

# STUDENT VISA ADMISSIONS and UKVI POLICY

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| CATEGORY         | <b>External Relations</b>                                    |
| POLICY OWNER     | <b>National Committee Liaison and Admissions Lead</b>        |
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| APPROVED BY      | <b>Director of Philanthropy, Partnerships and Engagement</b> |
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## 1. Policy Purpose

With the recent changes due to Brexit, all students from outside the United Kingdom and Ireland now require a visa to enter and pursue their studies.

UWC Atlantic (the College) and its Governing Body fully recognises its responsibility under Immigration Legislation and Regulation to enable attendance at the College by students from outside the UK.

United World College of the Atlantic Limited has a responsibility to document the visa status of our students. This is a legal requirement within the UKVI Department. This policy outlines the processes we will follow to comply with the UKVI requirements.

### 1.0 Key Terms

1.1 Whilst every effort has been made to outline our responsibilities in as clear, concise, and easy to understand manner as possible, we do need to use certain terms throughout this policy.

1.2 Definitions of terms used in this document are as below:

- **Authorising Officer** – responsible for ensuring that compliance duties placed on the organisation under the sponsor license are met.
- **Key Contact** – the main point of contact between the organisation and UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).
- **Level 1 User(s)** – responsible for carrying out the day-to-day SMS activities, from assigning certificates of sponsorship and reporting migrant worker activities, to updating the SMS and renewing the sponsor license. At least one Level 1 user must be appointed, including at least one employee.
- **Level 2 User(s)** – are not mandatory, but can be appointed to perform day-to-day SMS functions with fewer permissions than Level 1 users.
- **UKVI** - UK Visas & Immigration, also commonly referred to as UKVI, is the division of the Home Office responsible for the UK's visa system.
- **BRP** - Biometric Residence Permit. It is a residence permit which holds a migrant's biographical details (name, date and place of birth) and biometric information (facial image and fingerprints), and shows their immigration status and entitlements while they remain in the UK.
- **CAS** - A Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies. CAS is a unique number which confirms a student has been accepted on a course of study in the UK. It is an electronic document

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generated using the Home Office's system and is essential in order to make a successful Student visa application.

## **2. Policy Statement**

All members of staff of UWC Atlantic ('the College') are expected to recognise the importance of holding a license to sponsor international students to come to the UK under the Student and Child Student routes, in keeping with the College's duties established by UKVI.

To this end, it will take the appropriate action within the legislation, regulation and guidelines to ensure that it acts lawfully and responsibly in its dealings with United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI), its officers, and agents.

It is the College's policy to assure that we follow the right processes and procedures to be compliant with our role as visa sponsors.

The procedures set out in this policy are designed to follow the compliance duties established by UKVI in the Student Sponsor Guidance.

## **3. Policy Implementation**

### **3.1 The College's Commitment to Compliance**

The College is recognised as a 'Highly Trusted Sponsor' by United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI), and is committed to satisfying the necessary conditions to retain that status, or any other of a similar or higher designation that may be introduced by UKVI at a later date, thus enabling it to facilitate the admission and attendance by students from outside the UK. The College is mindful that the awarding of Highly Trusted Sponsor Status is subject to the satisfactory compliance with exacting standards as set out by UKVI and its agents, and will strive to meet those standards, and comply with them.

As part of its commitment to continuing to act as a Tier 4 Sponsor with Highly Trusted Sponsor Status, the College will submit itself to, and comply with, arrangements for Educational Oversight Inspections by the appropriate authority.

### **3.2 Relationships with UK Visas and Immigration**

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The College will renew its Sponsorship Licence as may be required, and ensure that applications for renewal are made in good time and will satisfy the process and procedures applicable at the time of renewal.

The responsibility for sponsoring a student will be taken seriously and processes and procedures followed rigorously to limit the possibility of abuses to the system and allow only bona fide applicants to enter the United Kingdom lawfully.

