Student Sponsorship Policy and Procedures for Managing Overseas Visa Sponsored Students

Harper Adams University

Purpose of this policy

This document specifies the arrangements for managing Harper Adams University's Student Visa Sponsorship obligations. The document contains all aspects of the visa sponsorship for students which need to be considered when assessing applicants at offer stage, including the Confirmation of Acceptance to Study (CAS) requirements, and the procedures which have to be followed when a student is in attendance on their course. There is also reference to students on visitor visas, who do not require sponsorship, but need to be managed.

The purpose of this policy document is to ensure that all relevant members of staff and students remain informed of the policies and processes which the University is required to follow to ensure that it complies with the requirements that UKVI places on it with regards to the sponsorship of students who are subject to visa sponsorship. These requirements are **mandatory** and must be followed to ensure that the University is able to maintain its Student Sponsor status and general sponsorship licence. The University would not be able to accept students requiring sponsorship without these, which would have a significant impact on the University both financially and reputationally.

Who is this policy for?

This policy is relevant to all international students of Harper Adams University, who are require a visa to study and to the members of staff who support these students and the University's efforts to remain compliant with the requirements of our student sponsor licence.

What are our principles and our approach?

Our principles and approach are to achieve the balance of admitting visa sponsored students to our University, while ensuring that we remain compliant with our visa sponsorship obligations. The steps outlined in this document are provided to give clarity to applicants over the documentation required and also so students, when on campus, understand the processes which they will be subject to and importantly the reasons why.

While intended in the main as an internal processes document, in the interests of transparency, this policy, and related policies, is available to applicants and students through the Key Information page (www.harper.ac.uk/keyinfo). The University reserves the right to make changes to the management of its sponsorship obligations and associated student obligations at any time, in light of revisions to the Home Office's Guidance.

Who is responsible and what are our responsibilities?

The Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager is responsible for the oversight and application of the processes within this policy. Additional job roles are highlighted throughout the document to indicate responsibility in support of visa compliance. Students themselves are responsible for ensuring that they comply with the policy and associated policies, to ensure they comply with their own visa requirements and to support the University in its compliance duties.

Relationships with other policies

The content of the policy is directly influenced by the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) branch of the Home Office's Student Sponsor Policy Guidance, which is updated several times a year. The issuance of this policy guidance by UKVI directly affects the updates which are applied to

this document, thus regular revisions may be required. As a minimum, it will be reviewed and updated by the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager on an annual basis.

This policy is directly linked to the following Harper Adams Policies:

Admissions Policy
Student Engagement Policy
Postgraduate Research Students handbook

This document does not replace the Student Sponsor Guidance. The most up to date version of the guidance can be found at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-sponsor-guidance This differs from the guidance which students use to make their application which can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/points-based-system-student-route

An information repository for sponsored students and applicants is provided on the Harper Adams University website at http://www.harper-adams.ac.uk/university-life/international/ which is regularly reviewed and updated by the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager and International Officer.

Glossary

Admissions Officer	For the purpose of this document and in line with the Admissions Policy, the 'Admissions Officer' referred to herein includes the Admissions Officers for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate applications, and the Postgraduate Research Students Advisor, for Research student admissions.
ATAS certificate	Academic Technology Approval Scheme; introduced in 2007, this is an essential part of the UK's commitment to 'counter proliferation'. The scheme is specifically designed to ensure that those applying for postgraduate study in certain sensitive subjects do not acquire knowledge that could potentially be used in weapons of mass destruction programmes. Whether approval is required is based on the CAH3 code of the course. Further information can be found at https://www.gov.uk/academic-technology-approval-scheme.
Basic Compliance Assessment	This is the annual review of a Student Sponsors' compliance with the criteria set out by the Home Office, based on enrolment, non-completion and refusal rates. This determines whether a sponsor remains on the register of sponsors and is permitted to continue to admit sponsored students.
Biometrics	Biometric features are unique physical characteristics that can be used to identify a person such as a facial image and fingerprints. The Home Office take a digital photograph of all applicants and scan the fingerprints of applicants aged six or over.
CAS	Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies; a number generated by the Sponsor Management System once a sponsor has entered all the required information to confirm that they are prepared to accept and sponsor the student on a course of study. A CAS number is a mandatory requirement for a Student Route visa application.
Entry clearance officer	A member of Home Office staff who considers a visa application.
HECoS/CAH code	The Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS) is a coding system which classifies academic subjects and replaces the previous Joint Academic Coding System (JACS). The Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH) is a set of standard groupings for subjects.
IELTS	International English Language Testing system; one of the most common English language tests in the world.
Premium Customer Service	The Premium Customer Service is a subscription service provided by UKVI, which provides institutions with a dedicated contact (Premium Account Manager) to whom they can ask questions regarding Student Sponsorship policy, immigration and CAS issues and to look at specific student cases.

Sponsor Management System (SMS)	A secure IT system which enables licensed sponsors to manage their licence and perform actions such as licence renewals, issue CASs and report student activity.
Statutory reporting	The reporting which we are required to do to maintain our Student Sponsorship licence.
Student Route	Previously known as Tier 4, a category of the Home Office's points based system for immigration, which is the category under which students are able to be sponsored to study in the UK.
UK ENIC	European Network Information Centre. A website database (by service provider Ecctis) which provides information and advice on worldwide vocational, academic and professional skills and qualifications.
UKVI	UK Visas and Immigration is the branch of the Home Office which oversees the sponsorship of students and the associated immigration responsibilities (along with other categories of sponsorship).

Significant Positions within the Organisation

The following are the named contacts within the SMS system and in relation to our sponsor licence, with the explanation of their role, taken from the Student Sponsor Guidance.

Authorising Officer – Kate Baker
- The Authorising Officer is the most senior person responsible for the recruitment of students and ensuring that all sponsor duties are met. The authorising officer is also responsible for deciding how many staff need to have access to the SMS and what level of permission they can have. They are responsible for the activities of all SMS users. They must be a paid staff member or office holder within the organisation.

Key Contact –Andy Allen
- The key contact is the main point of contact with UKVI. They will be contacted if there are any queries about applications, the documents sent or the fees paid. A key contact must be a paid staff member or office holder within the organisation.

Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager – Laura Harper
- Internal position at the University. They have oversight of all Student Sponsorship processes and are responsible for the management of internal policy in relation to visa sponsored students.

Level 1 users – Laura Harper, Elizabeth Rooker and Heather Hogan
- Level 1 users carry out the day to day sponsorship duties within the SMS system, including the assignment and payment of CAS and the reporting of student activity. They also have the permissions, under the responsibility of the Authorising Officer, to apply to renew the sponsor licence, student sponsor status and the premium service.

Level 2 users – currently under review
- The activity of Level 2 users is limited to the creation of CAS (but not payment) and the reporting of activity in relation to their own (not all CAS area(s) of responsibility).

Contents

1. Sponsor Basic Compliance Assessment Requirements

The University is required to apply for its Student Sponsor status on an annual basis. As part of the consideration of the application, the Home Office conducts a Basic Compliance Assessment (BCA) and reviews the CAS and student reporting activity of the University over the previous twelve months to determine if the University meets the requirements to remain a Student Sponsor.

The Home Office considers a number of factors when assessing compliance. These are split into the mandatory requirements and the core measurable requirements. These requirements are assessed against students with visa sponsorship and issued with a CAS by the University.

The requirements detailed below were in place when Harper Adams University completed its most recent BCA application in August 2021.

1.1 The mandatory requirements are:
- Minimum qualifying period – the institution must have held a student sponsor licence for 12 consecutive months.
- No civil penalties – during the previous 3 years, the institution must not have become liable to pay a civil penalty which remained in place once objections and appeals have been exhausted.
- Refusal rate – the visa refusal rate must be less than 10%. This is assessed using the information on all CAS used and refused during the previous 12 months.
- Reasons for visa refusals can include:
  - Failure of a credibility interview
  - Insufficient funds available to the student for at least 28 days prior to application
  - Failure to produce original documentation, such as qualification certificates
  - Failure to complete and produce a clear TB test (for applicants from countries that require them. Details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/overview)
- Enrolment rate – the enrolment rate of students issued with permission to study must be at least 90%. This is assessed using SMS information on the reported numbers of students who have not enrolled on time or at all, during the previous 12 months. Only those who failed to enrol are counted.
- Course Completion rate – the course completion rate must be at least 85%. This means that 85% of the students who were due to complete their course in the previous 12 months, did so. If no students were due to complete during the period then this criterion will not be assessed. All students who were due to complete, regardless of their start date will be considered, and the drop-out rate will be calculated. Students who switched institution (to be sponsored as a student), switched immigration category and those who have both left the course and the UK will not be included.

If one or more of the following requirements are not met, then the application for renewed sponsor status would be refused, as this would mean that that University has failed to meet the standards for sponsors set by the Home Office.

