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Introduction

This guide explains your responsibilities as a student sponsored by the University of Birmingham under the Student Route visa (previously Tier 4) and provides information on protecting your immigration status in the UK. If you have been assigned a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) and use it to apply for a visa and you are granted a visa, it will be a Student Route visa.

For the purposes of this guide:

- a. we will refer to the Student Route visa or Tier 4 (General) as a 'student visa';
- b. students who hold other types of visa should refer to 'Student Guidance – Student holding non-Student Route visas'.

It is important that you understand and comply with the responsibilities of your student visa and co-operate with the University in fulfilling our shared duties. Any breach could have serious implications to your studies and continued stay in the UK.

By using the University's CAS to apply for your visa, you agree to the requirements outlined in this document.

1. University Sponsor Duties

1.1 Sponsor duties

As a Home Office Student Sponsor, the University has a number of duties it must meet and must:

- a. only assign a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) certificate to you if we believe you are a genuine student who has the ability and intention to study your course and that you can meet the criteria for making a visa application;
- b. keep a copy of any Admissions documents that are part of your offer including any certificates you must provide, evidence of your English Language qualifications, and copies of ATAS certificates (if appropriate);
- c. check that you have the right to study (RTS) in the UK and hold the correct immigration status before you can start or continue your studies;
- d. keep a copy of your immigration documents on arrival and monitor your immigration status during your studies and ensure your permissions continue to permit you to study;
- e. keep an up-to-date record of your UK contact details, address & telephone numbers on your student record;
- f. keep all details of your academic engagement with your studies and report to the Home Office if you fail to attend your studies;
- g. report to the Home Office if you fail to arrive for your studies or if you are arriving late;
- h. report to the Home Office if you leave your course of study;
- i. tell the Home Office of any significant changes in your student circumstances.

The University takes its duties as a Student Sponsor very seriously and provides advice and guidance to its staff, students and visitors that is in accordance with Office of the Immigration Services Commissioners (OISC), Immigration Rules, Policy Guidance and appropriate UK Laws.

The University will always act in accordance with the law.

1.2 Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies position statement:

The University is not lawfully obliged to assign a CAS to any applicant or student and reserves the right to assign, decline to assign, or withdraw a CAS.



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The University reserves the right to withdraw sponsorship from any applicant or student whose activities are not in accordance with Immigration Rules, Guidance and/or UK laws or on institutional grounds.

1.3 University Training and Compliance Team

Management of the University Student Sponsor compliance activity is centrally co-ordinated by the Training and Compliance (T&C) Team who are part of the International Student Team (IST).

T&C will maintain contact with you throughout each academic year when they will email you to:

- a. check if there has been any change to your circumstances, for example if you have a new or different type of visa; and
- b. remind you to keep your contact details up to date; and
- c. check your plans - approximately three months before your visa is due to expire you will be emailed to ask if you are intending to extend your visa to continue your studies; and
- d. carry out spot checks of your immigration documents.

You are expected to respond to emails from T&C. If you are unresponsive to emails requesting the above information, the University may have to take action that could include withdrawing your immigration sponsorship and/or registration at the University.

1.4 University International Student Team

The University provides immigration advice and guidance which is available from Advisors in the IST. The services are available to new applicants, visitors, and students and by using the IST you can access lawful advice on visa matters. Staff in the IST are the only staff in the University who are permitted to provide immigration services and their work is carried out in accordance with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC).

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk

2. Student Duties

If you have a student visa **you** will have certain responsibilities regarding your engagement with your studies at the University and for activities that you can do in the UK, such as working.

You are required to:

- a. use the [MyRTS](#) to upload copies of your immigration documents and inform the University if you change any details of your visa;
- b. undertake your studies as a full-time student and engage in-person on campus with your studies;
- c. ensure that your studies are not interrupted by non-study matters. If you are not able to attend your studies full time you are expected to advise your School immediately;
- d. live in the UK in accordance with UK Law and Immigration Rules;
- e. cooperate with the University as it undertakes compliance duties for its Sponsor licence;
- f. ensure that you keep your address details up to date via MyBham; and,
- g. ensure that you do not let your visa expire while you are in the UK.

