

Course Engagement Monitoring Guidance for UAL Students with a Tier 4/Student Visa

Attendance is a key contributor to successful studies and we would like to ensure you get the most out of your time at UAL.

As your student visa sponsor, the University is required by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to monitor your engagement with your course.

If you are studying at UAL and **you have applied for or received your Tier 4 or Student visa**, this guidance will explain to you what course engagement is required and how this will be monitored. You must engage with all compulsory sessions, meet deadlines for submission of work and communicate with academics and other relevant staff members.

As long as you remain fully engaged with your course, the University will not withdraw you from your course and sponsorship of your student visa will still be valid.

Read the [University Attendance Policy for HE students](#).

UKVI Concessions

Blended learning requires students to be physically in the UK to attend their studies in person, whilst undertaking some study elements online.

The University must have face-to-face contact with sponsored students who are doing blended learning in the UK at least twice per month during term time, on a rolling four-week basis.

Distance learning is learning that takes place entirely remotely, without any face-to-face teaching or research activities on sponsor sites. In line with UKVI rules, from 27 September 2021 onwards, the University cannot provide tuition which is delivered entirely remotely to students who are **in the UK**, there must be face-to-face learning.

UKVI policy allows sponsors to continue to provide distance learning for students who are **outside the UK**. Current University policy requires Research students to transition to blended learning by 06 April 2022 and all other students by 10 January 2022.

Attendance and engagement monitoring

1. Undergraduate and Postgraduate Courses

Blended Learning

If you are UAL student with a Tier 4/Student visa and studying via blended learning on an undergraduate or postgraduate course, your College Academic Registry Team will monitor your engagement with face-to-face academic sessions such as:

- Unit briefings
- Tutorials

- Presentations
- Lectures/seminars

From all your face-to-face academic sessions, your College will monitor your engagement once every two weeks.

What will happen if I miss face-to-face academic sessions over two consecutive fortnights?

If you miss face-to-face academic sessions over two consecutive fortnights, your Course Administration Team will ask you to complete a Course Engagement Form to ensure that:

- You are given the opportunity to explain your non-engagement and provide evidence if applicable
- you understand the University's engagement policy
- you understand the conditions of your student visa in regards to engagement
- you understand the authorised absence process
- you understand the conditions under which you will be allowed to return to studies and the consequences of further non-engagement.

If you fail to return your completed Course Engagement Form to your Course Administration Team within 7 calendar days you will be suspended from your course and your access to online College facilities will be removed until further notice.

If you return your completed Course Engagement Form to your Course Administration Team within 7 calendar days you will be able to continue your studies.

What happens if I am suspended from my course for failing to return my Course Engagement Form?

If you are suspended from your course for failing to return your Course Engagement Form within 7 calendar days, you will be sent a final warning and given an additional 7 calendar days to return your completed Course Engagement Form.

If you do not return your completed Course Engagement Form within the additional 7 calendar days, your Course Administration Team may withdraw you from the University.

If you are withdrawn from the University, your withdrawal will be reported to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and your student visa will be curtailed (cancelled) by UKVI. You will then need to leave the UK within 60 days.

If you are studying at UAL with a Tier 4/Student visa, you must engage fully with your course in line with the conditions of your visa. Please note, repeated patterns of non-engagement may result in you being suspended from your course and could put you at risk of being withdrawn from the University.

Distance Learning

If you are UAL student with a Tier 4/Student visa and studying via distance learning (studying online only from overseas) on an undergraduate or postgraduate course, your College Academic Registry Team will monitor your engagement **on a weekly basis**.

What will happen if I miss two consecutive weeks of academic sessions?

If you miss two consecutive weeks of academic sessions, your Course Administration Team will ask you to complete a Course Engagement Form to ensure that:

- You are given the opportunity to explain your non-engagement and provide evidence if applicable
- you understand the University's engagement policy
- you understand the conditions of your student visa in regards to engagement
- you understand the authorised absence process
- you understand the conditions under which you will be allowed to return to studies and the consequences of further non-engagement.