It is the responsibility of the University to ensure that the BCA application is submitted on time. Full details on how the BCA assessment is conducted can be found in the 'Student Sponsor Compliance' document on the following page: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-sponsor-guidance

The renewal date for Harper Adams University is **25th August** each year. The application can be made at any point in the calendar month before this date, but must be made before the renewal date for it to be considered. This is done through the SMS system and can be done by any level

1 user. Application fees must be paid by credit card and can be found at the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visa-regulations-revised-table

The current UKVI service standard for a BCA is 18 weeks. Until the result is known, the University can operate as normal. The approval will always be backdated to the renewal date, regardless of when the outcome of the application is known.

Those sponsors who have passed a BCA for the last four consecutive years are listed in the Student Sponsor Register as having a 'Track record of Compliance'. Harper Adams University has this and it means that there are additional privileges which students can have around working rights and the being eligible to apply for the Graduate Route.

2. Sponsor Licence Renewals

In addition to the renewal of Student Sponsor status, described in section 1, the University is also required to apply to renew other elements of the sponsorship licence in order to remain a registered sponsor.

2.1 University Sponsorship licence (Tier 2 and Student)
- This is the overarching combined sponsorship licence of the University which allows it to sponsor overseas students and staff (under Tier 2).
- The licence period is for 4 years.
- The licence is next due for renewal in **November 2024** by the key contact
- The institution will receive renewal reminders from the Home Office in the run up to the licence expiration date.
- The application must be made through the SMS system and the fee must be paid by credit card. Up to date fees can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-visas-and-immigration-fees.
- Responsibility for this within Harper Adams University lies with the Head of Human Resources, due to the University having a joint Tier 2 (workers) and Student licence.
- The application must be made on time otherwise the licence will expire.

2.2 CAS Allocation renewal
- On an annual basis the University is required to apply for a new allocation of its Confirmations of Acceptance for Studies allowance (CASs).
- This is the number of CASs that it predicts to use over the next 12 month period and should include all CASs which will be issued, including those for new students and those requiring extensions.
- The renewal can be done at any point in the 3 months prior to the expiration date (which is currently 6th August 2022) and is done through the SMS system. No charge is made for this.
- Once confirmed, the next allocation will run from the approval date, so the next renewal date will be different to the last.
- This can be done by any level 1 user of the SMS system.
- A renewal can be done after the renewal date, but no CAS can be issued until the new allocation has been approved.

2.3 Premium Service
- The Home Office offers a Premium Customer Service which institutions can pay for, which gives them extra support and information through a dedicated Account Manager.
- Harper Adams University subscribes to this service.
- Application for the service is made through the SMS system and the annual charge of £8000 (as at October 2021) must be paid by credit card at the point of application.

3. Application Procedure

This procedure is to be used by all those involved in the consideration of an overseas (non- EU) applicant for admission, who requires visa sponsorship. Due to the ways in which different student types are recruited, not all will be able to follow this pattern, however it gives an outline of the factors which have to be taken into consideration by the University when considering applicants who require visa sponsorship. Each student file must contain all the necessary information before an application is completed and a CAS is issued, by either the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager or Admissions Officer. Where there are queries, staff will seek advice from either the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager or Admissions Officer.

3.1 Who requires a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)?
A CAS is required by an applicant who fits into the Student Route immigration category of the UK Home Office points based immigration system. This will be an international student (from outside the UK and Ireland) who requires entry clearance (a visa) to enter the UK and who the University is prepared to sponsor. If a student is studying a course that is six months or less, then a Visitor visa, which permits study but does not require a CAS, may be more appropriate. (See section 9)

3.2 Application received
- The Admissions Officer will check the application information initially to determine if the applicant potentially meets the course entry requirements and both internal sponsorship and Home Office English Language requirements.
- The intended start date will also be checked to ensure that the application been received on time for the intended entry point, based on application deadlines. Due to the complex nature of assessing international applications, if the application has been received late we will not normally consider the application and advise the applicant to reapply for entry for next intake. The University will not be rushed into making a decision on an applicant, for example if their current visa is due to expire, as the University has a statutory responsibility to follow due process in line with UKVI requirements.
- The University is unable to accept applications from students who require visa sponsorship for Foundation Degree and Extended Foundation Degree courses as the maximum time permitted on a student visa for these courses is 2 years and Harper Adams courses at this level are 3 and 4 years respectively. The University also does not sponsor students on part-time courses.

3.3 Request documents and additional information
The following information is also required if not included with the original application, before the application can be fully considered:
- Qualifications – All qualification certificates which are not in English, must be supplied with an authenticated translation – this will be required for all certificates submitted as part of the visa application process. UK ENIC is used by the University as a guide to determine the equivalence of qualifications in comparison to UK entry requirements, with copies, where relevant, added to the applicant file. Where an overseas qualification is not deemed to be equivalent, even if it is accepted for entry at a Higher Education Institution in the students' home country, it will not be accepted. In the exceptional circumstance that the University is prepared to consider an applicant who does not meet the minimum accepted entry requirements (such as having substantial relevant work experience) the University will request information to be able to demonstrate the student's ability through other means. Where this cannot be adequately documented, the application will not be progressed.
- References – one academic for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, and two academic for postgraduate research are required as a minimum for each application. If the student has been out of education for some time, an employment reference may be an

acceptable alternative, but this will be agreed on an individual case-by-case basis. References from award programmes such as the Chevening or Commonwealth Scholarship programmes are also acceptable.

- Proof of English language ability – all applicants requiring a student visa are required to have an English Language ability of at least level B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (unless as a pre-sessional student they require B1). The English Language Policy outlines the English language qualifications which the University considers to meet its own requirements and those of the Home Office. The policy is available at https://www.harper-adams.ac.uk/university-life/international/english-language.cfm Students from a majority speaking English country (based on the list available at https://www.gov.uk/student-visa/knowledge-of-english) or those with a qualification of at least UK degree level from one of these countries are exempt from English language requirements, unless at interview there are concerns over their ability.
- Valid passport and any applicable visa copies – a passport does not need to be valid for the entire course, but must have at least 6 months remaining to be accepted.
- Completion of the Fee and Immigration Status Enquiry form (appendix 1 – for illustration purposes only) should be undertaken to form the basis of assessment if it is unclear whether the student requires sponsorship and will be provided to the applicant by the relevant Admissions Officer.

In addition, the following background information may also be requested for the University to be assured that the application is genuine and to identify any potential visa application issues:
- If the applicant has studied in the UK before, or is currently in the UK:
  - o Does the applicant meet the academic progression rules regarding entry onto a higher course? Generally, students must be progressing to a higher-level course to demonstrate academic progression. In exceptional circumstances a student may be considered for a course at the same level of their previous level of study, however the University would need to provide UKVI with clear rationale and justification.
  - o If the applicant is in the UK did they successfully complete their previous course in order to comply with academic progression considerations? Applicants who have previously studied in the UK as a visa sponsored student must have successfully completed their previous course and be able to demonstrate achievement of their intended award.
  - o Will this course exceed the time limit allowed under student sponsorship rules? UKVI states a maximum period of time that students can study on a student visa – this varies depending on the courses previously studied and the length of them.
  - o What is the applicant currently doing in the UK? Their immigration history will be reviewed if it is unclear what they have been doing and which permissions they have had to be in the country.
  - o If they are on a Short Term Study or other type of visitor visa they are not allowed to switch to a Student Route visa in the UK; the applicant must go home to apply in that country.

Where extra clarity is required on any of the above points, the University will ask the applicant for their permission to contact the UKVI Premium Customer Service Team, so an immigration history check can be completed. If permission is refused, the application will automatically be rejected.

Once all requested information is received, the application in its entirety will be considered by the Admissions Officer and Course Manager, taking into account all the information provided as well as the personal statement and references. If the applicant is deemed to be unsuitable for any reason the application will be rejected and the applicant will be informed. This may include academic and non-academic reasons and the University reserves the right to reject any

application following its own assessment. We are also unable to consider any applicant where we believe they would be unsuccessful in getting a student sponsorship for any reason, including, but not limited to, those listed above. Should an applicant wish to request a review of an admissions decision, or appeal that decision, they should refer to the Admissions Policy which can be found within the University Key Information page (www.harper.ac.uk/keyinfo) which outlines the Review of Admissions Decisions and Complaints process.

Any applicant who is deemed to potentially be suitable, based on their application, will then be required to attend an interview either in person, or online, as determined by the University.

3.4 Interview (SKYPE/web-cam based or in person)
All applicants are interviewed if they have provided the information requested above, and are potentially suitable for the course by either meeting the entry requirements, or by having the potential to meet them if they have qualifications pending and by demonstrating in their application an understanding and motivation for the course to which they have applied. If an applicant is unavailable to present for interview, they will be rejected.

