

CTF students on Student Visas Academic engagement

Academic engagement policy

Our policy from 5th October 2020 is that all those with Student visas must meet or exceed the minimum engagement levels at all times. Except in exceptional circumstances, failure to re-engage with studies within 60 days will lead to the Federation withdrawing its sponsorship of that student's visa.

UKVI requirements

The Federation is required by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to monitor the academic engagement of all those on Student visas (previously called Tier 4 visas). A condition of our licence is that "Where a student fails to re-engage with their studies within 60 days (30 days for distance learning) of the first contact from their sponsor regarding their lack of academic engagement, the sponsor must withdraw sponsorship except in exceptional circumstances."

"the sponsor must annotate the student's record with the reason for the lack of academic engagement and the steps taken to ensure the student re-engages with their study."

Minimum engagement levels

Research students are expected to meet with their first supervisor monthly except during agreed holidays. (Anglia Ruskin University allows research students to take 35 working days holiday a year.)

Taught students are required to engage with their studies every week in term time. "Engagement" includes attending lectures, attending supervisions, submitting work or sitting exams.

Taught students undertaking a dissertation or a project after teaching has finished are required to engage with their tutor monthly.

Students on placements, field research trips etc. must maintain contact with their supervisor or tutor monthly (research students) or weekly (taught students) who will confirm to the Bounds House team that the student is engaging with their academic programme.

Engagement can be in person or online.

Monitoring procedure

Research students' engagement will be monitored by the supervisor sending a record of each supervision to Bounds House staff.

Taught students' engagement will be monitored through lecture and supervision attendance, assessment submission and exam attendance. We will agree an appropriate method for recording the engagement of taught students with their House who will then be responsible for sending the information weekly. Monitoring is not required in vacation periods.

Bounds House staff will create a record of engagement for each Student Visa holder. The Bounds House team will email the supervisor (research students) or Director of Studies (taught students) if an engagement is expected but not recorded to find out whether the records are incomplete or whether the student has been absent.

If the student has been absent, a note will be made to record if the absence was agreed, there were exceptional circumstances or a new date had been arranged for a research student to meet their supervisor. The re-engagement process will start if the student does not have a valid reason for their absence.

Re-engagement process

Stage 1 – inform	Day 1	Bounds House write to the student and their Supervisor (research students) or Director of Studies (taught students) explaining the process and that failure to re-engage may lead to the Student Visa being withdrawn.
Stage 2 – meet	Days 15-21	Bounds House invite the student to a meeting to discuss their lack of academic engagement.
	Days 22-28	The meeting is held and steps agreed for the student to re-engage with their studies or establish whether there are exceptional circumstances which justify halting the process.
Stage 3 – intention to withdraw sponsorship	Days 43-45	Bounds House write to the student notifying them of the intention to withdraw sponsorship of the Student visa.
Stage 4 – appeal	By day 55	The student can submit an appeal in writing.
	By day 59	The appeal is considered and a decision is communicated.
Withdrawing sponsorship	Day 60	Sponsorship is withdrawn and UKVI notified. The student must leave the UK within 60 days.

We may reasonably adjust the timetable to take account of weekends and holidays etc. provided that it does not extend beyond 60 days.

The process will terminate automatically if the student re-engages at any point up to day 59. Students missing ten contact points (engagements) in a 12 month period will be taken straight to Stage 3 of the process.

The same timetable will apply even if the student fails to engage with the process.

Sample communications

nb these templates may be altered to fit the specific circumstances of each case

Stage 1 email (research students)

Dear [student] [cc supervisor]

According to our records you have not met with your supervisor for more than a month. This email is to warn you that if this is correct you may be in breach of our minimum academic engagement levels, which may be a breach of the terms of your Student visa. Please let me know as soon as possible if you have met your supervisor recently, whether an alternative supervision date has been arranged, you have been on an approved holiday, or whether there are exceptional circumstances (eg injury, serious illness) that have been preventing you from continuing your research.

I attach a copy of our academic engagement monitoring process, from which you will see that this email is Stage 1 of the re-engagement process. Should you not meet your Supervisor in the next two weeks, the process will escalate to Stage 2 and you will be required to attend a meeting to discuss your lack of academic engagement. You should note that if you do not engage with your research within the next 60 days, we will have no choice but to withdraw sponsorship of your Visa and you will have to return home.

Our hope is that this email will enable us to resolve this matter either by correcting our records or enabling you to confirm that you are once again “academically engaged”.

I would be grateful if you could reply with the information requested within the next 14 days so that we can update our records and mark this process as finished. Please ask if there is any more information you would like about this process or if you have other questions.

