



St George's
University of London

Student Visa Responsibilities



STUDENT VISA RESPONSIBILITIES

As a student sponsored for a Student Visa by St George's, University of London (SGUL), you are required to understand and comply with the responsibilities and conditions of your visa set by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), and to co-operate with SGUL in fulfilling its sponsorship duties.

This guide outlines your immigration responsibilities as a sponsored student and provides information on protecting your immigration status in the UK. Please read this guide carefully, as any breaches to your responsibilities can have serious implications on your studies and continued stay in the UK.

Sponsorship of International Students is offered under the [Student Visa Sponsorship and CAS Issuing Policy](#).

International Advising Team

The International Advising Team (IAT) provides a confidential visa advice service to prospective and current students and has a responsibility for ensuring institutional student immigration compliance. Please contact the IAT if you have any questions, or if you are worried that you may have breached the conditions of your visa.

The IAT will contact sponsored students periodically regarding their immigration records and the conditions of their visa. You must respond to any instructions promptly.

Contact us at student.immigration@sgul.ac.uk

CONTENTS

SECTION ONE

ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

SECTION TWO

CHANGES TO YOUR STUDIES – VISA IMPLICATIONS

SECTION THREE

WITHDRAWAL OF VISA SPONSORSHIP

SECTION FOUR

SPONSORED STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

SECTION FIVE

WORKING CONDITIONS

SECTION SIX

PROTECTING YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS: CHECKLIST

SECTION ONE – ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

Academic engagement and attendance

As a sponsored student, your visa status is dependent on your continued attendance and engagement on your programme. You are required to attend consistently, and be punctual to all in-person and online timetabled sessions, including lectures, examinations, meetings with supervisors, and any other arranged session. Your programme team will regularly check and confirm your attendance and engagement with the IAT.

SGUL is required to keep a record of your continued engagement with studies as part of its visa sponsorship duties. The specific points of recorded engagement will vary for each course. If you are deemed to have stopped engaging with your studies, support will be offered to assist re-engagement. If a lack of attendance or academic engagement persists then you risk being withdrawn from your course, which will result in a [withdrawal of visa sponsorship](#).

These responsibilities still apply if you are studying off site, including if you are on a work/clinical placement, professional training year, or study abroad programme.

You should read the University's [Attendance and Academic Engagement Policy](#).

Authorised absence

If you become ill during your studies, or if you are unable to attend or complete work due to other circumstances, then you must let your programme team know as soon as possible. They may agree to authorise your absence; you may be required to provide evidence to support the reason for your absence.

Please note that an academic decision to authorise any absence is separate from any actions taken regarding your visa sponsorship. Therefore, it is important to discuss any prolonged absence with the IAT so that they can advise.

Automatic withdrawal – 60 day absence rule

If at any point during term time, you do not (or are not required to) attend or engage in your studies for 60 days or more, we are required to withdraw visa sponsorship. This includes if you are required to re-sit without attendance, i.e. 'assessment only' year.

SECTION TWO – CHANGES TO YOUR STUDIES – VISA IMPLICATIONS

As a student visa sponsor, SGUL has a legal obligation to inform UKVI if there has been a change to your academic circumstances. Please read this section for guidance about how different changes during your studies may affect your visa and which of these changes must be reported to UKVI.

Before making any decision, it is important to note that UKVI has limited the number of years sponsored students can study in the UK at undergraduate level to 5 years (with an exception for medicine). Therefore, any changes to your studies that will result in you spending longer than planned to obtain your qualification (e.g. undertaking a professional training year) must take this rule into consideration as SGUL will be unable to sponsor you for any study that exceeds this time limit.

There is no cap on time spent studying at postgraduate level, but you must continue to meet the academic progression requirements.

Please be aware that if we do notify UKVI of a change in circumstance, we will always email you first to advise you, another important reason why you must keep your contact details updated

Changing your course

Your Student visa only allows you to study the course specified on your CAS, and a change of course is only permitted with the same visa in very limited circumstances.

You will initially need to consult with your programme team to see whether a change of course is academically viable. The IAT will then be able to advise whether your existing Student visa would permit this change, or if you need to apply for a new Student visa.