Please note: Claiming public funds in the UK

As you have a student visa you **are not** eligible to claim access to public funds; this includes local authority housing benefits and welfare benefits.

You must monitor your University email account – emails from the University will only go to this account. You must also respond quickly to any emails concerning your visa or immigration status.



3. Before you travel to the UK

If your visa has been granted you will receive a letter from the Home Office that will tell you about your visa and if you need to collect a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) when you arrive in the UK.

Please note: If you used the University Alternative Collection Location (ACL) code on your visa application, your Home Office letter will state the address that your BRP card will be delivered to by the Home Office.

This is **NOT** the address where you collect your BRP card from – this is simply the postal delivery address.

The IST collects BRP cards from this address and they will check and copy your card. You will then be sent an email from the IST which includes information on how to book a date and time to collect your BRP card and where to collect it from.

Please do not go to the postal delivery address on campus asking for your card as they will not have it.

You should check that the visa information in your Home Office letter is accurate before you travel to the UK - the Home Office require any errors on a visa to be corrected within a specified time:

- 10 days for a BRP; and
- within 3 months for a vignette (yellow visa sticker).

When you check your immigration information, if you find an error you must tell the IST as quickly as possible.

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Email subject title: VISA ERROR

3.1 Correct Sponsor details

If your visa has been granted for the University of Birmingham it will have the University Sponsor Licence Number (SLN) on it.

The University of Birmingham SLN is T7N18X2X1.

If your visa does not have this number you must contact the IST as soon as you can and attach a copy of your passport biometric page and your visa. You will be provided with the help you need to obtain the correct visa.

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Email subject title: WRONG SLN

For more information on problems with your:

BRP: <https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/report-problem>

Vignette: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transferring-a-visa-to-a-new-passport-ecb17/transferring-a-visa-ecb17#ecb173-replacing-a-30-day-short-validity-travel-vignette>

3.2 Visa information about you

You should check your visa to ensure that the details about you are correct. If there are any errors, you must inform the IST immediately.



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If you are outside the UK, you should contact us before you travel to the UK.

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk

Email subject title: VISA ERROR

3.3 Visa start and end dates

You should check that the start and end dates of your visa are correct. Your visa will be granted for the duration of your studies and added to this will be additional time (known as a 'wrap-up' period) dependent on your course end date on your CAS:

Length of study	Additional time on your visa	Example
Courses longer than 12 months	Four months	Course start - 27.09.2021. Course end – 27.09.2022 Your visa should have an end date of 27.01.2023
Courses from 6 to 12 months	Two months	Course start – 08.01.2021 Course end – 24.09.2021 Your visa should have an end date of 24.11.2021
Courses less than 6 months	Seven (7) days	Course start - 07.08.2021. Course end – 28.08.2021 Your visa should have an end date of 04.09.2021

3.4 Visa refusal

If your visa has been refused you must send a scan of all the pages of your refusal notice to the IST immediately.

Contact the IST at: visarefusals@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Emails subject title: VISA REFUSAL

The IST will advise you on your right to an administrative review. If you have no right to make an administrative review you will need a new CAS to make a fresh visa application.

You **must NOT** use your previous CAS number to make a fresh application as it will be refused.

If you make an administrative review without first checking with the IST, the University will not consider assigning you a CAS until the review outcome is known.

3.5 Right to Study (RTS)

The University is required to check your immigration documents to ensure that you have the right to study. To do this you will go to [MyRTS](#) and follow the instructions. You should familiarise yourself with this link before you travel to the UK.

3.6 Late arrival at the University

You should always plan to arrive at the University of Birmingham before the start date of your course. However, if you are not going to be able to arrive on time you must inform your School who will advise you whether or not you can arrive late. You should note that if you request to arrive late, you must discuss with your School whether or not you will still be able to complete your studies within the current duration of your visa.

If you are granted permission to arrive late, the University is obliged to report this to the Home Office and to also inform them if you do not arrive.



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If you are unable to arrive to start your course, the University will withdraw immigration sponsorship and inform the Home Office which will result in the curtailment of your visa. You will be advised of this and you must not travel using your visa.