An interview form is used to document the key points from the conversation. Interviewers should request a copy from their Admissions Officer. The questions will focus around the specifics of the course, and explore the applicant's suitability for it. It will also include questions which may be similar to those asked during a UKVI credibility interview including the following areas:
- Motivation for the course and career aspirations
- Why does the applicant wish to study in the UK and at Harper Adams University specifically?
- Discussion around previous study (places and qualifications), specifically if this includes previous study in the UK
- Awareness of the student visa requirements
- Ability to cover the costs of study, including tuition fees and maintenance, including accommodation costs.

Where required, the interview will also be used to make an assessment of the applicant's level of English Language ability, including where the applicant holds an appropriate Secure English Language Test at the required level. Where this is the case the applicant will be informed in advance and a member of the English Language Support team will be in attendance. The outcome of the assessment will be added to the file and will inform any conditional offer made to the applicant.

The purpose of the interview is to establish that there is a high likelihood of an applicant succeeding on their chosen course, based on their motivation and existing capabilities, including English language skills, and that they appear to wish to study specifically in the UK for the primary purpose of succeeding in their intended course of study.

3.5 Post-interview stage
- Following interview, a completed interview form and auditable assessment of English Language ability (if required) will be produced for the file.
- The decision to offer a place on the course will be documented, including clear offer conditions or a clear reason for rejection which can be explained to the applicant.
- **Any complex admissions cases are escalated, to the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager, taking advice from the Premium Customer Service Team where necessary and, if required, from the Director of Academic Services.**

3.6 Conditional Offer letter

All applicants requiring student visa sponsorship will receive a conditional offer, even if they have already satisfied the academic requirements for the course. This is due to the additional requirements for entry, which form part of the assessment as to whether to issue the applicant with a CAS or not. Examples of conditions are detailed below:

- Deposit for tuition fees and accommodation costs (where applicable). The costs of tuition will be detailed in the offer letter and a deposit of no less than 100% of the first year tuition fee must be paid in advance. The University Finance Office will provide confirmation of cleared payment. If an applicant is expecting to receive financial sponsorship, confirmation of this, and what it covers, will be required before the requirement to pay fees in advance is waived. The University reserves the right to request a deposit to cover CAS allocation costs from applicants with full financial sponsorship.

- Copies of bank statements will be required to demonstrate that the applicant has the availability of sufficient funds to meet the maintenance requirements for their visa application for a minimum of 28 days prior to their visa application. At the time of writing (October 2021), applicants are required to show funds of £1,023 for 9 months, which is a total of £9,207. As this is a UKVI requirement and is subject to change without notice. The latest information in relation to maintenance requirements is with the following guidance; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/points-based-system-student-route.
  Where the currency is not in British pounds (GBP) the currency conversion tool used https://www.oanda.com/convert/classic will be used. Where an applicant is in receipt of financial sponsorship by a recognised authority for their course, this requirement will be waived, once satisfactory evidence of sponsorship commitment has been provided. Students with an established presence in the UK of 12 months or more at the point of their visa application may be exempt from providing financial documents with their visa application.

- Any outstanding qualifications, including acceptable proof of English language proficiency where necessary. All qualification certificates not in English, must be supplied with an authenticated translation and IELTS scores will be checked by the online verification service.

- Any applicant already on a student route visa elsewhere must successfully complete their current course of study, regardless of its relevance to their application to Harper Adams University. This measure is used to help to reassure the University that the applicant is a genuine student and is not primarily seeking to extend their right to remain in the UK. Applicants who make their visa application from inside the UK will be able to access the visa application support provided by the International Officer.

- Any other missing information required for the application, for example references. The University is required to hold key documents on each applicant file, which demonstrate how an admissions decision has been made to meet both UKVI and internal requirements. Appendix D of the Student Sponsor Guidance is used as the basis for this and a CAS Issuance checklist (appendix 2) is used to ensure everything is received.

- Applicants who require an ATAS clearance due to the HECoS/CAH code of their course (primarily postgraduate taught and research subjects) will be advised as such and must use their conditional offer to apply for their ATAS clearance. Without this clearance, we are unable to confirm a place or issue a CAS. There are serious consequences for the applicant and the University if ATAS clearance is missing where required. Under no circumstances will a CAS be issued before ATAS certification has been received. Guidance from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the course codes which require ATAS clearance is included in Annex 1.

- Evidence of a clear Tuberculosis (TB) test is required where the Home Office lists this as a document required for a visa application. It is limited to certain countries, and the most up to date list can be found at https://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/overview

- Where a student will be under 18 at the start of the course, we require details of a next of kin or emergency contact, residing in the UK, for the period that the student is under 18, as the University is unable to assume parental responsibility in emergency situations.

3.7 Issuing a CAS

Once all offer conditions are met, and before issuing a CAS, final checks are made to the file to ensure it contains all the required documents and information as listed above. We will also check the most up to date version of the Student Sponsor Guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-sponsor-guidance) to ensure that no updates have been made during the application period which may affect CAS issuance. Each applicant file must contain all UKVI defined, mandatory documents as detailed in Appendix D of the Student Sponsor Guidance, (the CAS Issuance checklist (appendix 2) is completed to ensure these are collected) as well as additional documents which have been used by the University during the admissions process. These additional documents may vary between different students and course types.

The end date of the course for CAS purposes may not align with the end of the relevant academic year for the end of the course. For undergraduate students, the CAS course end date will be the last anticipated date where a student may be expected to meet with a member of staff or external examiner, which is typically before the last week of the academic year. For postgraduate taught students, the end date will be the anticipated final submission date and for postgraduate research students it will typically be 4 calendar years from the start date, which also represents the anticipated thesis submission date.

As an applicant cannot apply for their visa more than 6 months before the start of the course, no CAS will be issued earlier than this.

A CAS will not be issued if there is any doubt surrounding the applicant or any aspect of their application, regardless of them meeting offer conditions, or if there is any reason to doubt that their visa application will be unsuccessful. The University will also not issue a CAS where visa processing times (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-decision-waiting-times-applications-outside-the-uk) indicate that it is too late to make a successful visa application in time for the start of the course.

The University will not be pressurised into issuing a CAS for an applicant for any reason. When considering the issuance of a CAS, the risk to the University's sponsorship licence is the primary concern. The University also reserves the right to withdraw any CAS issued on the basis of any new information received, where it is believed that there is a possibility that a visa application will be refused as a result of this information.

The University reserves the right not to disclose the reason that it may choose not to issue a CAS or to withdraw a previously issued CAS, although the student will be notified that that course of action has been taken.

3.8 Visa Application

Once the CAS has been issued it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they submit their student visa application in good time to be able to start the course. We advise all applicants to make their visa application as soon as possible, and where possible, make as many preparations for it in advance, such as collating supporting documents, to avoid any delay in the application process. Should assistance be required with the application, applicants are welcome to contact the International Officer, based in Student Services, for advice. Applicants should

also ensure that they refer to the most recent Home Office guidance, as this is subject to change, without warning.

3.9. Students from Beijing University of Agriculture and Huazhong Agricultural University

Students on joint programmes run in conjunction with partners in China initially make an application to the institution based in China, where they commence their studies. The Chinese partner admits students based on agreed admissions criteria. Individual assessments of eligibility to proceed or transfer to subsequent UK based studies are made as follows:

- **Assessment of student eligibility from Beijing University of Agriculture** to proceed to the year of course in the UK, is made through the Harper Adams University Course Assessment Board's assessment as to whether the student has successfully completed the first two years of the course in line with the HAU assessment regulations. The students are also required to complete an applicant statement (akin to a personal statement on an application form) so a credibility assessment of their motivation for study on the course in the UK can be made.

- **Assessment of student eligibility from Huazhong Agricultural University** to join the course in the UK is made through an Admissions Panel which reviews the achievement of each candidate, at the end of their second year of study in China, to determine whether they will be eligible to transfer into their first year of UK based studies. The students are also required to attend an interview with a Harper Adams representative so their credibility can be assessed. If accepted, they will be admitted on a programme with advanced standing, having successfully demonstrated learning in 120 credits of study at Level 4 in appropriate subjects to support subsequent UK-based study.

Only following receipt of a deposit, TB certificate, IELTS Certificate or other acceptable English language test and passport copies and once course progression or transfer is confirmed, will a CAS be issued.

4 Enrolment and Registration

For first year (new students):

4.1 Online Enrolment
- All students are required to enrol online in advance of their arrival at the University. This is the initial stage of the enrolment and registration process through which the student confirms their contact details, their course of study and other information required for statutory reporting and for internal purposes.
- The student information which is displayed within online enrolment is taken directly from their application, and if there are any changes, they are automatically updated in the electronic student record with the date the student completed enrolment recorded in the system. In the rare circumstance that a student is unable to complete online enrolment for any reason, they will be required to complete a paper enrolment form upon arrival at the University.