The College will ensure that offers of Confirmations of Acceptance of Studies are made in good time and will satisfy the processes and procedures applicable at the time of issue, and that appropriate records are kept of their issue, and where appropriate, withdrawals and circumstances regarding subsequent non-issue of visas.

After receiving the nomination documents for students put forward by National Committees, the Admissions Department will conduct interviews with each nominee. This important step ensures the authenticity of their student status and evaluates whether they embody the essential skills and qualities that the college values in its student community.

The College will keep detailed records of all non-UK students, including application forms and associated correspondence; contact details; copies of passports and visas; a copy of any residency permit; copies of reports and examination results; and details of plans post-college.

The College will, using appropriate communication methods, notify UKVI of:

- Students whose initial Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies does not lead to the issue of a visa;
- Students who do not arrive to take up their place;
- Students who withdraw from the College;
- Students who are excluded from the College;
- Students who absent themselves without permission for a significant period;
- Any additional information which will support UKVI in the discharge of their duties.

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### 3.3 Record Keeping

In order to comply with the UKVI procedures, the college must keep a record of documents for each student enrolled under the Student route or Child Student route (including migrants previously enrolled). Annex A provides further details of these procedures.

## 4. Related Information

### 4.1 Related Policies

- Admissions Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Safeguarding and Respectful community policy

### 4.2 Additional information

Students who are sponsored are particularly vulnerable to a number of safeguarding risks such as child trafficking, exploitation and being missing from education. All overseas students will have an Individual Welfare Plan (IWP) by the end of their first month at the college to ensure any specific additional needs relating to their status as overseas students are identified and can be supported. This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Safeguarding and Respectful Community Policy** and the **Attendance policy** (can be found in section 4.1).

## 5. Policy Measurement and Reporting

The Student Visa Admissions and UKVI Policy is reviewed annually by the External Relations Committee of the Board and the Head of Admissions and National Committee Liaison, as part of the review cycle and as part of the whole College development plan. Part of this review process will consider to what extent the policy is being used as an active working document.

The policy is communicated to the school community electronically on **Every** and is available on the UWCA website.

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**Staff with key responsibility for supporting the implementation of this policy:**

Leadership Team Members

Managers

Pastoral Staff (House Mentors and Tutors)

Admissions Office

Academic and Safeguarding Department

## 6. Annexes

### Annex A - Record Keeping

#### 1.1 Record Keeping

According to the UKVI, for each migrant enrolled under the Student route or Child Student route (including migrants previously enrolled) the college must keep the following documents:

- a) Copy of each sponsored migrant's current passport. All pages should be copied showing any personal identity details including biometric details, stamps, or immigration status document including their period of permission to stay in the UK.
- b) EEA nationals (who have a chip checker passport) applying under the Student or Child Student routes after the end of the transition period will receive a biometric immigration document in the form of an online immigration status rather than a vignette and a physical Biometric Residence Permit. The validity of the Student or Child Student permission will be confirmed on the digital status. Sponsors should record information received from the share code in order to meet the record-keeping requirement.
- c) The college must always check the date on which the migrant entered the UK, to ensure they entered during the validity of their Student or Child Student permission and therefore have the ability to study. If a student uses an e-gate, they will not have an entry stamp; the college must still check the date of entry by asking to see other evidence such as, but not limited to, e-tickets or a paper or electronic boarding pass. The college must then record the date the student entered the UK, but does not have to retain evidence of the date of entry.
- d) Copy of the migrant's biometric residence permit (BRP) or digital status. Where the Student or Child Student has digital status, you must keep an electronic copy of the status.
- e) Record of the migrant's absence/attendance, this may be kept either electronically or manually.
- f) A history of the migrant's contact details to include UK residential address, telephone number and mobile telephone number. This must be kept up to date with any changes to these details.
- g) Copies or originals where possible of any evidence assessed by the college as part of the process of making an offer to the migrant; this could be copies of references, or examination certificates.