If you are advised that you must apply for a new visa, you will normally have to make your application from outside the UK, although there are exceptions, for example, when changing from a bachelor's degree to an integrated programme (see below). You will not be able to start your new course until you have returned on the new visa.

Integrated programmes

Students who have been issued a Student visa for a bachelor's degree only and are progressing to an integrated Masters are considered as an exception and will be able to apply to [extend their visa](#) inside the UK, usually in the summer of their third year.

Early completion

SGUL is required to report to UKVI if you complete your course earlier than originally stated on your CAS. Depending on how much time is left on your visa, UKVI will curtail your visa to the standard four-month post-study period you are entitled to following the end of your course.

If you leave the UK after your permission has been curtailed, or you are overseas at the point of curtailment action, you may not be permitted re-entry to the UK on your Student visa.

Changing your mode of study

Your Student visa will have been issued on the basis that you are engaging with your studies on a full-time basis. It is therefore not possible to switch the mode of study and continue studying on the same visa; UKVI views this as a change of course.

SGUL will only sponsor a part-time Student visa for certain postgraduate courses. You should contact the IAT for more information. If visa sponsorship is offered, you will need to obtain a new Student visa before beginning on the changed mode of study. The visa application would need to be made from outside the UK; UKVI does not allow for this application to be made inside the UK.

Please note:

- i) UKVI does not provide a refund of the immigration health surcharge paid during the application process for the current visa, and this surcharge would need to be paid again for the new application.
- ii) a part-time Student visa is more restrictive – it does not permit work (paid or unpaid) or allow dependant family members.

Interruption of studies

An interruption of studies (IOS) is a temporary break in your studies that has been authorised by your programme team. The IOS is normally given for a complete academic year or until the start of the next academic year.

If the IOS is for more than 60 days, SGUL is required to report a withdrawal of visa sponsorship. You will be unable to stay in the UK during your period of interruption, your visa will be curtailed, and you will be expected to leave the UK before your 'curtailment end date', i.e., the new date that your immigration permission will end.

Once your return to study has been approved by your programme team, you can request a new CAS from the IAT for a Student visa application. You will need to make this application in your home country.

If the IOS is for 60 days or less, St George's can continue visa sponsorship provided you can still complete your course within the validity of your existing visa.

'Assessment only year' – re-sitting out of attendance

If you are required to 'resit without attendance', SGUL is unable to meet its obligations as a sponsor and therefore must withdraw sponsorship of your visa during the academic year or term that you are not required to attend.

UKVI will take action with this information to curtail (shorten) your current visa. You cannot stay in the UK on a Student visa which has been issued for study at SGUL if you are not required to attend. You will need to leave the UK before the 'curtailment end date', i.e. the new date that your immigration permission will end.

You will then apply for a Standard Visitor Visa, to come back to the UK in order to attend your exams. The IAT can provide you with a letter confirming your details and exam dates for the purpose of returning to the UK as a visitor.

Once your exams are over, you should leave the UK again to await the results. If you subsequently progress into the next year of your course, you will need to request a CAS from the IAT in order to apply for a new Student visa.

Re-sitting with attendance

If you are required to repeat an academic year with attendance, you can remain in the UK and continue your current Student visa. Your course end date will change as your course will be one year longer, so at some stage before your current visa expires you will need to make a visa application to cover the additional time. You can make this application in the UK. The visa application needs to be made no more than 3 months before your current visa expires. For more information, go to 'Extending your visa'.

Intercalating year

SGUL can continue to sponsor medical students who intercalate internally at SGUL or with another university sponsor but is required to report the intercalation to UKVI. If you are intercalating at a different institution, that institution will be responsible for notifying UKVI of any relevant changes during that period.

It is your responsibility to notify the IAT prior to starting the intercalation so that they can report this promptly to UKVI.

You will need to apply for an extra year of immigration permission to complete your medical studies, you can choose to apply to extend your Student visa before or after you intercalate.

For more information, including costs, go to '[Extending your Visa](#)'.