4.2 Registration
- All students are required to register in person for their course. The course start date on the CAS is the date which students are required to present themselves at the University to register as a student and commence their course.
- Students who completed online enrolment are required to sign in and will be asked to confirm or update any information, such as contact details, if this has changed since online enrolment was completed.
- Those who have not been able to enrol online, are required to complete a paper enrolment form which will be used by the relevant administrator to update the student records system.
- All international students are required to bring with them their passport and visa, either as a passport page entry clearance vignette, with corresponding immigration stamp, Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) card or share code for confirming digital immigration status. This is to enable the University to conduct a 'Right to Study' check to ensure that students have the correct immigration permission to allow them to study. If a student has a temporary entry clearance vignette, due to needing to collect their BRP from the post office or other location, they will be permitted to provisionally register, but must present with their BRP within 10 days. Students in this position will be supported to enable them to collect their BRP and their Admissions Officer will ensure that the student is reminded of the need to present with the BRP. Failure to do so could result in a fine being issued by the Home Office and the possibility of visa sponsorship withdrawal. If there are any problems in relation to the collection of a BRP, the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager or Admissions Officer will contact the Premium Service for assistance and advice. Copies will be taken of the passport identity page, the visa and any stamps within the passport deemed to be relevant. These will then be signed and dated by the administrator taking the copies to confirm that they are certified copies of the originals. Where a BRP has been received directly by the University, this will be given to the student during the registration process.
- Where required, outstanding copies of original certificates will also be taken. Original copies of ATAS certificates will also be collected from students who require them, if they are not already held on the file.
- Failure to provide documents to allow the University to conduct a 'Right to Study' check at registration will result in the student being unable to register for the course and commence studies until such documents can be provided.
- Following successful completion of a right to study check and subsequent registration, the relevant administrator for the course area will confirm to the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager (or the Admissions Officer in their absence), that the student has completed the registration process and the relevant information will be added to the CAS

Tracker. The 'Visa Sponsored' flag will also be marked against the student record in the University's Student Records System.

- While social distancing measures are in place as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic enrolment processes and right to study checks are being undertaken remotely in line with the concessions permitted by the Home Office at the time. (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents)

4.3 Continuing students

- Continuing students at all levels are required to re-register at the start of each new academic year.
- They are required to complete online enrolment and as part of this to confirm that their contact details are still correct and up to date.
- Passport and visa copies are taken at the start of each academic year, with the exception of the placement year.
- Students are issued with a letter reminding them of their obligations as a visa sponsored student.
- Where a student is undertaking further study, having previously studied at the University, they will be permitted to enrol on the basis of proof of an on-time visa application, which would be added to the student's file. The student will be required to provide the relevant administrator weekly updates as to the progress of their visa application and when they receive a decision on their application they should take it to their administrator as soon as possible. If their visa is refused the University will consider the student's position in line with the process outlined in section 7.
- If the student does not have any information on the progress of their application, the University will seek permission from the student to contact the Premium Customer Service Team to get an update after 1 month. If the application is still progressing and the student is engaging with the application process, the University will continue to sponsor the student until a decision has been made. Should the student not be engaging in the process, for example by not providing documents as requested to the Home Office, the University will consider withdrawing sponsorship from the student.

4.4 BRP Collection

The University acts as an Alternative Collection Location (ACL) for BRP cards. This means that rather than choosing a post office, students can opt to have their BRP card delivered to Harper Adams for collection on arrival. The code required for this is communicated to applicants with their offer information and this should be entered into the relevant section of the visa application available from the Home Office. In order for a card to be distributed to a student, they will be required to present with their passport, including entry clearance vignette and their letter confirming that their visa application has been successful.

5   Engagement and Attendance Monitoring

The Student Engagement Policy (available at www.harper.ac.uk/keyinfo) outlines the arrangements in place to monitor the engagement of all taught students (undergraduate and postgraduate) on their studies. As detailed in this policy, engagement is primarily monitored through attendance recorded at learning and teaching events and by the submission of assignments and assessments.

All students are expected to attend all timetabled learning and teaching events and are required to complete all assessments and assignments by the stated deadline. Attendance is monitored by the course team, by the use of Tableau reporting, and they apply their professional and academic judgement to determine if a student's level of engagement with their studies will have an impact on their ability to successfully complete the course. Course content and the requirements of professional accreditation will form part of this judgement. The policy outlines the process which course teams will take to address poor attendance and engagement.

Where action to address poor attendance and engagement is taken against a visa sponsored student, the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager will be informed to advise on any implications to the students visa sponsorship and to take action to revoke a students visa sponsorship should this be required.

5.1 Additional Engagement monitoring for Taught Sponsored Students on campus
Visa sponsored students are subject to additional engagement monitoring points in addition to routine attendance monitoring and this is outlined in Annex 1 of the Student Engagement policy. These points are in place for administrative and welfare reasons and are managed by staff within professional services.
- Undergraduate and postgraduate students are required to attend termly sign-ins with an administrator to ensure that their contact details are correct.
- Undergraduate and postgraduate students are also required to attend a termly meeting with the International Officer, which gives them the opportunity to discuss any issues or ask any questions they may have.
- Postgraduate students will also have at least two supervisory meetings once they enter the project stage of their programme

These additional engagement points will be arranged at a time which is mutually convenient for the student and the administrator undertaking them. Should the student not attend the event they will be required to make another appointment no later than 1 week after the original one. If the student fails to attend a second time the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager will be informed and will attempt to contact the student. Should this be unsuccessful, this will be referred to the Course Manger and considered to be an unauthorised absence in line with the Student Engagement Policy.

5.2 Engagement monitoring of Postgraduate Research Students
The engagement monitoring process in place for postgraduate research students is outlined in the Postgraduate Research Students' handbook. Students are required to attend a monthly progress meeting with their supervisor for the duration of their studies, including when they enter the writing up period. The handbook also clearly details the process to follow should a student not attend their meetings as scheduled. In addition to this, students are also required to have termly sign-ins with the Postgraduate Research Students Advisor.

5.3 Students on work placement
Undergraduate students on placement are not required to be on campus at any point during that academic year so their engagement with their placement is monitored through a number

of contact points designed not to impact on their experience of the workplace. Overseen by the Placement Office, these students will be in contact with their Placement Tutor, for routine reviews and additional calls to ensure that there are no issues. They will also be required to take part in welfare calls with the International Officer.

The student's employer will receive a letter from the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager explaining that the student is on a Student Route visa, stating that we expect to be informed by them if there are any concerns over the student's attendance and performance on placement. They will also be asked to ensure that the student is provided with sufficient time and resource to enable them to meet their engagement points. They will be required to contact the Placement Office and Placement Manager if the student has an unauthorised/unexplained absence from placement of two days or more. The student is also advised of this and receives a copy of the letter. Should this occur, the Placement Manager will attempt to contact the student and if contact cannot be established within 5 days of the notification and the student has not returned to their employment, then the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager will be informed and visa curtailment actions will be undertaken. The student will also be subject to the employer's internal policies around attendance.

5.5 Pre-sessional English Students
We currently have no students on pre-sessional English language courses; these arrangements will be subject to review should these courses resume, incorporating bespoke attendance monitoring arrangements.

5.6 Student Visitors and those on other visa types
Right to study checks will be conducted before a student visitor or other non-sponsored visa student can commence their studies. There is no requirement to report attendance activity to the Home Office.

6   Postponement of studies

Postponements (or deferral of studies) are permitted within University regulations, for a small number of reasons, mostly due to evidenced ill health or exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control that prevents them from being able to study. Students who require an absence from their course should always ensure that they discuss this with their Course Manager or, for research students, their Director of Studies and the Research Programmes Manager, as soon as they become aware that they may be unable to attend, to discuss any implications and to ensure that they are not deemed to have an unauthorised absence. The Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager will be consulted to identify any implications for fulfilling the University's sponsorship obligations, by the relevant Course Manager or the Research Programmes Manager.

6.1 Action at the University
- Where a student takes the decision to postpone their studies for the remainder of an academic year, a discussion will take place between the student and either their Course Manager or Director of Studies, which will explore the reasons why the student needs to postpone and when they intend to return.
- A postponement form will be completed, which must be authorised by the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager before it is actioned within the student records system. A copy must be kept on the student file.

Where a student requires a short period of absence, such as a few weeks, a postponement form may not be required, but the student will have needed to discuss the absence with their Course Manager or Director of Studies and agree that they are still able to complete their intended studies within the academic year. The member of staff should keep a written record of any agreed absence and ensure that staff involved with attendance monitoring are made aware so action around poor attendance does not take place. Postgraduate Research students should use their annual leave allocation for such purposes in the first instance.

