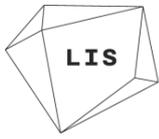The London Interdisciplinary School

Engagement Policy

1. Purpose

1.1 LIS is required to monitor the engagement of all its registered Student visa holders, in line with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations as well as the Immigration Rules that underpin immigration into the UK. As a Sponsor with a record of compliance, LIS is committed to meeting all of its duties under its sponsor licence. As such, the following engagementmonitoring procedures have been put in place, which will assist students in protecting their immigration status.

1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the LIS Attendance Policy and the LIS Home Office Compliance Policy.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy is to be adhered to by Student visa holders who are registered on a programme at LIS These students fall under the following categories:

- Students who hold a Student visa;
- Students who have made an application for Student permission to stay within the UK using a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number from LIS and a decision on the application is outstanding;
- Students who have made an application for Student permission to stay within the UK using a CAS number from LIS, have had their application refused and are currently undergoing an administrative review

2.2 This policy does not apply to students who currently hold permission to enter or stay in the UK that is outside the Student Route of the Points Based System.

3. Contact points

3.1 In line with the LIS Attendance Policy, a contact point is a point which will be defined in the timetable and of which there will be approximately 3 per week.

3.2 Where an assessment is not taken, and mitigating circumstances are not submitted this will be counted as non-engagement.

3.3 As set out in the LIS Attendance Policy, the minimum attendance requirement is 80%.

3.4 Should 3 consecutive contact points be missed, an automatic email will be sent to the student requesting further information as to absence and the student's Academic Tutor and Head of Student Support will be informed.

3.5 A further email will be sent should 6 consecutive contacts points be missed.

3.6 Should 9 contact points be missed, the Head of Student Support will attempt to make direct contact with the student in question.

3.7 Should 15 consecutive contact points be missed, the Registrar will inform the Home Office via the Sponsor Management System, in accordance with the Home Office Compliance Policy.

4. Re-sits/retakes and the 60 day regulation

4.1 UKVI regulations state that if any students already in the UK are not required to participate in their programme of study (either in class or by some other in-person face-to-face contact) for more than 60 days then these students must leave the UK. In such instances, LIS will withdraw its Student Route sponsorship of these students, their student records will be set to 'interruption of study' and the Home Office will be informed of the circumstances.

4.2 The 60-day regulation applies to all Student Route visa holders who fail their assessments and have to undergo reassessment (i.e. they do not undertake any study or attend any classes in the intervening period).

4.3 Where a student is not required to engage in study within a 60-day period, students will be asked to provide evidence that they have left the UK (such as a scanned exit stamp in their passport and an e-ticket/ boarding pass). This will then exempt them from the Engagement Policy.

5. Authorised absence and sickness periods

5.1 The Registry will ensure that are able to identify whether their students are studying on campus or away from LIS to fully comply with Home Office requirements.

5.2 To comply with Student Route sponsor duties, LIS needs to stay in contact with any student who is away from LIS for field-work, data collection, conference or for research purposes. The School should agree the schedule and form of contact prior to the student leaving campus. These ideally should be face-to-face contacts via Microsoft Teams.

5.3 Any official absences need to be authorised by the academic member of staff concerned. Authorised absence, without maintaining contact with LIS, cannot exceed 59 days.

6. Staff absence

6.1 An expected contact point is one which the student would in principle have been able to attend. If a lecture, tutorial or other planned contact point with a student is cancelled due to staff absence or industrial action, any missed face-to-face in - person contact point caused by such circumstances should not be treated as an unauthorised absence.

6.2 In the event of a prolonged disruption to the normal schedule of attendance, for example as a result of the absence of a member of staff or industrial action, it may be necessary to vary the process for verification of attendance. If this is necessary, students will be informed of any new requirements via their LIS email.

7. Lack of engagement

7.1 If it is noted through monitoring that there has been no engagement for four teaching weeks, then the Student Experience Team will flag to the Registry.

7.2 After four weeks of non-engagement, the Registry will issue a warning to the student advising them that the University may withdraw sponsorship if they do not engage for 30 (working) days or more.

7.3 If the student fails to respond or engage within 30 days of the warning email or there is no exceptional reason for non-engagement, the Registry will inform the Executive Committee that the student must be withdrawn and Student Route sponsorship will be withdrawn on the SMS within 10 working days.

7.4 If a decision is made to withdraw sponsorship of the student's Student Route visa, the Registry will send an email to the student to advise them of this and to detail the actions that they need to take. The Registry will then withdraw the student's registration record.

7.5 Students who are withdrawn under this regulation will only be permitted to re- register if they are able to provide mitigating evidence for their non-engagement. If the Home Office had not actioned the sponsorship withdrawal, and the student provides sufficient evidence, the notification on the SMS may be withdrawn and the student can continue to be sponsored under the Student Route by LIS. It should be noted that once the student's registration has been re-instated if the student continues not to comply with the Engagement Policy sponsorship of their Student Route visa may be automatically withdrawn.

7.6 When requesting to reverse the decision on the SMS where the Home Office have already actioned the withdrawal of sponsorship, the student will be asked to obtain fresh permission to enter the UK if they are required to undertake face-to-face teaching.

7.7 Following withdrawal of a student's Student Route visa (because they were unable to provide satisfactory evidence of their engagement) the decision cannot be reversed. This is because the student has failed to meet the conditions of their visa. Sponsorship of the student's visa will be withdrawn, as will their student status, and the student must return home. Following these actions, if the student wishes to return to LIS at a later date, they must provide mitigating evidence for their non-engagement. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

8. Policy Review

8.1 This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains compliant with Sponsor Guidance and Immigration Rules as well as good sector practice.

Version Control

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Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Brief summary of changes
1	Dr Michael Englard (Registrar)	20/10/2021	Change of contact points in line with attendance monitoring software