3.7 Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

If you are coming to the UK for longer than six months, you will be given a BRP card. When you made your visa application outside the UK you will have confirmed where you want to collect your BRP card when you arrive in the UK. You will have had two choices:

- a. From the University; or
- b. From a Post Office

When you have selected where you want to collect your card from, you will **NOT** be able to change it.

Collecting from a Post Office - the letter you received from the Home Office will remind you to collect your BRP card from a Post Office. If you are collecting from a Post Office, the letter will also include the date you should collect it.

Collecting from the University - if you used the University Alternative Collection Location (ACL) code you on your visa application, your Home Office letter will show the University address that your card will be delivered to by the Home Office.

This is **NOT** the address you collect your BRP card from – this is simply the postal delivery address. The IST collects BRP cards from this address and they will check and copy your card. You will then be sent an email from the IST which includes information on how to book a date and time to collect your BRP card and where to collect it from. Please do not go to the postal delivery address on campus asking for your card as they will not have it.

**If you apply for your visa inside the UK, you will not have a choice for collecting your BRP card – it will be sent to your home address. You must check that the details on the BRP card are correct and then upload a copy of both sides of the card to your [MyRTS](#).*

4. Arrival at the University

When you arrive at the University you are required to do the following:

4.1 Complete your Right to Study (RTS)

You must complete your RTS as soon as you can after arriving in the UK. Go to [MyRTS](#) where you will find full information on how to do this.

4.2 Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

This is a small credit card sized residence permit (see the example below) which holds your biographic details (name, date and place of birth), your biometric information (facial image and fingerprints), and your immigration status and entitlements while you remain in the UK. If you made your visa application in the UK then your BRP will be posted to your home address in the UK.



If you made your visa application outside the UK then you have two choices for how to collect it:

4.2.1 Collecting your BRP card from the University

Your BRP will be posted to the University and the IST will collect your card and will firstly check the details on it, take copies of it and store it as part of your right to study (RTS) check. You will be sent an email from the IST with information on how to book a date and time to collect your BRP card. When you collect your card you should check it thoroughly to ensure that all the information about you is correct. You must keep this card safe.

If you are sent a link to collect your BRP card, you must NOT share the link to book a collection slot with other students or on social media, as the link will be sent to students when their own BRP is ready to collect.

Your BRP card is printed in the UK by a Home Office approved provider. The University is wholly dependent on them printing and sending the card – any delays are outside our control. As soon as your card has been received and processed, we will send you an email to collect it.

Please **do not** send multiple emails asking where your card is.

4.2.2 Collecting your BRP from a Post Office

You must ensure that you collect your BRP card from the Post Office on the date shown on your letter. When you collect your BRP card you must check that all the details are correct. You will upload a copy of both sides of the BRP card to [MyRTS](#). If your visa application is unsuccessful, or if there are errors on your BRP card, you must notify the IST immediately.

4.2.3 BRP Information

Your BRP should show the following information:

- Type of Permit: STUDENT VISA
- Undergraduate and Postgraduate students - WORK 20HRS MAX IN TERM-TIME
- Study under degree level (e.g., Foundation) - WORK 10HRS MAX IN TERM-TIME
- T7N18X2X1 (University of Birmingham sponsor licence number)

If this information is missing, or if any other information is missing or wrong, please contact:

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Email subject title: INCORRECT BRP

4.3 Visa for 6 months or less

If your student visa is granted for a period of 6 months or less, you usually will not receive a BRP. Instead, the entire period of your leave will be stated on your entry clearance vignette (yellow



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sticker in your passport). You should upload a copy of this to [MyRTS](#) as soon as possible after it is stamped on entry to the UK.

If you arrive from Ireland or entering via e-gate you will not receive an entry stamp in your passport. Please ensure you keep a copy of your boarding passes to upload to [MyRTS](#), as IST will require proof of your entry into the UK.

4.4 Share code

The Home Office has plans to digitalise immigration status information, and therefore some student visa holders will not be issued a BRP. Instead, you can prove your immigration status via the online 'view and prove your immigration status' service on gov.uk. You can do this by providing the University with a share code through [MyRTS](#).

5. Your Studies

5.1 Academic Engagement

All students at the University of Birmingham are expected to engage with their studies full-time. In addition to this, for students who hold a Student visa, the University is required to keep a record of your engagements and any absences.