6.2 Action with the Home Office
- Where the absence does not affect the student's ability to complete the course within the original timescale, is no longer than 60 days, and the University is able to continue to continue its sponsorship duties with regards to the student, there is no requirement to report the student activity to the Home Office.
- Where the absence means that the student will have a later course end date, but that end is still within the time of their allocated leave (within the 'wrap-up' period after the course end date), there is no requirement to report the student, provided that it is no longer than 60 days and the University is able to continue its sponsorship duties with regards to the student.
- Where the absence means that the student will require an extension to complete the course, but is no longer than 60 days and the University is able to continue its sponsorship duties, there is no requirement to report the absence as the Home Office will review the student activity during the renewal application. The student will be counselled on the implications of this as they will be required to make a new visa application to complete their studies and may be required to return home to do this due to rules relating to academic progression.
- Where the absence means that the student will not return to the course before the end of their current visa, or that the absence is more than 60 days and/or the University would be unable to continue its sponsorship duties, the student will be reported via SMS to the Home Office, to inform them that sponsorship has been withdrawn. This will result in the student's visa being curtailed and they will be required to leave the country. We are required to provide the Home Office with the student's flight details (where applicable) to demonstrate that

they are leaving the UK. The student will be supported to make a new visa application when they are in a position to return.

7 Expired Visas, Visa Extensions and Visa Refusals

Any current student requiring a visa extension, either for their current course or a new one, will be directed to the International Officer, based in Student Services, for assistance with their application. A CAS will only be issued for an extension where the student is making satisfactory progress on their course and is expected to successfully complete their course within the additional time. If a student is progressing from one course to another and requires a visa to do so, (for example, a student moving from a pre-sessional English language course to a PhD) they will not be permitted to register for their new course until they have provided evidence that they completed their visa application, regardless of how much time is left on their previous visa.

7.1 Expired Visas
It is expected that the majority of students will be issued with a visa for the duration of their course. However, as our academic regulations allow students to transfer between courses and in some cases within the assessment regulations, allow them to restudy failed modules, there can be instances where a student may need a visa extension.

7.1.1 Monitoring
- All visa end dates are recorded by the relevant course administrator when students first enrol and are checked each time the student re-enrols at the start of each academic year.
- The visa end dates are also retained centrally by the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager in the 'CAS Tracker' and within SITS, which details all visas and passports of visa sponsored students.
- Where a student's visa does not last until the end of the course, within the final academic year of the visa, the student will be advised by their administrator that they need to make a new application and be directed to the International Officer for advice on the application process.

7.1.2 New CAS Assignment for an Extension
- Provided that a student who requires a visa extension meets the most up to date CAS requirements, they will be eligible to have a new CAS assigned.
- The relevant administrator will check that there are no concerns regarding the student's ability to complete the course and will also check what fees or other charges the student may still be liable for, either those outstanding or those incurred as a result of the visa extension.
- For undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, the end date of the extension will determined by the modules outstanding and the timing of these and associated assessments. These would typically fall at the end of the academic year. Where a student has been offered a restudy opportunity as a result of a Course Assessment Board decision, a 'Restudy Evaluation' form (appendix 4) will be completed by the Course Manager which will document the assessment decision on whether the student should be offered the opportunity, taking into account their conduct and performance on the course to date. Postgraduate Research students needing an extension are required to discuss the extra time required with their Director of Studies and must agree a work plan to demonstrate that the time required is appropriate and not excessive; this plan is required before an extension request is considered by the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager.
- All extension visa applications are supported by the International Officer to ensure that the students have the best chance of success in their application. To ensure that this will take place and that the student is supported in their application, the 'extension CAS' will be given directly to the International Officer, rather than to the student. If a student is applying from their home country, for example during a

vacation period, they will receive their CAS directly, but will be directed to the International Officer for assistance.

- Due to rules around academic progression, there are certain circumstances where a student is unable to apply for a visa extension in the UK and must return to their home country to do so, for example when a PhD student transfers down to MPhil. Where a student is in this position, they will be advised of this at the earliest opportunity and will be required to travel home to make their application, preferably at the nearest vacation point. Any student in this position will still be able to access the support of the International Officer as outlined above before they leave the UK.
- Before a CAS is issued, the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager will refer to maximum length of time guidance to ensure that the student will be permitted to continue within these rules.

7.1.3 Post application
- Once the visa application has been submitted, the relevant administrator will contact the student at regular intervals for updates on the progress of their visa application, such as if they have attended their biometrics processing appointment, until confirmation of the decision reached has been received.
- The Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager is able to monitor the CAS status on SMS to find out when a CAS has been 'USED' - meaning that it has been used as part of a visa application. If there is no movement and the student does not hear anything, the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager is able to make enquiries through the UKVI Premium Service, to which the University is subscribed, to request an update.
- If the student has been successful in their application, they must take their new BRP to their administrator for an updated copy to be added to their file and the 'CAS Tracker' as soon as possible following receipt.
- If the application has been unsuccessful, consideration will be taken as to whether the University is willing to risk another visa refusal, based on the level of the students' culpability in the reason for refusal – see section 7.2.4.

7.2 Visa Refusals

7.2.1 New Students
- Where a potential new student informs us that their visa has been refused, a number of considerations will take place before a new CAS is issued, as repeated failures can affect the University's sponsor licence.
- The University will not automatically issue another CAS under any circumstances.
- Once the student has informed the University that their visa has been refused, the student is required to provide the relevant administrator with a copy of the refusal letter, so the reason for refusal can be determined and investigated. Without this letter, no further consideration will be given and the course offer will be withdrawn.

7.2.2 Visa Refusal Considerations
Upon receipt of a visa refusal notice from a student, the University will review the information within it to make an assessment of the refusal reasons. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis and previous decisions will not set a precedent for future ones.
- Where has the refusal reason originated from:
  - Is it a CAS error (an error made by the University)?
  - Is it due to an error with the student's application (such as incomplete paperwork or lack of sufficient funds)?
  - Is it as a result of a Credibility Interview by an Entry Clearance Officer (ECO)?

If the refusal is down to a CAS error, this will be investigated, to determine why it occurred and how to correct it. If it is a 'simple' administration error, the CAS will be reissued, ensuring that it is correct. If the reason appears to be more complex, the Student Sponsor Guidance will be checked to ensure that current knowledge is up to date, to ensure that the application has the best possible chance to be successful the second time.

If the error is of the student's making, it will be investigated to determine if it is a genuine error, such as omitting paperwork, or if the application is suspected to be of a fraudulent nature. If it is a genuine error, it will be clearly explained to the student what the problem has been and how they should rectify this for a future application. The International Officer will be put in contact with the student to discuss further and to provide assistance with the new application. The University is not obliged to support a second visa application where a student has made an error. If the error is more serious and/or there is a suspicion of fraudulent activity then the CAS will not be reissued.

If the error is based on the availability of funds, the student will be asked to provide copies of their financial statements, both those submitted with their initial application and the ones they intend to submit in a second application so they can be checked to see if they appear to be sufficient for a second application. As applicants have to provide copies of their bank statements before the first CAS is issued we will also check against those held on file to see where the discrepancies lie.

If the student has been refused due to the outcome of a credibility interview with an ECO, it is unlikely that a student would succeed upon reapplication, so a new CAS will not be issued unless it is clear that there was a specific refusal reason which can be overcome. In order to make an informed decision, the interview transcript will be requested from the Premium Customer Service team. Advice issued to applicants, which is available on the Harper Adams University website regarding credibility interviews is in appendix 5.

The Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager is consulted in all visa refusal cases and no CAS will be reissued without agreement from the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager. If the student has received their refusal too close to the start of the course, they may not be issued with a new CAS if they would not be able to start the course within an acceptable timeframe and may be offered a place on the course for the following intake as an alternative. The University reserves the right not to reissue a CAS under any circumstances.

7.2.3 Appeal/Administrative Review
* If the student is eligible to appeal a refusal decision, or request an Administrative Review, this will be documented in the refusal letter, along with instructions on how to proceed. Students will be encouraged to follow this route as a new CAS will not be required,
* Where deemed necessary, the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager will consult with the Premium Service Manager for advice.
* If following appeal/review the refusal still stands, the process above will be followed to determine if a new CAS will be issued, however it is unlikely that a new CAS would be issued.

7.2.4 Continuing students

- Continuing students are treated along the same lines as new students with regard to considering whether to issue a new CAS following a visa refusal, but they will have the benefit of being able to access the International Officer directly for support.
- Continuing students should be aware of the implications of being an over-stayer, especially if they are reapplying after refusal or appeal. In some circumstances, it may be in the best interests of the student to return to their home country to reapply.
- If a continuing student becomes an over-stayer, due to a refusal or exhausted appeal, and they do not have a new application in the system, the University is obligated to report the student to UKVI and they will be unable to continue with their studies. The University will not support future visa sponsorship requirements in this instance.

7.2.5 Issues considered when a new CAS and reapplication is requested

- What are the chances of success of appeal or reapplication? Is it in the best interests of the student and/or the University to risk further visa refusals in the future?
- Would the student miss the start of the course as a result of reapplication? Students are not normally permitted to enrol on a course after the start date; if the start is missed would there be a risk to their ability to successfully complete the course?
- If the student is currently on course, what is their status? Are they currently in good academic and financial standing? Is there an option of an interim award to account for studies already undertaken?