If you return your completed Course Engagement Form to your Course Administration Team within 7 calendar days you will be able to continue your studies.

If you fail to return your completed Course Engagement Form to your Course Administration Team within 7 calendar days you will be suspended from your course and your access to online College facilities will be removed until further notice.

What happens if I am suspended from my course for failing to return my Course Engagement Form?

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If you do not return your completed Course Engagement Form within the additional 7 calendar days, your Course Administration Team may withdraw you from the University.

If you are withdrawn from the University, your withdrawal will be reported to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and your student visa will be curtailed (cancelled) by UKVI. You will then need to leave the UK within 60 days.

If you are studying at UAL with a student visa, you must engage fully with your course. Please note, repeated patterns of non-engagement may result in you being suspended from your course and could put you at risk of being withdrawn from the University.

What if I am unable to engage with my blended or distance learning for up to 2 weeks during term time?

If you have an illness or other reason that prevents you from engaging with your studies for up to 2 weeks during term time, you must email your Course Leader and your Course Administration Team. You will be required to produce evidence to support your absence.

What if I am unable to engage with my blended or distance learning for 2 to 4 weeks during term time?

If you have an illness or other reason that prevents you from engaging with your studies for 2 to 4 weeks during term time, you must email your Course Administration Team and request an Application for Authorised Absence Form.

You must send the completed form to your Course Leader with supporting evidence at least two weeks before you plan to be away. Once you have received approval from your Course Leader, you must send the form and supporting evidence to the Immigration Compliance team ImmigrationCompliance@arts.ac.uk who will also assess the request.

The Immigration Compliance Team will assess your application and supporting evidence, and confirm by email to your UAL email account the result of the application.

If an application for authorised absence is not authorised, any missed contact points will be marked as non-attendance.

What is considered and authorised absence?

In exceptional circumstances, you may require a period of absence. If the absence is approved, this will prevent you from being in breach of the conditions of your visa.

The authorised absence process is different to the extenuating circumstance process or the Covid-Related Authorised Absence which is only for students who are overseas or in quarantine following their arrival in the UK (if required by the UK government). The Covid-Related Authorised Absence is only valid for the Autumn term and students must arrive in the UK by 10 January 2022 at the latest.

If you believe your absence will impact your assessment, you must also submit a separate claim for [extenuating circumstances](#).

You can apply for an authorised absence under the following categories:

- Illness. Extended periods of illness must be accompanied by evidence e.g. medical certificate, doctors' note.
- Attendance at appointments/commitments considered inflexible e.g. hospital appointments, religious requirements, court attendance.
- Mitigating circumstances e.g. bereavements, serious illness of a close family member, childcare, technical issues related to online study.

All authorised absence requests will be considered on an individual basis and evidence will be required.

All evidence should be in English, signed, officially stamped and in headed paper. If the original documents are not in English, you must obtain an official translation.

Please note, we can only support absences for up to 4 weeks during term time. If you're absent for longer than 4 weeks you may need to consider taking [Time Out](#).

Changes to your circumstances

Remember to inform the Immigration Compliance team of any changes to your circumstances by emailing: ImmigrationCompliance@arts.ac.uk

Changes may include:

- If you have lost your passport or visa or it has been stolen
- If you decide to withdraw or take time out from study

- If you switch to a different immigration category during your studies
- If your visa or passport expires during your course and you receive a new one
- If you have a visa refusal.

For immigration and visa advice, contact the [Student Advice Service](#).

2. Postgraduate Research Courses

As per UKVI guidance, UAL can continue to sponsor students who are starting or continuing their studies through remote learning if they are studying outside the UK under a Covid-related Authorised Absence, provided they intend to transition to face-to-face learning by 6th April 2022.

If students stop engaging with their remote learning for more than 30 days, the Student Sponsor must withdraw sponsorship as per UKVI rules.

From 7th April 2022 onwards, all students who are in the UK must have face-to-face academic contact at least once per month during term time.