If you fail to meet your engagement with your studies, the University is required to report this to the Home Office and withdraw your immigration sponsorship.

The University understands that students may become ill or have other valid reasons as to why they cannot attend their studies. To avoid any issues, you must ensure that your School knows if and why you are absent as soon as possible. Your School office will provide you with information on how to inform the School if you are having problems. Your School will want to help and advise you if you are feeling unwell or are having problems. Their aim will be to help you continue your studies.

5.2 Types of absence

Your School will monitor your attendance on your course. If it is not possible for you to attend for **any reason**, for example if you are suffering from ill health or you need to temporarily withdraw from your course, you must inform your School immediately. Some examples are as follows:

5.2.1 Short Term Sickness

If you cannot attend your studies because you are feeling ill, you must ring your School on the first day you are absent and/or follow your School or programme's absence procedures as there may be forms to fill in or specific email addresses to contact. They will advise you if they need any further evidence from you, such as a medical certificate from a GP.

5.2.2 Long Term Sickness

If you are ill and require hospitalisation or specialist treatment you must inform your School immediately. You will be required to provide medical evidence from the hospital or your GP.

You may also wish to access Welfare Services: [Your wellbeing \(birmingham.ac.uk\)](#)

If you are unable to attend due to longer term medical issues, the University may have no alternative than to defer your studies until you are able to study full-time. This means that the University will withdraw immigration sponsorship and report this to the Home Office. You will then need to consider if you need a different visa to remain in the UK or if you will go home and return to resume your studies at a later time.



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You should tell the IST as soon as you can and they will advise you with full information. In these circumstances you will be required to complete a Leave of Absence request form.

For further information, please go to:

Taught students: –

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/studentrecords/services/leave-of-absence.aspx>

Research students:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/student services/graduateschool/rsa/leavesofabsence.aspx>

5.2.3 Maternity Leave

If you are pregnant you should advise your School as soon as possible. This will allow them to carry out any relevant health and safety assessments and also allow them to help you plan how you will complete your studies or if you will need to take a leave of absence from your studies.

In the UK and at the University of Birmingham, students are required to take a minimum of two weeks' maternity leave immediately following childbirth. If you are a taught student (e.g., undergraduate or masters) it is possible that you will not be able to take a break in your studies as it will result in you losing too much teaching time. In these circumstances you may be asked to defer your studies until the following academic year.

5.3 Engagement at a location other than the University of Birmingham

The University has obligations to monitor your engagement with your studies if you are undertaking a work placement, or studying at another Institution, inside or outside the UK.

5.3.1 Engagement at another Institution in the UK

The University is required to monitor your engagement with your studies while you are undertaking any period of study at another Institution. Usually, studying at another Institution will contribute to your current studies and it must be agreed in advance with your School. If you wish to undertake studies that are not part of your current studies, you must inform the IST before you agree the study with the other Institution.

If the University approves the period of study or research, you can continue to be sponsored by the University on the basis that the University continues to monitor your engagement. If the University is unable to do this for any reason, it will withdraw sponsorship and inform the Home Office which means that your visa will be curtailed, and you will need to apply to the other Institution to be your sponsor. In all such cases you should contact the IST as quickly as possible.

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk

Email subject title: ABSENCE FROM STUDIES

5.3.2 Study at another Institution outside or inside the UK

The University is required to monitor your engagement while you are undertaking any period of study at another Institution outside or inside the UK e.g., study abroad, Doctoral Training Programme. Usually, study at another Institution will contribute to your studies and it must be agreed in advance with your School. If you wish to undertake studies that are not part of your current studies, you must inform the IST before you agree the study with the other Institution.

If the University approves the period of study or research, you can continue to be sponsored by the University of Birmingham during this period on the basis that the University continues to monitor your absence and attendance which will require the collaboration of the other institution.