7.3 Retention of deposit for refusals

Where a new student has had their visa refused, and the decision is taken not to issue another CAS, Harper Adams University reserves the right to retain a proportion of the tuition fee deposit paid by the student to cover administration and associated costs. The amount retained will be considered on a case by case basis but will not exceed £200. The University also reserves the right to retain the cost of the CAS where a CAS is withdrawn due to the student no longer planning to make a visa application.

8 Reporting International Students to the Home Office

The reporting of students and applicants to the Home Office will be done in line with the latest version of the Student Sponsor Guidance and the 'Reporting Student Activity' section of The Sponsor Management System User Guide which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sponsorship-information-for-employers-and-educators. This is a mandatory requirement with which the University must abide.

When reporting students/applicants via SMS, the date which the activity took place, rather than the date reported, is used to ensure that the Home Office receives the most accurate information on the student, particularly if the activity reported results in a curtailment of the leave to remain.

This type of reporting can only be done in relation to a 'USED' CAS. If changes need to be made before the student has made their visa application, they can be done by adding a sponsor note to the CAS, (including date changes, finance changes or course changes) or the CAS can be withdrawn and a new one issued, without penalty. The Premium Service may also be used to ensure notifications go to the right department of UKVI if required, or urgently need to be made.

If a student needs to be reported, but they did not have a CAS for their visa application, or they are a student visitor, they can be reported to MigrantReporting@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk with full details including relevant dates.

8.1 Poor Attendance and Engagement
- Section 5 on Engagement and Attendance Monitoring details how individual student groups are monitored during the course of the academic year.
- If the decision has been made to withdraw the student from the course due to poor engagement, they will be reported via SMS within 10 working days of the final decision being made. This report must also contain details of the students' plans to leave the UK, including flight details where possible.

8.2 Non-enrolment
- If a student is expected at enrolment and does not attend then they are reported on SMS as a non-enrolment within 10 working days of the end of the 'enrolment period' which is the 'Latest date a student can be accepted on to the course' on the CAS.
- If the student does not attend enrolment and they have informed the University that they are definitely not enrolling, then they will be reported on SMS, as soon as possible, even if they are still within the enrolment period.
- If a student is delayed, but they are in contact with the University, then there is no requirement to report them, provided that they can still arrive within the designated 'enrolment period' of the course.
- If a student has agreed a new enrolment date, due to unavoidable delays, this is reported under the 'Student is delayed' category on the SMS. This is to ensure that leave to remain is not affected and that the student will still be permitted to enter the country upon arrival.

8.3 Visa Refusals
- As soon as possible after notification has been received from an applicant or student that their visa application has been unsuccessful, and the University is not prepared to support an administrative review, this has to be reported to the Home Office via SMS.
- The student is required to provide the refusal notification as proof as SMS cannot currently display the difference between a 'USED' CAS which has been refused or approved.
- This is required by the Home Office to demonstrate that the University is actively monitoring the CAS that are issued.

8.4 Early Completions

Where a student completes their course early, significantly in advance of their original course end date, they will be reported via SMS to the Home Office within 10 days of the confirmation of their award by the relevant Awarding Board. This action will end the University's visa sponsorship responsibilities and curtail the students' visa in line with the new course end date. Students will still have the extra 'wrap-up' time which they would normally be entitled to but this will be recalculated. Any student in this position will be notified in advance.

8.5 Withdrawal or Suspension of Sponsorship

Students will also be reported if sponsorship stops, for reasons including:
- The student has withdrawn from the course (including moving to another sponsor)
- The student has been excluded from the course or the University
- The student is postponing their studies (meaning that they will need a new CAS on their return)
- The student has moved immigration category, meaning sponsorship is no longer required (but they are remaining on the course)

Where a student has been withdrawn as a result of a Course Assessment Board outcome, the Course Assessment Board Chair will notify the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager, who will report the end of sponsorship of the student within 10 days of the date that the student will have been officially notified.

Reporting of this type will be done on SMS as soon as possible and within 10 working days of confirmation of the cessation. The student will receive a curtailment notification from the Home Office confirming the new end date of their visa.

8.6 Change in circumstances

The following Change of Circumstances notifications are also required to be reported:
- The student changes course, including where a new ATAS certificate is required
- The student has a confirmed work placement address (as placement addresses are not known at the point a CAS is allocated)
- The student has changed their study location, for example when a research postgraduate student conducts as period of their research at a different location
- The students BRP card has an error.
- The student has successfully completed their course of study and is eligible to make an application for the Graduate Route.

8.7 Course Completion Confirmation for the Graduate Route

The Graduate Route is a scheme which allows students who have successfully completed their course of study in the UK to apply for a visa to remain in the UK for an additional 2 years. The University is required to report that the student has successfully completed their course, and that they were in the UK to study it, to enable them to apply. This is done via the SMS system as a 'Change of Circumstances' option as above.

8.8 Student Overworking

In the event that a student has overworked at Harper Adams University despite the measures put in place to prevent this, or where suspicions and associated investigations conclude that a student has overworked with another employer, within any Monday to Sunday period, the situation will be reported to the Premium Customer Service Manager at the Home Office for appropriate action to be undertaken. The student's visa will almost certainly be revoked.

9   Students entering the UK as a Visitor

Students who wish to study in the UK for a course of 6 months or less are able to enter the UK on a Standard Visitor visa. This may also be appropriate for students who were previously visa sponsored and are required to enter the UK for a short period to complete their course.

The students who would make use of a visitor visa tend to fall into the following categories:
- Exchange students studying in the region of one term on campus
- Students attending only one module of a course, by special request over a limited period
- PhD students who are distance learners, arriving for course related activities.
- PhD students registered at an international university arriving to carry out a short period of research training within their field of research (Visiting PhD Researchers).

Students are advised to use the 'Do I need a visa?' online checker to see if they are required to apply for a visitor visa in advance (https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa) Non-visa Nationals are not required to apply for the visa in advance and should declare their intention to study to a Border Force Officer on arrival. Visa Nationals must apply for their visa in advance.

In addition to entering the UK as a general visitor to study a course of up to 6 months, students who are studying an English language course of up to 11 months are able to apply for a Short Term Study visa which only available to students on those courses.

The most up to date information on these visa categories can be found at https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa and https://www.gov.uk/visa-to-study-english/eligibility

9.1 Applications
- Applications from students who will enter the UK as a visitor will be considered in the normal way. They are still required to satisfy entry requirements, including verified English language.
- Visiting PhD Researchers will apply either directly to a member of staff or via the Research Office. There is no formal application process, however, they are required to apply in writing/by email and to undergo informal English language assessment via interview, and confirm availability of funds for the duration of their visit.
- Where necessary, they will be interviewed and will receive offer letters in the normal way.
- The individual student circumstances will determine whether these students are required to pay fees and whether any payment will need to be made in advance of arrival.
- Students are required to provide copies of their passport and any relevant visas so immigration status can be checked.
- As with visa sponsored students, the course/area of research will be checked to see if the student will require an ATAS certificate to study.
- As these students do not require a CAS, they will be provided with an equivalent style letter to use with their visa application. This letter will include the student details, the course, any fees payable and where the student will be residing whilst on their course. The Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager will be consulted on the content of the letters to ensure that they meet requirements.
- Students are directed to the visitor visa section on the Home Office website (https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa) for assistance with their visa application to determine if they need to apply in advance or if they can declare their intentions to Border Force Officers on arrival at a UK port.

9.2 Enrolment

- Student visitors are required to enrol with their course administrator on the date communicated to them (in most cases, the course start date)
- In line with all other students they are required to complete online enrolment, including their contact details for the duration of their course. These are stored in the student record system in the usual way.
- They are also be required to bring their passport and visa, when they register in person, to allow for copies to be taken and right to study checks to be completed.
- Visiting PhD Researchers are required to enrol with the Research Office on their first day of attendance at the University. All Visiting PhD Researchers are logged on a database to track their arrival and departure dates.
- Enrolment for Visiting PhD Researchers requires a physical sign-in with the Research Office and completion of a Visitor Record Form which is checked and signed by the Research Office, and countersigned by the Director of Research who has oversight of all overseas Visiting Researchers.
- Visiting PhD Researchers are also required to bring their passport and visa when they register in person, to allow for copies to be taken and right to study checks to be completed.

9.3 Attendance monitoring

- Student visitors are subject to the same attendance monitoring requirements as other students. There are no attendance reporting requirements to the Home Office.
- All student visitors are required to confirm to their administrator the date that they are leaving campus at the end of their study period.
- Visiting PhD Researchers are required to sign in with the Research Office at least once a month to confirm their ongoing attendance.
- Visiting PhD Researchers are required to provide a final physical signature no more than two days prior to their departure.

9.4 Reporting to the Home Office

There are no reporting requirements for student visitors as these are only applicable to students who are sponsored. However, should the activities of a student visitor cause concern, or the University has lost contact with them, we will report this to MigrantReporting@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk This will be done by the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager.

