#), paragraph ST25.3

2.5.2 Your eligibility for a Student Visa extension will be considered if you:

- change your programme of study and need a longer visa to complete the new programme. The ICA team will advise you whether the application can be submitted inside the UK or not.
- need to repeat modules and/or assessments with attendance. Following an Exam Board, Student Records will inform ICA of any Undergraduate or Postgraduate Taught students who have the opportunity to repeat modules or assessments so that their eligibility for a Student Visa Extension (in line with UK Immigration Rules Appendix: Student) can be determined.
- are a Postgraduate Research (PhD) student who needs longer to complete your studies. The length of your visa extension will be determined by the KDA within UKVI rules.
- add a permitted work placement or study abroad period to your course which will mean you need longer to complete your course.
- are elected as a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer.

No other extensions will be considered.

2.5.3 The request for an extension does not automatically guarantee student visa route sponsorship. Requests are subject to UKVI requirements and are granted at the discretion of the University.

2.5.4 If you need to return to the University to complete your studies outside of your student visa route sponsorship period, you will be supported to apply for a Standard Visitor Visa (subject to UKVI requirements).

2.6 Visa Refusals

If your student visa application is refused by UKVI, there will be a £50 charge for a new CAS, if you would like to re-apply. Alternatively, if you are an applicant, you can request a refund of your deposit, unless the visa was refused because of fraudulent documents. You will need to provide the UKVI decision letter to ICA.

3. UKVI requirements and cancellation of visas

3.1 Withdrawal of Sponsorship

3.1.1 If your Student Visa is sponsored by Keele University, you will have your sponsorship withdrawn, resulting in a cancellation of your visa, if you:

- withdraw yourself from the University.
- take a Leave of Absence ([Regulation B4](#)); when returning from a Leave of Absence you must get a new visa before returning to the University.
- Have your studies terminated by the University.

- complete your studies more than four months earlier than the expected end date stated on your CAS. This will be reported to UKVI as early completion.
- change your Immigration status and/or programme of study and are consequently no longer eligible for university sponsorship under a student visa route.
- do not have a valid and in date Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) Certificate.

3.2 Breach of Student Visa conditions

3.2.1 Students with a student visa sponsored by Keele University are required to adhere to the [UK Immigration Rules](#) at all times and must academically engage with their course. The University has a duty to notify UKVI if a student fails to academically engage with their programme of study. Keele University can terminate the studies of any student whose attendance remains below the level required in the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy, as set out in [Regulation B8](#), for 60 calendar days, the period defined as unacceptable by UKVI. In this instance a student can be removed from their course and their Student Visa sponsorship will be withdrawn.

3.2.2 If the University finds, or the University is informed by UKVI, that a student has breached their immigration conditions, their studies can be terminated. For example, working more than the number of permitted hours per week.

3.2.3 If UKVI informs the University that a student does not have permission to study, Keele University will terminate their studies.

3.3 Tuition fee/accommodation fee debt

Students with debt to the University, having failed to pay for tuition fees or University Accommodation costs within the required period, in accordance with [Charging and Payment of Student Fees Policy](#), can be terminated from their studies.

4. The Graduate Route

4.1 Upon successful completion of the course, ICA will check whether you meet the eligibility criteria for the Graduate Route and if satisfied, will report your successful completion to UKVI.

4.2 ICA will notify you via your university email address once this report has been made.

4.3 It is then your responsibility to apply for the Graduate Route if you want to switch to that immigration category.

4.4 ICA cannot advise on the Graduate Route but can provide information.

4.5 Keele University reserves the right to refuse to report your successful completion to UKVI if you have outstanding debt (tuition fees, accommodation, other) to the University.

5. Appeals

5.1 Appeals against denial of sponsorship

5.1.1 Applicants and students can appeal the decision to deny their sponsorship if there is evidence of procedural irregularity during the decision-making process. See above paragraphs 2 and 3 and [section C of Keele University Regulations](#).

5.1.2 Appeals must be submitted to the Head of ICA within 5 calendar days of being informed that sponsorship has been denied.

5.1.3 The Head of ICA will decide the result of any appeal within 15 working days. This communication will be sent to the email address provided with the appeal.

5.2. Appeals concerning potential cancellation of visas

5.2.1 Students can appeal against the University's decision to terminate their studies if there is evidence of procedural irregularity in the decision-making process.

5.2.2 Appeals must be submitted to the Deputy Academic Registrar within 5 calendar days of being informed of the termination of studies.

5.2.3 The Deputy Academic Registrar or nominee will decide the result of any appeal within 5 working days. This communication will be sent to the email address provided with the appeal.

5.3. Grievances against appeal decisions

5.3.1 Once the appeals procedure is complete, it is possible to submit a grievance to the University Council. A grievance can be submitted if there is evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the appeal process.

5.3.2 A grievance must be submitted in writing to the Secretary to Council within 14 calendar days of receiving the outcome of the appeal.

5.3.3 Students must comply with the requirements of the UK Home Office and will not be sponsored during the grievance proceedings.