If the University is unable to agree this with other Institution for any reason, you will either need to find an alternative Institution that will support engagement monitoring, or you can attend that



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Institution instead. The University of Birmingham will then withdraw immigration sponsorship and inform the Home Office of this, which means that your visa will be curtailed. Before returning to continue your studies at the alternative institution, you will need to apply for a fresh student visa (entry clearance). In all such cases you should contact the IST as quickly as possible:

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk

Email subject title: ENGAGEMENT AT ANOTHER INSTITUTION

5.3.3 Work placement/placement

A work placement/placement is only possible while being sponsored under a Student Visa Route if it is an integral and assessed part of your studies. If you are studying at undergraduate level or above, your work placement must not be more than 50% of the total length of your programme of study.

Inside the UK - If the University approves the work placement/placement inside the UK, you can continue to be sponsored by the University under your Student Visa Route during this period on the basis that the University to monitor your engagement which will require the collaboration of the work placement/placement provider.

Outside the UK - If your work placement/placement is outside the UK and the provider will support engagement and provide information to your School, the University is not required to withdraw immigration sponsorship and your visa can be used to travel back to the UK at the end of your placement.

Outside the UK - If your provider will not support engagement, the University will withdraw immigration sponsorship and you will need to apply for a fresh Student Visa Route (entry clearance) before returning to the UK. In this case you should contact the IST three months before you are due to return to the UK.

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk

Email subject title: PLACEMENT

If there are changes to the location of where you are undertaking your work placement/placement, or if it is suspected that you are working in breach of your visa conditions, the University is required to report this to the Home Office.

5.4 Writing up/Thesis Awaited

If you are a postgraduate research student and you are in thesis awaited status - whether you are in the UK or outside the UK - the University is expected to monitor your engagement and you will continue to complete a GRS2 form with your Supervisor. If you are writing up your thesis outside the UK, please see below.

5.5 Taking a period of absence from your studies

There are certain times when you may need to take an absence from your studies. You must apply for either Leave of Absence or Authorised Absence, depending on the circumstances. These must be applied for before they are taken as the University will not approve a retrospective Leave of Absence or Authorised Absence. It is your responsibility to speak to your School immediately should there be circumstances (e.g., health, childcare, financial etc.) that are impacting on your studies and may require you to take an absence.

5.5.1 Leave of Absence

A Leave of Absence will normally only be given for periods of absence exceeding one (1) calendar month and not exceeding twelve (12) calendar months. During this period your registration status will be changed to Leave of Absence.



You cannot engage with your studies during a period of Leave of Absence and immigration sponsorship will be withdrawn.

Further information on Leave of Absence, and the request form, can be found here:

Taught students: –

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/studentrecords/services/leave-of-absence.aspx>

Research students: –

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/student services/graduateschool/rsa/leavesofabsence.aspx>

5.5.2 Authorised Absence

In instances where you need to take a short break from your studies, the University may approve a period of authorised absence for a maximum period of eight (8) weeks without the withdrawal of immigration sponsorship. For example, if you suffer a family bereavement, you may choose to request a short absence to return to your home country for the funeral.

Further information on authorised absence, and the request form, can be found here:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/studentrecords/services/authorised-absence-international-students.aspx>

5.6 Can I take an absence for travel/tourism purposes?

Undergraduate or Postgraduate Taught Students: UG or PGT students are not expected to ask their School for time off to travel during term time. You can travel as much as you want during vacation periods, but during term time you are expected to be in attendance and engaging fully with your studies.

Students on postgraduate taught programmes are normally expected to work on their dissertation during the summer, during which time you are still considered to be studying full-time. Whilst this is a University vacation period, PGT students are not normally expected to take an absence for holiday during the summer as academic engagement will continue.

Postgraduate Research Students: PGR students have up to eight (8) weeks per year (including Bank Holidays and University closed days) which they can use as holiday, during which time they can work or travel. You must liaise with your Supervisor to agree on taking a break from your studies as it is formally recorded.

5.7 Changing your course

It may be possible for you to change your course but only if it meets visa rules. You must meet the following requirements:

- the new course is at the same or a higher level as the course for which your visa was granted;
- the new course is at degree level or above;
- the course can be completed within the existing validity of your current visa; and,
- if you have previously studied in the UK, the new course fulfils student visa academic progression requirements.

Please see this link for information about how to change course –

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/student services/projects/support/changing-course.aspx#decide>.



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A request to change your course must be approved by your School. If the University approves a change of course, and the new course meets the conditions outlined above, this will be reported to the Home Office by the University.