Professional Training Year (PTY)

As a sponsored student you can complete a PTY as part of your study in the UK provided SGUL can continue to monitor your attendance and engagement on the placement. The placement must be an assessed and integral part of your course and take up no more than 50% of the total duration of your course.

Before confirming a PTY, you should ensure that you will not exceed the [five-year study time limit](#) that applies to study at bachelor's degree level and that you understand the additional visa costs for the extra year of study. Please contact the IAT to discuss.

SGUL are required to report details of your PTY, including the location and name of the work placement provider.

You will need to apply for an extra year of immigration permission to complete your course, you can choose to apply to extend your Student visa, before or after you complete the PTY.

For more information, including costs, go to '[Extending your visa](#)'.

Working away and study abroad

If you are an undergraduate student undertaking an approved period of study abroad as part of your course or a postgraduate student approved to 'work away' (e.g. for fieldwork or writing up), SGUL may continue sponsorship of your Student visa during the permitted activity, provided we can continue to monitor your academic engagement with your studies during this period.

It is your responsibility to notify the IAT in advance if you are planning on working away or undertaking a period of study abroad. SGUL are required to report these details as a change of location to UKVI.

Withdrawal

SGUL is required to report a [withdrawal of visa sponsorship](#) if you cease to be a student because you withdraw from your studies, or you have been withdrawn by the University.

Your visa will be curtailed (shortened), and you will be expected to leave the UK or submit an in-time visa application before your 'curtailment end date', i.e., the new date that your immigration permission will end.

If you have been withdrawn by the University but submit an appeal against this decision, SGUL is still required to report a withdrawal of visa sponsorship because you will not be actively studying at this time. You will be advised to return home to await the outcome of the appeal. If successful, you will need to apply for a new Student visa from outside the UK.

SECTION THREE – WITHDRAWAL OF VISA SPONSORSHIP

If SGUL is required to withdraw its visa sponsorship for you, a report will be made to UKVI, who will curtail (shorten) your visa and you will be required to leave the UK. We will always email you before any withdrawal report is made. Please note the stages below:

- **Report the withdrawal of sponsorship** – The IAT will report withdrawal of sponsorship to UKVI and then send confirmation to you.
- **Notification of curtailment** – UKVI will send you a ‘notification of curtailment’ by email or post. This will confirm that your Student visa has been curtailed and provide a new visa expiry date, which is typically 60 days from the date of the notification. It is difficult to say how long it will take for UKVI to curtail your immigration permission. They could make a decision the day they receive the report from SGUL or it could take many months.

- **Return home or submit a new visa application**
To ensure that you protect your immigration status, you should plan to leave the UK as soon as possible (and at the latest, prior to your visa expiring) unless you submit a valid in-time visa application to extend your permission to stay in the UK.

Please be aware, your immigration permission will be curtailed, even if you do not receive the notice of curtailment. To avoid the risk of accidentally staying in the UK illegally, you should leave the UK within 60 days of the date when SGUL reported you to UKVI. If you are not sure whether your immigration permission has already been curtailed, you should contact the IAT who can help you to check.

- **Re-entry to the UK** – If your immigration permission has been curtailed and you leave the UK, or are overseas at the time when your immigration permission is curtailed, then you should not try to travel back to the UK with this permission.

If you try to re-enter the UK you may be refused entry and returned home. This refusal to allow you to enter the UK will form a permanent part of your immigration history and you will have to disclose it on all future visa applications you make. You will need to apply for a new visa outside the UK, if you are permitted to resume your studies at a later date.

- **Overstaying** – If you stay beyond the visa expiry date without having submitted an in-time visa application, you will be classed as an ‘overstayer’. Overstaying is a criminal offence and may result in a ban on re-entry to the UK and have consequences for any future immigration applications you make to the Home Office.

Please note:

- i) Time spent in the UK waiting for your visa to be curtailed still counts towards the UKVI time limit on study cap.
- ii) You may continue to work and **access the NHS** until the new end date of your cancelled Student immigration permission. If you leave the UK before this date, your visa will be automatically cancelled and you will lose these rights.
- iii) Anyone who is dependent on your Student visa will also lose the conditions of their visa and will need to return home with you.