10 Academic Visitors

Academic visitors are not students and are outside of the scope of this policy. Any member of staff who is considering inviting an academic visitor to the University should contact the Director of Research, working on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, for advice.

Academic visitors are those who come to the University for a short period of time, who work for a Higher Education Institution or are qualified to a level equivalent to PhD and work in a specialist field. These visitors can come to the University for professional, academic reasons, such as undertaking research, attending specialist lectures, accompanying overseas students or other related activities.

Academic visitor visas were formally a sub-section of the Business Visitor visa category. They now come under the more general Standard Visitor visa. Academic visitors can stay for a maximum of 12 months and must be self-funded. They are not permitted to work or fill a genuine vacancy at an institution or do more than 30 days of study.

As academic visitors are not classed as students, they are not required to make an application for a place in the normal way, nor enrol once they have arrived. However, they will require an invitation letter from the University, prepared by the person hosting them, outlining the purpose of their visit, the timescales and where they will reside during their stay. Specific responsibility for these visitors lies with the Head of the Department working in liaison with processes overseen by the Director of Research.

Once they have arrived it is best practice to take a copy of the passport and visa stamp to confirm that the visitor has the correct permission to stay. If any study is planned for the period, a right to study check must be completed before any study commences by the Director of Research.

If it is believed that there is an issue with an academic visitor, they can be reported to the Home Office in the same way as Student visitors by emailing MigrantReporting@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Further information on Standard Visitor visas can be found at https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa

11 Dealing with Agents for International students

The Home Office requires institutions to keep them informed of any agents that they use to recruit international students, either based in the UK or in an overseas country. This enables the Home Office to ensure that those who are involved in bringing students to the attention of UK based institutions are reputable and have no history of non-compliance.

The Home Office will not undertake checks on agents on behalf of institutions. It is the responsibility of the institution, through the Vice Chancellor to ensure that adequate background checks are made and references taken for all agents, before they commit to contracts.

All contracts for agents must be dealt with through the University's legal advisor and finalised following appropriate legal advice. Original copies should be held by the University Secretary's Office, with copies forwarded to the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager and the Assistant Registrar (Accreditation and Validations) who maintains the Register of Collaboration provision on the University website.

It is the responsibility of all those staff retaining the services of overseas agents to advise the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager and the Assistant Registrar (Accreditation and Validations) of agent details. A checklist is used in all instances at initial approval and the regular review of agent services.

Agent performance is reviewed by the Vice Chancellor before any contract is extended. Commission is paid in the following circumstances only:

- Commission will be paid to the agents for the first academic year of a referred student's full-time study of any academic programme.
- Commission shall be 10 % of full tuition fees for one academic year of study
- The agents will submit an invoice to HAU for payment of commission fees 30 days prior to the completion of the first term. Commission will be payable upon receipt of an invoice.
- Commission will only be paid when the fee payment for the academic year is complete and the student has remained on the programme beyond the refund deadline.
- Commission will not be paid when the student has successfully communicated directly with HAU prior to the agents becoming involved.

Agents are not permitted to check documents on behalf of the University, receive deposits from students, make offers or issue CAS to students.

The Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager is responsible for informing the Home Office of any new agents which the University becomes linked with by sending details to the Premium Customer Service Team (PCSTRegion.2@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk) as soon as possible after the contract has been finalised and when an agent is no longer used, and confirms the agent list at least annually.

Policy information

Date of last review	November 2020
Individual policy owner(s)	Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager
Collective oversight	Academic Board
Approval date	November 2021
Equality Impact Assessment approval date	November 2021
Date of next review	October 2022
Date and description of any minor amendments made: Removal of reference to the Tier 4 pilot Update to Section 5 due to new Student Engagement policy Inclusion on reporting for the Graduate Route Minor text updates.	

Harper Adams University

Fee and Immigration Status Enquiry Form

CONFIDENTIAL

Harper Adams University, in common with other UK universities, charges university fees at a higher level to students classified as "overseas" for fee purposes than to those classified as "home".

In order to allow a decision to be made on the fee status which would apply in the event of admission to Harper Adams University, you are asked to complete and return this form. The information given will be treated in confidence. **Please provide a copy of your passport identity page and any UK visas when you return this form.**

Please note that you may be asked to provide additional documents based on the information supplied when the form is returned. Please ensure that supporting documents are readily available to avoid any unnecessary delays in the processing of your application. Where applicable, the information provided in this form may also be used to determine eligibility for a student visa, so please ensure that all information is correct to the best of your knowledge as any false information could lead to a failed visa application.

When assessing fee eligibility, the University will use the latest guidance, applicable to Higher Education study in England, available at https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Fees-and-Money/England-fee-status

Please complete the form as accurately and as completely as possible.

1. Personal Details:

- Surname/Family Name: ………………………………………………………………………………….
- First Name(s): ………………………………………………………………………………………
- Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr): ………………………………………………………………………….
- Date of Birth: ………………………………………………………………………………………….

2. Student Details:

- Student Number (if known) :……………………………………………………………………………….
- Course of Study applied for: …………………………………………………………………………………
- Course Start Date (month and year): …………………./…………………………..

3. Residence Status:

- Country of Birth: ……………………………………………………………………………………
- Your Nationality/passport: …………………………………………………………………………
- Do you have Dual Nationality? If so what? …………………………………………………………..
- Your current country of residence:……………………………………………………………………
- Is there a specific reason why you are living in the country above, which would mean that you would normally be living elsewhere (i.e. due to parental work, for education purposes)? If so, what is it? ……
- Is there another country that you consider home:…………………………………………………….
- If so, why?………………………………………………………………………………………………

- Are you married/in a civil partnership?   Yes ❑   No ❑
- If yes, what is the nationality of your husband/wife/civil partner: ……………………………………….
- Current Immigration status of your husband/wife/civil partner:……………………………………………
- Nationality/nationalities of your parents:

  Mother:……………………………………………………………..

  Father:…………………………………………………………….

- Current Immigration status of your parents (if in the UK): ……………………………………………….
- Nationality/nationalities of any other relevant family members: …………………………………………… ……

- Where will you be resident on the 1st September in the year you commence your course?………
- What is your reason for this?………………………………………………………………………………

- If you are not currently in the UK, what date do you intend to arrive:…………………………………………

If you are already in the UK:

- Date you arrived in the UK (date, month, year): ………………./…………………../……………….…

- If you are an EU national, where were you resident at 10.59pm on 31st December 2020 (the date the UK officially left the EU)?...

- Are you entitled permanently to live and work in the UK/EU?　　Yes ❑　　　　No ❑

- What is your current immigration/visa status? ……………………………………………………………….
…… .

- If you are not entitled to permanently live and work in the UK/EU, what is the expiry date of your current Leave to Remain ('visa') (date, month, year): ……………/…………………../…………………..

- Were you born in the UK?　　Yes ❑　　　　No ❑

- If not, for what purpose did you originally enter the UK (e.g. study, employment): ……………………
……….

- If you were not born in the UK, have your applied, or are you intending to apply, for citizenship of the UK or other EU country?　Yes ❑　　　　No ❑

4. Residential History

- Please give FULL details of your countries of residence during the last ten years. Please be as specific as possible with regards to dates as this can have an impact on home fee eligibility:

Country	Dates	Please provide details of the reason for residency and any visas required

- Please give any other information which may assist the University in determining your fee status (including reason for being out of the UK if you are a British National):

………
………
………

6. Declaration:

Checklist:

- ☐ Completed all sections of the form
- ☐ Attached passport identity page and front cover, copies of relevant visas and any other relevant paperwork (including a valid 'share code' for EU settlement scheme)

- ☐ I confirm that the information given on this form is true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge, and that the documents supplied are genuine. No information requested or other significant information regarding myself and my family has been omitted. I understand that I may invalidate my course offer if I make a misleading or false statement. I also understand that, when requested, original documents must be presented at registration to the relevant staff member in order for my enrolment to be completed. I undertake to notify Harper Adams University immediately of any changes in my circumstances before the start of the course.

- ☐ **I confirm that, should the University require it, I give my permission for the Home Office to be contacted so an immigration background check can be conducted.**

Signature: …………………………………………………….. Date:………………………...

<u>Appendix 2</u>

<u>Student Route CAS Issuance checklist</u>

Student name:	
ID number:	
Course:	

To issue a student with a CAS for Student Route visa application purposes, we need to ensure that we have the documents listed below to demonstrate that we are satisfied to issue the student with a CAS.