If your new course is at a lower level or your visa expires prior to the new course completion date, you might need to apply for a new visa for the new course from outside the UK. You will not be able to change courses until you have obtained the new visa.

If student visa academic progression rules do not permit you to either study the new course on your current visa or apply for a new visa from inside the UK, you will need to return overseas to apply for fresh entry clearance. More information about academic progression is available here:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentservices/international/visas/studentvisas/academic-progression.aspx>

We recommend that if you are considering changing your course, you contact the IST.

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Email subject title: CHANGE OF COURSE

5.8 Withdrawing from your studies

5.8.1 Voluntary withdrawal

If you want to stop your studies at the University of Birmingham or if the University decides to withdraw you from your studies, the University must inform the Home Office and withdraw immigration sponsorship.

If you decide to withdraw from your studies, you are strongly advised to meet with your Personal Tutor for advice and guidance before making a final decision. More information about withdrawals is available at this [link](#).

We recommend that if you are considering withdrawing from your course, you contact the IST.

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Email subject title: WITHDRAWAL FROM STUDIES

5.8.2 University withdrawal of immigration sponsorship following a voluntary withdrawal

The University is required to report this change in circumstances to the Home Office. The Home Office will subsequently curtail your visa to 60 days within which time you will be required to leave the UK or apply for a new visa in the UK under a different visa category or sponsor. Please note, the University is not notified when the Home Office take curtailment action, they will contact you directly. When you leave the UK after the Home Office has withdrawn your visa but before the Home Office curtail your visa, your visa will end the moment you leave the UK and you must not use the visa to re-enter the UK as it will be considered as expired. If you do travel to the UK under these circumstances, you may not be granted right to study. We therefore recommend that you contact the IST at least 3 months before you are due to return to the UK.

When you leave the UK after your visa has been curtailed, you may not be permitted re-entry to the UK on your student visa.



Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Email subject title: WITHDRAWN/CURTAILED VISA

5.8.3 Appeals and University withdrawal of immigration sponsorship

The University will inform you if your immigration sponsorship is to be withdrawn and you may be able to appeal the decision. During this time the University will **not** normally inform the Home Office that it is withdrawing your immigration sponsorship.

If you do appeal and the decision changes, so as you are not to be withdrawn, the University will not inform the Home Office.

If you appeal the decision and the decision is that you will be withdrawn, the University will notify the Home Office and immigration sponsorship will be withdrawn.

We recommend that you contact the IST.

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Email subject title: WITHDRAWAL

5.9 Externally Registered Status

Students who are engaging with their studies on campus are Normally Registered. Some students do not need to engage with their studies on campus and, in these cases, their registration status will be Externally Registered. If you are Externally Registered your immigration sponsorship will be withdrawn and this means that you will be expected to leave the UK. This is because you are not required to be in attendance in the UK to be studying so it is therefore no longer appropriate for you to hold a student visa.

The University is required to report this change in circumstances to the Home Office. The Home Office will subsequently curtail your visa to 60 days within which time you will be required to leave the UK or apply for a new visa in the UK under a different visa category or sponsor. Please note that this is done by the Home Office and the University will not be notified when Student permission is curtailed, instead they contact the visa holder directly. When you leave the UK **after** the University has withdrawn sponsorship of your visa but **before** the Home Office curtail your visa, your visa will end the moment you leave the UK and you must not use the visa to re-enter the UK as it will be considered to be invalid. If you do travel to the UK under these circumstances, you will not be granted right to study. We therefore recommend that you contact the IST at least 3-months before you are due to return to the UK.

When you leave the UK after your visa has been curtailed, you may not be permitted re-entry to the UK on your student visa.

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Email subject title: WITHDRAWN/CURTAILED VISA

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Email subject title: EXTERNALLY REGISTERED

6. Visa to continue your studies at the University of Birmingham

The IST will email you at least 90 days before your visa expires (or 120 days if you are a student whose studies requires a new Academic Technology Approval Scheme [ATAS] certificate) to ask if you are planning to continue studying at the University of Birmingham.



You **must** respond to our emails.