The engagement of Research Students studying on Student Route/Tier 4 visas will be monitored using the following points of contact:

Remote Learning

- One recorded **remote** academic contact per month and
- Monthly email contact between the Student Team Research Co-ordinator (Emily Ruff) and the Director of Studies.

Face-to-face Learning

- One recorded **face-to-face** academic contact per month and
- Monthly email contact between the Student Team Research Co-ordinator (Emily Ruff) and the Director of Studies.

Academic Contact can include:

- RNUAL attendance: Blocks 1-3 & and Study Days
- Supervisory Meetings
- Submission of the Application for Registration
- The Confirmation Meeting
- The Annual Report
- Thesis submission
- Viva Voce
- Online Course Activity: this can be through Skype, Microsoft Teams or similar technology and could include phone meetings or meaningful email communication between academics and students.

Key points

- There will be at least one academic contact for each month; it is not possible for students to have a number of academic contacts in a short period of time which can then be averaged out over the year.
- The type of contacts throughout the year will vary for each student.
- At the start of each academic year the student is asked to agree their plan of academic contact with their supervisory team.
- There will be one email contact each month between the Student Team Research Co-ordinator and the Supervisor.
- The monitoring runs from October to September each year and term dates do not apply.

Example plan of academic contact based on a full-time student in their 1st year:

- October – RNUAL Registration Study Day
- November - Supervisory meeting
- December - Supervisory meeting
- January - Supervisory meeting
- February - RNUAL Block 2 attendance
- March - Supervisory meeting
- April - Supervisory meeting
- May - Supervisory meeting
- June - RNUAL Block 3 attendance
- July - Supervisory meeting
- August - Supervisory meeting
- September – Supervisory Meeting

How will it work?

Academic Contact

- The Student Team Research Co-ordinator, Emily Ruff, is responsible for monitoring this policy (e.ruff@arts.ac.uk)
- At the start of each academic year the student sends their agreed academic contact plan to researchdegrees@arts.ac.uk
- Students should email the document confirming their academic contact by the end of each month. At the end of each month the Student Team Research Co-ordinator will check the academic contact plan for each student and email students if the document is missing. Documents should be submitted as follows:
 - **Supervision Record Sheets:** Students should email the completed form, signed by themselves and their supervisory team, to researchdegrees@arts.ac.uk by the end of the month during which the supervisory meeting took place. Supervisors should be copied in.
 - **RNUAL Attendance:** The Research Student Team will check registers. Students need to sign into the event using their full name.
 - **Application for Registration:** Students should submit this form, signed by themselves and their supervisory team, to researchdegrees@arts.ac.uk
 - **Confirmation Meeting Reports:** The Director of Studies will submit this form to researchdegrees@arts.ac.uk

- **Annual Reports:** Students should email the form to researchdegrees@arts.ac.uk
- **Thesis Submission:** Students should email their thesis and submission declaration form to researchdegrees@arts.ac.uk or submit in person to a member of the Research Student Team by appointment.
- **Viva Voce:** Examination in person or online, confirmed by submission of the Joint Final Report by the Viva Voce Chair.

For Students in **Writing Up Status** only 5 supervision meetings are scheduled for the year, so the student may schedule a meeting or email contact with the Student Team Research Coordinator in lieu of a meeting with their Supervisor. These meetings will be recorded in a Supervision Record Sheet, be signed by the student and Student Team Research Coordinator and submitted to researchdegrees@arts.ac.uk

Supervisor Email

- The Student Team Research Co-ordinator, Emily Ruff, is responsible for monitoring this policy (e.ruff@arts.ac.uk)
- Each month the Student Team Research Co-ordinator will email the Director of Studies requesting an update on student engagement.
- The Director of Studies will reply to the email giving an update on student engagement.
- The Director of Studies update will be used as evidence of course engagement and will be recorded on the students' engagement record.