#### 1.2 Record Keeping procedures

##### 1.2.1 Process to collect boarding passes:

- a) The Admissions Office will email parents of all students to confirm travel arrangements to request evidence of flight numbers and travel dates e.g. e-tickets.
- b) Students will be asked to share evidence of transport (e-ticket or boarding pass) within 24 hours of arriving in the care of the college. This is to provide proof that student arrival is in

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compliance with the date specified on the visa. A passport stamp may also be shown as evidence of arrival and/or departure date.

- c) The Admissions officer will share a list of any students who have not submitted their passport and travel evidence to House Mentors and Tutors who are expected to support the collection of this evidence. Students will not be permitted to commence their course without provision of the evidence stated above.

### 1.2.2 Process to collect passports:

Passports are required to be checked as soon as the students arrive, to avoid any breach in compliance.

- a) At the commencement of the academic course, the Admissions Office will provide a list of sponsored students to relevant pastoral staff to support with gathering evidence for sponsorship compliance.
- b) Students will be asked to submit the passport linked to their visa to the Admissions Office via House Mentors as part of a mandatory checking process.
- c) For students who require a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), this will be provided to the student on return of their passport following the passport collection / check.
- d) Student passports must be stored securely and returned to students without delay when they are no longer required.

### 1.2.3 Process to distribute BRPs and return passports:

- a) As part of the orientation process for new students, the Admissions Office will organise a briefing meeting to discuss conditions and requirements relating to the Biometric Residence Permit (BRP). Attendance at this briefing is compulsory for all sponsored students. **The date will be established with the help of the VP Student Life.**
- b) The Admissions Office checks and stamps all relevant passports in accordance with the UKVI requirements.
- c) The Admission Officer (at the meeting with students) explains what the BRP is for and how to use it. They attach the BRP to the passport before returning passports to students.
- d) Tutors will have to remind students of this important meeting and make sure that all students required attend.

### 1.2.4 Process to check students' boarding passes at the airport (Student Life Coordinator)

- a) Following arrival students will attend an agreed meeting point with the appointed member of staff (Student Life Coordinator) to be checked in.
- b) The Student Life Coordinator will find the student on the list and ask the student to show the stamp on their passport or boarding pass.
- c) If they have arrived before the day of arrival, the Student Life Coordinator will inform the Head of Admissions and make a note on the list.

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- d) College Staff will double check the names of the students when they are boarding the coach from the Airport.

### **1.2.5 Process to monitor students' whereabouts during breaks**

- a) In advance of each school break, parents will be asked to confirm where each student will reside during the break.
- b) Parent(s)/carer(s) will be asked to provide a destination address for the student and travel details.
- c) Travel details will include dates of each flight, flight numbers, details of transport arrangements to/from the airport and any addresses the student might reside at between flights.
- d) Information will be collected with support from pastoral staff (House Mentors and Tutors).
- e) A record of information gathered will be saved in the student's personal file as captured in the Leave of Absence (LOA) form.

### **1.2.6 Process to do student withdrawals and keep attendance:**

- a) VP Academics must inform the Head of Admissions when:
  - A student is absent for more than 10 consecutive sessions
  - A student has withdrawn from the college
- b) VP Academics is responsible for sending the withdrawal form to the student and when the form is completed to share it with the Admissions office.
- c) The Head of Admission notifies UKVI of the withdrawal of the student via SMS.
- d) The Admissions Office keeps the withdrawal form in the records.
- e) The Admissions Office will notify UKVI of sponsored students who fail to meet the attendance requirements as stipulated in UKVI guidance. The notification points for this will be at the end of each academic term.

## **Annex B - Supporting Documentation**

- [Student Sponsor Guidance Document 2: Sponsorship Duties - UK Government](#)
- [Student Sponsorship Guidance Document 3: Student Sponsor Compliance - UK Government](#)
- [Workers, Temporary Workers and Students: guidance for sponsors Appendix D: keeping documents – guidance for sponsors](#)

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