



NMITE Visa Sponsored Students: Academic Engagement and Monitoring Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Student progression and achievement are strongly correlated with an appropriate level of engagement with the programme of study. NMITE recognises that attendance and participation are key elements in student retention, progression, achievement, and employability. Active and consistent student engagement is important not only for an individual's progression and achievement, but as a key component in the success of other students.
- 1.2. NMITE looks forward to welcoming international students to our learning community, recognising the diversity, social and intellectual benefits they can bring.
- 1.3. NMITE is required to monitor the academic engagement of all sponsored students under the UK Government's Points-Based Immigration Scheme (PBS). Specifically, [the Home Office Student Sponsor Guidance, Document 2: Sponsorship Duties](#), version 07/2023 requires that NMITE demonstrates compliance with its sponsorship duties and ensure that all sponsored students are engaged academically throughout the period of their study. This policy explains NMITE's approach to demonstrating how we meet these responsibilities. The policy applies to all NMITE's sponsored students.
- 1.4. The Sponsor Guidance provides example indicators of academic engagement and contact that can be used for the purposes of monitoring. These indicators will be recorded on the Attendance and Engagement Tracker for UKVI audit purposes.



- 1.5. NMITE is responsible for monitoring and reviewing students' academic engagement and withdrawing sponsorship for students who interrupt, are deemed withdrawn, or who are excluded from their studies. Sponsorship withdrawal will result in the student's visa being curtailed.

2. Expected Academic Engagement

- 2.1. All students are required to remain fully engaged with their course, as detailed in the Student Handbook and Attendance Monitoring Policy.
- 2.2. The circumstances of each sponsored student absence will be considered individually by NMITE.
- 2.3. If a student's circumstances are such that they are likely to be unable to engage with their studies on an ongoing basis, they may wish to discuss the possibility of a Leave of Absence with their Personal Tutor or Student Support Team member. Implications of Leave of Absence for sponsored students must be discussed with the Director of Registry and Student Life.
- 2.4. NMITE expected contact points are defined as:
 - i. **Course enrolment**
Evidence: (1) completion of in-person enrolment and (2) confirmation of start date
 - ii. **In person attendance to Registry with passport to sign an attendance register at the commencement of each module (every 4 weeks)**
Evidence: Attendance Register
 - iii. **Engagement in scheduled academic activities.**
Evidence: Reports from module leaders to Personal Tutors where students are absent.
 - iv. **Submission of assessments**
Evidence: Assessment profiles at the end of blocks of study
 - v. **Progression/Continuing student re-enrolment**
Evidence: Progression report / Re-registration completion
 - vi. **Successful completion of programme**
Evidence: terminal assessment report and award recommendation

3. Managing non-engagement

- 3.1. NMITE will follow UK Home Office Guidance for Sponsors with Probationary Status. This involves notifying the Home Office within 10 working days of the intention to withdraw sponsorship because of a student failing to demonstrate sufficient academic engagement. 3.2 outlines the process by which NMITE will assess whether a student has stopped engaging academically to the extent that the duty to report has been triggered.
- 3.2. Where a sponsored student fails to academically engage as outlined in 2.4.(iii), NMITE will follow the academic engagement monitoring process specified in the Attendance Monitoring Policy. In NMITE's intensive learning model, interventions begin at c.2 days absence although such absences are the result of a wide range of reasons that often involve multiple communications with students.
- 3.3. Where actions outlined in paragraph 3.2. do not satisfactorily re-establish contact, re-engagement or cause, escalation for a visa sponsored student would begin at two weeks consecutive absence. In that instance, NMITE will follow the process outlined in paragraphs 3.4 – 3.9 inclusive.
- 3.4. The Student Services Manager is responsible for taking action where a sponsored student has two consecutive weeks of non-attendance without prior authorisation. They will email the student inviting them to meet with the Student Support team (SST) and their Personal Tutor (PT). This is described as Stage 1 and takes place within 3 days of the notification.
- 3.5. Sponsored students who fail to re-engage with their studies for a further consecutive week, will receive a second email (Stage 2) from the Director of Registry and Student Life requiring them to attend a mandatory academic engagement meeting.
- 3.6. Students who fail to respond to both emails or without prior notification fail to attend the scheduled meeting with the Director of Registry and Student Life, will be forwarded to a non-engagement panel, comprising the Head of Learning and Teaching, the relevant Programme Lead, and the Director of Registry and Student Life. The purpose of this panel is to determine whether student visa sponsorship should be withdrawn. Referral to the non-engagement panel constitutes Stage 3.
- 3.7. Where a student has failed to engage, and no reasonable cause is established, the Panel will confirm withdrawal of the sponsorship, termination of studies, and will notify the Home Office immediately (or in compliance with prevailing Home Office guidance at the time).