Is there any way I can stay in the UK?

In some cases you may be able to apply for further permission to stay in the UK, for example:

- If you have a well-founded fear that you would face persecution if you return home
- If you are not well enough to travel
- If you are able to make an immigration application for another reason (e.g. studies, work, to stay with family members).

If you think any of the above might apply to you, you should seek advice from a regulated specialist immigration adviser.

SECTION FOUR – SPONSORED STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Changes to immigration documentation during studies

You must provide the University with your passport and visa documentation at enrolment. Thereafter, if you apply for a new visa or a new passport at any point during your studies, you are required to provide a copy of this to the IAT.

Please note the steps that you need to follow in the situations below:

- i) **Switch visa or status** – if you switch from a Student visa to another visa category (e.g. ILR or BNO visa), or have another status that means you no longer require a Student visa, you must notify the IAT of the change straight away and provide documentary evidence (normally a visa/BRP or new passport). SGUL is required to report this change to UKVI and cease visa sponsorship.
- ii) **Submit a new visa application** – if your current visa is due to expire while you are still studying, then you must provide evidence that you have submitted an ‘in-time’ application (i.e. an application made before your current visa expires) to the IAT and inform us immediately of the outcome of the application. You must provide a copy of the new visa/BRP when this is issued.
- iii) **Acquire a different nationality** – you must inform the IAT (and UKVI) if you acquire a different nationality and provide documentary evidence of this.
- iv) **Lose your visa/BRP** – if you lose your visa/BRP, or it is stolen, you are required by UKVI to [apply for a replacement](#) at an additional cost. You must notify the IAT straight away and provide proof of the application and a copy of the new visa/biometric residence permit (BRP) when this is issued.
- v) **Obtain a replacement visa/BRP** – if you apply for a replacement visa/BRP (e.g. because you have reported a change of nationality or name) you must notify the IAT straight away and provide a copy of the new visa/BRP when this is issued.

Keeping your contact and personal details up-to-date

You have an immigration responsibility to keep us updated if you change your address or personal details. We must always hold your up-to-date contact details; this includes your mobile telephone number and personal email address. You can update SGUL through [eVision](#).

Changes you must report to UKVI

There are various changes that you have an immigration responsibility to report directly to UKVI. These include changes to:

- **Contact details** (including your residential address and email address)
- Name (e.g. if you have got married)
- Criminal convictions
- **Passport number**
- Dependants’ details
- Nationality
- Gender

How do I report a change to UKVI?

This depends on whether you have a BRP or a digital eVisa:

- BRP – you can [report the change online](#)
- eVisa – you must [sign into your UKVI account](#) to update your details

If you have a BRP, you are required to [apply for a new BRP](#) if you report certain changes, e.g. nationality, name, gender.

Extending your visa

There are various reasons why you may need to extend your Student visa, e.g. you are repeating an academic year, or you have intercalated or undertaken a Professional Training Year.

Once the IAT have confirmed that the visa extension is academically supported, you will be sent a CAS Request Form to complete. The IAT will advise you if you can make your visa extension application from within the UK or whether you need to return overseas to submit your application.

You will have to pay the [application fee](#) and the [immigration healthcare surcharge](#) as part of your application.

If you are applying within the UK, your application must be submitted no earlier than three months before your current visa permission ends.

Please note, if your course requires an [ATAS certificate](#), you must have received the new one before you can request the extension.

More information about extending your visa can be found on our [EU and international student support pages](#).

If you apply to extend your visa from within the UK, **you will be unable to travel outside of the UK and the Common Travel Area while your visa application is in progress**, as doing so will automatically withdraw your visa application and this may affect your ability to continue your studies and/or re-enter the UK.

Changes to your research and ATAS certificate

If you are studying at postgraduate level you may have required ATAS security clearance to study your subject. This depends on the course you are studying. Your offer letter and CAS will have confirmed if you require ATAS clearance. If so, you must have applied for and been granted an ATAS certificate before you applied for your Student visa.