Yours sincerely

Stage 1 email (taught students)

Dear [student] [cc DOS]

According to our records you have not engaged with your programme for more than a week. This email is to warn you that if this is correct you may be in breach of our minimum academic engagement levels, which may be a breach of the terms of your Student visa. Please let me know as soon as possible if you have been engaging academically (eg by attending lecturer or supervisions) or whether there are exceptional circumstances (eg injury, serious illness) that have been preventing you from continuing your studies.

I attach a copy of our academic engagement monitoring process, from which you will see that this email is Stage 1 of the re-engagement process. Should you not re-engage with your studies in the next two weeks the process will escalate to Stage 2 and you will be required to attend a meeting to discuss your lack of academic engagement. You should note that if you do not re-engage with your studies within the next 60 days, we will have no choice but to withdraw sponsorship of your Visa and you will have to return home.

Our hope is that this email will enable us to resolve this matter either by correcting our records or enabling you to confirm that you are once again “academically engaged”.

I would be grateful if you could reply with the information requested within the next 14 days so that we can update our records and mark this process as finished. Please ask if there is any more information you would like about this process or if you have other questions.

Yours sincerely

Stage 2 email

Dear [student] [cc supervisor]

We wrote to you on [date] about your lack of academic engagement and I have to let you know that the issue has not yet been satisfactorily resolved and that we therefore need to start Stage 2 of the re-engagement process.

I attach another copy of our academic engagement monitoring process, from which you will see that should you not re-engage with your studies by [date of 59th day], we will have no choice but to withdraw sponsorship of your Visa and you will have to return home.

You are required to attend a meeting at [date, time, location] to discuss your lack of academic engagement, to agree the next steps and to ensure that you fully understand the process that has started and the potential consequence of us having to withdraw our sponsorship of your visa. You will not need to attend this meeting if we have had confirmation that you have re-engaged with your research/course before the meeting date, which we hope you will do. Please let me know if you need the meeting to be at a different time.

You may be accompanied and/or represented at the meeting by a fellow student registered on a Federation programme. A support worker may also accompany disabled students. Please notify us at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting if you intend to attend the meeting and if you are to be accompanied and/or represented, and, if so, by whom. If you have a representative you may still be required to answer questions at the discretion of the person chairing the meeting.

At the meeting you will be given a chance to explain why you have not been engaging academically and we will ask any questions to ensure we have a full understanding as possible of your situation. We will then agree a course of action with you that enables you to return to "academically engaged" status as soon as possible. Following the meeting you will have two weeks in which to re-engage. If you do the process will finish at that point.

Please ask if there is any more information you would like about this process or if you have other questions.

Yours sincerely

Stage 3 email (progressing from stage 2)

Dear [student] [cc supervisor/DOS]

We met on [date] to discuss your breach of our academic engagement requirements and I am sorry to say that to our knowledge you have not subsequently engaged with your research/studies.

I attach another copy of our academic engagement monitoring process, from which you will see that we are now at Stage 3 and this email is to inform you that we intend to withdraw sponsorship of your Student visa on [date].

You can appeal this decision if you think we have acted wrongly or not followed the process correctly by writing to [name and details of someone not previously involved] by [date of day 55]. Alternatively you can re-engage with your research/course by [date of day 59] in which case we will not withdraw sponsorship and the process will finish.

Please ask if there is any more information you would like about this process or if you have other questions.

Yours sincerely

Stage 3 email (missed 10 contact points)

Dear [student] [cc supervisor/DOS]

We have met previously to discuss your breach of our academic engagement requirements and I am sorry to say that according to our records you have missed ten contact points within the last 12 months.

In accordance with your academic engagement process, I am now giving you notice that we intend to withdraw sponsorship of your Student visa on [date]. I regret to inform you that at this stage it is not possible to re-engage with your research/course and halt this process unless there are exceptional circumstances which we have not yet taken into account.

You can appeal this decision if you think we have acted wrongly or not followed the process correctly by writing to [name and details of someone not previously involved] by [date of day 55].

Please ask if there is any more information you would like about this process or if you have other questions.

Yours sincerely

Stage 4 email (appeal confirmation)

Dear [student] [cc supervisor/DOS]

On [date] [name] informed you of our intention to withdraw sponsorship of your Student visa because you have breached our academic engagement process.

On [date] you appealed this decision and I can now inform you that I have considered your appeal and my decision is that your appeal is upheld and

OR

On [date] you appealed this decision and I can now inform you that I have considered your appeal and my decision is that the decision to withdraw sponsorship is upheld. Consequently we will be withdrawing sponsorship of your visa on [date], following which you must leave the UK within 60 days.

It is not possible to appeal my decision but do let me know as soon as possible if you have any questions about the process.

Yours sincerely

Withdrawal email

Dear [student] [cc supervisor/DOS]

Further to our email on [date of Stage 3 email] I confirm that we are now withdrawing our sponsorship of your Student visa because you have not satisfied the academic engagement requirements which are a condition of the visa.

The Home Office will be notified of our decision today.

Yours sincerely