- 3.8. The Panel's decision on the Stage 3 level will be communicated with the student in writing, outlining the reason(s) for it within 5 working days of the Stage 3 panel meeting.
- 3.9. A favourable outcome of the Stage 3 process does not in itself guarantee a return to study, as all factors, including the student's academic success and ability, as well as module(s) time missed will be considered. The student may be asked to interrupt and re-enrol with the next intake provided their academic and sponsorship status allows.

4. Review of a 'deemed withdrawn' or exclusion decision

- 4.1. If a student is not satisfied with the decision of the Stage 3 panel, they may request a review within 5 working days of the date they are notified.
- 4.2. They can do so by submitting a request in writing to the Director of Registry and Student Life by email to registrar@nmite.ac.uk. Requests for review must demonstrate that:
 - i. In the process of conducting the Academic Engagement monitoring procedure there was identifiable procedural irregularity.
and/or
 - ii. The outcome of the Stage 3 panel was not reasonable.
and/or
 - iii. New evidence is available which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to present earlier in the process.
- 4.3. The student should set out their concerns clearly, state which of the grounds in 4.2. is being invoked and, where possible and appropriate, provide supporting evidence.
- 4.4. A review panel will be convened comprising the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Academic Officer, another senior academic. the. Together they will review the request, and all information collated for the review, together with any new evidence presented.
- 4.5. The outcome of the review panel may be to:
 - i. Uphold the original outcome; or
 - ii. Overturn the original Stage 3 panel decision.
- 4.6. The Review stage decision is final and will be communicated with the student in writing, usually within five working days from the date the panel is convened.

5. Other instances of non-engagement

- 5.1. If a sponsored student elects to withdraw from their sponsored course of study before travel to the UK, NMITE will report this to the Home Office within 10 working days of becoming aware of the withdrawal.
- 5.2. Students should not delay the start date of their studies after they have been granted UK entry clearance. In instances of delay, sponsored students should contact NMITE as soon as possible to discuss a planned arrival date and whether the sponsored course can still be completed within the dates stated on their visa. If the course can no longer be completed within the visa validity, NMITE will consider whether a new Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) can be issued to allow the student to vary the dates of their UK visa. NMITE is not obligated to assign a new CAS to such a student.
- 5.3. Where a sponsored student fails to engage with contact point 2.4.(i) (course registration and enrolment) and no agreement exists for a fresh CAS to be assigned, NMITE will follow UK Home Office Guidance for Sponsors. At the time of writing this requires notifying the Home Office within 10 days of the enrolment period ending, including the reasons for non-enrolment (such as refusal of a UK visa).
- 5.4. If a sponsored student wishes to defer their studies after they have arrived in the UK, this requires the approval of NMITE. NMITE may continue to sponsor for up to a maximum of 60 days providing it is agreed that the student can complete their course within their existing period of permission. In all circumstances, NMITE will report the deferral to UK Visas and Immigration within 10 days of the deferral date.
- 5.5. If NMITE thinks that the student will not resume studies after 60 days, NMITE will withdraw sponsorship and report this to UK Visas and Immigration within 10 days.
- 5.6. In exceptional circumstances, such as serious illness or injury, NMITE may continue to sponsor a student for longer than 60 days, providing the student can still complete their course within their existing period of permission when they resume their studies. NMITE will assess such deferral requests on a case-by-case basis and is not obligated to continue to sponsor. The student will be required to provide acceptable evidence of the reason for deferral.
- 5.7. If a student ceases study with NMITE for any other reason, NMITE will inform UK Visas and Immigration of withdrawal of sponsorship within 10 days of the student withdrawing from study.

6. Further monitoring and reporting

- 6.1. If there is a significant change in a student's circumstances, such as a change in study location, a change of course, or anything that suggests that they are breaking the conditions of their permission to stay in the UK, NMITE will report the change to UK Visas and Immigration within 10 days of becoming aware of it.
- 6.2. If NMITE has cause to reasonably suspect that a sponsored student is not a genuine student, this will be reported to UK Visas and Immigration as soon as is possible.
- 6.3. NMITE will consider that a student has completed their UK studies in accordance with the Sponsor Guidance when:
 - i. they have successfully completed their course.
 - and
 - ii. they have met the qualification requirement.
 - and
 - iii. they have met the requirement for studying in the UK.
- 6.4. NMITE will comply with the Successful completion reporting duty outlined in Sponsor Guidance where this is appropriate.



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