You are required to **apply for a new ATAS certificate within 28 days** if:

- you change your course to a course that also requires ATAS; or
- you apply for an extension of leave to continue and complete the course; or
- the area of research/modules change for the course you originally applied to; or
- you move to another institution.

It is your responsibility to [check if you require ATAS clearance](#).

Contact the IAT if you believe you need to apply for a new ATAS certificate. If you are unsuccessful in gaining an ATAS certificate, you may be required to suspend or withdraw from your studies.

SECTION FIVE – WORKING CONDITIONS

Working

Your Student visa may allow you to work but there are restrictions on this including both the number of hours you can work and the type of work that can be undertaken. UKVI treat work conditions very seriously. A breach of working rights can result in cancellation of your visa, fines and/or a ban on entry to the UK.

A week is defined by UKVI as a seven-day period starting on a Monday and ending on the Sunday.

You can do most kinds of work, but you must not:

- be self-employed or work on a freelance basis
- be employed as a professional sports person or sports coach
- be employed as an entertainer
- take a permanent full-time job.

If you are a full-time undergraduate degree student, the Student visa permits you to work a maximum of 20 hours per week during [term-time](#), and full-time during vacations and, after you have completed your course of study. The hour limit includes any paid work, unpaid work, voluntary work or otherwise and internships.

If you are on a postgraduate taught course (Masters), you can work full-time during Christmas and Easter vacation periods but not during the summer as you should be working full-time on your dissertation. You can work full-time after you have completed your course.

If you are on a Postgraduate Research course (PhD), you are required to be in continuous attendance, so term dates do not apply to you. You cannot work full-time during standard University vacation periods, but you are permitted to request a vacation period each academic year, as agreed and authorised with your supervisor.

More information about student work, can be found on the [UKCISA website](#).

SECTION SIX – PROTECTING YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS: CHECKLIST

This section provides a summary of what you need to do to adhere to the University's sponsor licence responsibilities, your visa conditions and other considerations.

Your responsibilities as a sponsored student

- Enrol on time on your eVision portal, for each academic year of your course.
- Make sure you know when your programme is running and when the holiday and assessment periods fall.
- Provide the University with your passport and visa documentation at enrolment. Thereafter, keep the IAT updated with any changes to immigration documentation during your studies.
- Keep your UK contact details on your student record up to date on eVision throughout your studies. This includes residential address, telephone number and email address.
- Continue to attend and engage with your studies actively and consistently on an ongoing basis.
- Meet all tuition fee deadlines set out in the Tuition Fee Policy.
- Contact the IAT to discuss how changes to your studies may have implications for your visa, for example, undertaking a work placement or intercalating.
- Complete your course on time and within the time limits imposed by your visa. If your visa is expiring and you need more time to complete your studies, and the University has approved an extension, contact the IAT to discuss extending your visa.
- Only study the programme for which your Student visa was granted.
- Observe the work restrictions.
- Do not attempt to access public funds, e.g. welfare benefits.
- Report any relevant changes of circumstance to UKVI, e.g. new passport, contact details.
- Apply for a replacement BRP if your personal details change or if your BRP is lost or stolen.
- Make sure you leave the UK prior to your visa expiring unless you obtain further leave or have submitted a valid in time visa application to extend your permission in the UK.

Our responsibilities as your Student Sponsor

- Notify UKVI if you do not enrol/re-enrol on your programme as expected.
- Ensure you have a right to study and keeping copies of your current passport and immigration documentation throughout your studies with us.
- Hold up to date contact details for you, including your UK address and phone number.
- Monitor and keep records of your attendance and engagement. Notify any attendance/engagement concerns to UKVI. Withdraw visa sponsorship when appropriate, including any absence over 60 days.
- Notify UKVI if there is a change of circumstances with your studies, e.g., if you complete earlier than expect or intercalate or undertake a professional training year.
- Notify UKVI if we believe you are breaching the conditions of your leave (for example, working more hours than is allowed by your visa).

St George's, University of London
Cranmer Terrace | Tooting | London | SW17 0RE
student.immigration@sgul.ac.uk