Non-Engagement Process

First Intervention – Course Engagement Form

- If a student shows failure to engage for two consecutive points of contact (academic contact or supervisor email), there will be an intervention. The Student Team Research Co-ordinator will email the student a course engagement form using their College and personal email addresses.
- The student will sign part 1 of the course engagement form and return the form by email to the Student Team Research Co-ordinator.
- A member of the Course Team will sign part 2 of the course engagement form and the Student Team Research Co-ordinator will keep a record of the form for auditing purposes.
- If the student fails to complete the form within 5 working days, the Student Team Research Co-ordinator will suspend the student and give them an additional 5 working days to return the form. If the student fails to return the form within the additional 5 working days, the student will be referred to the Immigration Compliance Team who will take the appropriate action.

30 calendar days of non-engagement after first intervention – Suspension

- If a student shows failure to engage for 30 calendar days after the first intervention, the Student Team Research Co-ordinator will suspend the student from their course. For example, if the intervention email is sent on 4 January 2021 and the student fails to engage with their course by the 3 February 2021 the student will be suspended. If

the 30 calendar days fall at the weekend, the suspension should be actioned the following weekday, e.g. Monday.

- The Student Team Research Co-ordinator will email the student to confirm their suspension from the course and copy in the Immigration Compliance Team. The student will be given 5 working days to respond to the suspension email.
- If the student responds to the suspension email within 5 working days, the Immigration Compliance Team will assess if the student should be withdrawn from the University and reported to UKVI.
- If the student fails to respond to the suspension email within 5 working days, the student will be withdrawn from the University and reported to UKVI.

Authorised Absences

1. Sickness or other unforeseen absences:

- **Absences of up to 10 working days:** Students must inform their Director of Studies and the Research Student Team at researchdegrees@arts.ac.uk ; evidence (e.g. a doctor's certificate) may be required.
- **Absences over 10 working days:** Students need to submit an Application for Authorised Absence Form to the Research Student Team at researchdegrees@arts.ac.uk together with supporting evidence and written confirmation from their Director of Studies in support of the absence.

2. Planned Absences of more than 10 working days:

- These absences must be requested **no later than one month before the absence is due to begin** using an Authorised Absence Form. Requests made after this time will **not** be authorised.
- Academic-related absences (e.g. conference attendance) must be approved by a student's Director of Studies. An Authorised Absence Form must be completed stating the date of departure and the date of return, along with an agreement that contact will be made with the student's Director of Studies at least once during the absence.

An absence of more than four weeks will **not** be authorised. If students are absent for more than four weeks their sponsorship will be withdrawn and reported to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). As a result, UKVI may curtail (cancel) their visa.

Authorised Absence Forms

To request an Authorised Absence Form, or if you would like to discuss your plans for an authorised absence, please contact the Research Student Team at researchdegrees@arts.ac.uk

Study Away

Students may be permitted to study away from UAL either in another city or country if they require to collect data or conduct research as part of their project.

Students will be permitted to study away for up to 60 calendar days per academic year.

In order to be eligible, students will need to:

- Have a satisfactory engagement with their studies
- Be up to date with payment of their course fees
- Obtain approval from their Director of Studies
- Complete the Study Away application form
- Meet academic contacts and demonstrate engagement with their studies during the time that they will be studying away from UAL

Study Away Form

To request a Study Away Form or if you would like to discuss your plans for Study Away, please contact the Research Student Team at researchdegrees@arts.ac.uk

Time Out from Studies

A formal time out can be for a period no shorter than 3 months. If you need to request time out from your research degree studies this will mean that:

- Your Tier 4/Student Route visa will be curtailed.
- You will need to leave the UK and reapply for a new Tier 4/Student Route visa from your home country following the time out. This will not have a negative impact on your visa history. Before submitting an application for time out you should plan this carefully with:

- Your supervisory team.
- The Research Student Team
- A Student Adviser (Student Services) – email student.advisors@arts.ac.uk

Retrospective time outs will **not** be allowed, so if you need to take time out, please contact the Research Student Team as soon as possible to discuss your options.

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Changes may include:

- If you have lost your passport or visa or it has been stolen
- If you decide to withdraw or take time out from study
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