<u>Documents Required</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1) Copies of all documents/ evidence used to make the offer to the student	• Application form	
	• Adequate qualifications (including copies and Naric print for overseas qualifications)	
	• Reference(s)	
	• English Language (either test results or auditable assessment of ability)	
	• Interview record	
	• Deposit (if not financially sponsored)	
	• CHECK – academic progression/maximum time on student visas – clarify any previous UK study and visas	
	• TB Test Certificate – Proof of negative test required *BEFORE* CAS is issued	
	• If self-funded – proof of maintenance is required *BEFORE* a CAS is issued	
	• Other credibility documents	
2) Contact details for the applicant	• Home Address • Residential Address • Contact phone numbers	
3) Copy of passport pages and permission to stay	• For application: Identity page (with photo) and any other visas	
4) Copy of UK Biometric card	• If held	
5) Copy of ATAS approval (if required)	• Certificate or electronic approval notice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office	

Form completed by:……………………………………………………………….Date:…………………………

Sponsored Student – Administrative sign-in form

As part of our sponsorship duties for students on a Student Route visa, the University is required to ensure that the contact details of students are up to date and that students are reminded of the conditions of their visa.

The University conducts these through administrative sign-ins, where the student meets with their administrator on at least a termly basis.

Students are notified of their sign in dates and locations at the start of term by their relevant administrator.

Academic Year	
Student Name	
Student Number	
Course	
Year of Study	

Note to students - by signing this form, you are declaring that you understand the working restrictions of your visa and that you are not undertaking paid or unpaid work which would take you in excess of this and put your visa sponsorship at risk.

Sign in date	Student Signature	Comments (changes to addresses etc)	Staff signature

Appendix 4

Eligibility for Opportunity to Repeat Study – Student Route visa Sponsored Students

Family Name: *Insert Family Name*   **First Name:** *Insert First Name*

Harper Adams Student ID Number: *Insert Student ID No.*

Course Name: *Insert Award Name and Year*

Original Graduation Date: *Insert original expected completion/graduation date`*
_____

Evaluation of Eligibility for Repeat Study by Course Team
Does the student meet the criteria for repeat study as stated within the assessment regulations? **YES / NO**

Has the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager confirmed that it is possible to extend the length of study? **YES / NO**

Please confirm the extent to which the student has engaged with/attended scheduled classes

Please include a short commentary (up to 80 words) on student attendance during the current academic year.

Do mitigating circumstances exist which may have had a significant influence upon student performance?

Please include a short commentary (up to 80 words) if factors outside the student's control have been experienced during the current academic year (if none, please state Not Applicable).

To what extent does the course team consider that the student is likely to be able to successfully complete a repeat restudy opportunity?

Please include a short commentary (up to 80 words) indicating the reasons why the course team believes that the student will be likely to successfully complete a repeat study opportunity.

Course Team recommendation to the Course Assessment Board: <mark>Please click to select</mark>

Course Assessment Board Decision:
.... **Signature (Chair of CAB)**   **Signature (Course Manager)**   **Date**

Please return this completed form, along with the student achievement profile (Course Assessment Board report) to the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager within 24 hours of the decision of the CAB

Information on Credibility Interviews

Admissions Department

November 2017

Harper Adams University

Information on Credibility Interviews

Credibility interviews are used as part of the assessment of the visa application and take place between the applicant and an Entry Clearance Officer (ECO). UKVI intend to interview most applicants, especially those from 'high-risk' countries so all applicants should make preparations for it. They will be conducted in English, without the assistance of an interpreter. Notification of the interview will be sent by email so it is important that you regularly check your emails to ensure you do not miss an invitation. If invited for an interview you must attend, otherwise your visa application will be refused.

The questions asked will be used to confirm that you are a genuine student and will cover areas relating to your intention to study and finances. Below are a number of example questions:

Relating to intention to study

- Why do you want to study in the UK?
- Why did you choose this University?
- Which other courses/Universities/Colleges did you consider?
- Where is this University?
- Where will you stay during your studies?
- Why did you choose the course?
- What qualification will you receive at the end of your course?
- How is the course relevant to your future career path?
- What are you planning to do after your studies?

Relating to finances

- What is your current occupation?
- Who is financing your studies?
- Do you have easy access to the money shown in your application?
- What is your relationship to your financial sponsor?
- Do you know how much your living expenses will be throughout the course?
- Do you know how much you are allowed to work?
- Are you relying on being able to work to help finance your studies?

The questions above are examples of the types of questions that you can expect and are not an exhaustive list. They should be used as a guide to ensure that you know what you need to about your course and the University. They are not designed to catch applicants out and genuine students should not experience any difficulties. The Home Office will also use the interview as a way of checking that your English Language is at the level stated on your CAS.

If your application is refused on the basis of the interview, you can request that the decision be reviewed by an Entry Clearance Manager. You have 28 days from the date of the decision to make an appeal and appeals must be made in writing. Details of how to do this will be included in the refusal notice letter.

Further information can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/points-based-system-student-route and https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Applying-for-a-Student-route-visa-outside-the-UK

Annexes

1) ATAS Guidance from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

2) SMS User guides

<u>Annex 1</u>

<u>ATAS Guidance from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office webpages</u>

The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) requires most international students who are subject to UK immigration control, who are intending to study at postgraduate level in certain sensitive subjects, knowledge of which could be used in programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) or their means of delivery, to apply for an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate before they can study in the UK. Nationals of some countries are exempt from requiring ATAS clearance and the most up to date list can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-out-if-you-require-an-atas-certificate

<u>Courses with the following CAH3 codes require ATAS clearance at Undergraduate (courses leading to a postgraduate qualification), Enhanced MEng, Taught Masters, Research Masters, PhD/Doctoral and Visiting Researcher level:</u>

  (CAH07-01-01) physics
  (CAH07-03-03) materials science
  (CAH10-01-02) mechanical engineering
  (CAH10-01-04) aeronautical and aerospace engineering
  (CAH10-01-09) chemical, process and energy engineering
  (CAH10-02-01) minerals technology
  (CAH10-02-02) materials technology

<u>Courses with the following CAH3 codes require ATAS clearance at Research Masters, PhD/Doctoral and Visiting Researcher level only:</u>

  (CAH02-02-01) pharmacology
  (CAH02-02-02) toxicology
  (CAH02-02-03) pharmacy
  (CAH02-03-10) biomedical sciences (non-specific)
  (CAH02-03-12) others in subjects allied to medicine
  (CAH03-01-01) biosciences (non-specific)
  (CAH03-01-02) biology (non-specific)
  (CAH03-01-03) ecology and environmental biology
  (CAH03-01-04) microbiology and cell science
  (CAH03-01-05) plant sciences
  (CAH03-01-06) zoology
  (CAH03-01-07) genetics
  (CAH03-01-08) molecular biology, biophysics and biochemistry
  (CAH03-01-10) others in biosciences
  (CAH05-01-02) others in veterinary sciences
  (CAH06-01-02) agricultural sciences
  (CAH07-01-02) astronomy
  (CAH07-02-01) chemistry
  (CAH07-03-01) physical sciences (non-specific)
  (CAH08-01-01) sciences (non-specific)
  (CAH08-01-02) natural sciences (non-specific)
  (CAH09-01-01) mathematics
  (CAH09-01-02) operational research
  (CAH10-01-01) engineering (non-specific)

(CAH10-01-05) naval architecture

(CAH10-01-06) bioengineering, medical and biomedical engineering

(CAH10-01-07) civil engineering

(CAH10-01-08) electrical and electronic engineering

(CAH10-02-03) polymers and textiles

(CAH10-02-04) maritime technology

(CAH10-02-05) biotechnology

(CAH11-01-01) computer science

(CAH11-01-02) information technology

(CAH11-01-03) information systems

(CAH11-01-04) software engineering

(CAH11-01-05) artificial intelligence

(CAH12-01-05) others in geographical studies

ATAS certificates are issued for an exact course at a specific institution. If a student changes course and/or institution then they must apply for a new certificate. The students are required to include a list of modules as part of their application.

It is the responsibility of the HEI to accurately assign the CAH3 code to the course and to inform the student of this and of their need for an ATAS certificate. It will be included in the CAS requirements for students who require a Student Route visa. The HEI is also responsible for ensuring that students who require clearance have it before they start their course.

Full Home Office guidance on ATAS can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme (link correct as at 20.10.21)

Annex 2

The UK Visas and Immigration section of the Gov.uk website contains an entire repository of documents on how to use the Sponsor Management System (SMS).

The guides can be found at the following links:

Guide 1 – Introduction to the SMS system:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/330934/1._Introduction_to_SMS.pdf

Guide 2 – Manage your Sponsorship licence:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/330939/2._Managing_your_licence.pdf

Guide 3 – Applications, Renewals and Services:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/330941/3._Applications__renewals_and_services.pdf

Guide 4 – Creating and Assigning CAS:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/330942/4._Creating_and_assigning_CAS.pdf

Guide 5 – Reporting Student Activity:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/352272/5._Reporting_student_activity.pdf

Guide 6 – Miscellaneous CAS Functions:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/330963/6._Miscellaneous_CAS_functions.pdf

Given the size of some of these documents, they are best viewed online, rather than in printed copy.

Links correct as at 20.10.21