6.1 Preparing to make a visa extension

The University has the right to refuse CAS requests. The University will only support you in extending your visa if there is enough time for the IST to advise you e.g. if you contact us close to the date your visa is due to expire, the IST may decide that it does not have enough time to provide you with the support you need to make an in-time application. In this case, the University would not assign a CAS, and you would be expected to return to your home country and make a new entry clearance application.

To avoid this situation, you should ensure that you start the visa extension process at least 90 days before your visa is due to expire - or, if you are a student who needs ATAS, 120 days before your visa is due to expire.

To request a new CAS to continue your studies you should go to:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/international/services/cas.aspx>

6.2 Time Limits – how long can I study in the UK?

You are only permitted to study for a certain amount of time in the UK at undergraduate level or below.

It is important to remember that any delays you may experience in your studies can affect the amount of time you have remaining to complete your studies.

- Below degree level - if your course is below degree level, the limit is a maximum of 2 years;
- Undergraduate study – the limit is a maximum of 5 years.

Calculations by the Home Office include all previous student visas. If the amount of time you have previously spent studying in the UK exceeds the above time limits, we expect that future visa applications will be refused and you will not be assigned a CAS.

If you are a continuing student, please note that the Home Office will count all time spent in the UK on a visa that permits study.

If you have any concerns, please contact the IST.

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk

Email subject title: VISA TIME LIMITS

6.3 Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

If you are undertaking a PhD, postgraduate research degree, master's course or undergraduate master's degree in certain science and technology subjects in the UK, you may need to obtain ATAS approval before you will be assigned a CAS for new or continuing studies.

An application for ATAS usually takes at least 20 working days to be processed. You should note that during busy periods this can take much longer. You are therefore encouraged to apply for ATAS as early as you can. It is advised that you make your ATAS application **four (4) months** before your visa is due to expire or as soon as you can before you begin a new course.

You should note that even if you did not need ATAS clearance as part of your original admission to your programme, you might be required to apply for a new certificate if:



Student Route Visa holders - handbook

- there are any changes to the course content or research proposal. Changes are those other than minor changes to the areas of research or the use of any new research technique;
- your course end date is postponed by more than 3 calendar months; or,
- you wish to start a new course that requires ATAS clearance.

If ATAS clearance is required, the University will not assign you a CAS until you have provided us with current valid ATAS clearance certificate.

Follow this [link](#) for information about ATAS

If you have any concerns, please contact the IST.

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk

Email subject title: ATAS

7. Extending your visa to complete your studies at the University of Birmingham

The University expects you to complete your course within the dates stated on your CAS. However, if you need more time to complete your studies there must be clear academic grounds for approving additional time.

7.1 Making an application inside or outside the UK

If you are in the UK with a student visa, you can only apply to extend your visa from inside the UK if you have obtained the qualification for which your current immigration permission was granted (and you meet the further conditions below). If you have not obtained the qualification, you will need to apply for your new visa from outside the UK.

7.2 Visa extension

If additional time to study on your programme is approved, you will need to make a new student visa application.

Full information on how to obtain a new Confirmation of Acceptance to Studies can be found [here](#).

Full information about making an extension to your visa can be found at this [link](#).

7.3 Preparation timescales

You should leave enough time to collect all the documents you need so as they can be submitted to the IST to be checked. If you leave it too late, the IST may not be able to help you with your application. If you need an ATAS certificate we recommend that you apply for your new clearance **four (4) months** before the expiry date of your visa or as soon as you can before you begin a new course.

- a. You can only submit your application inside the UK if your new course start date is less than 28 days after your current visa expiry date. For instance, if your visa for your Master's course ends on 30 August, and you are starting a PhD which begins on 1 October, this gap exceeds 28 days and you will need to submit your new visa application in your home country.
- b. If you started your course after 1 November 2016, you will need to make a new visa application prior to starting your next course even if your current student visa is valid after this date.

7.4 Evidence of making a visa application

You are required to provide evidence to the IST that you have submitted your new visa application in-time by uploading a copy of your UKVI application coversheet via [MyRTS](#). If you are not sure what this means, please ask the IST immediately.



Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Email subject title: RTS VISA EXTENSION COVERSHEET

7.5 Overstaying your visa

You must **not** overstay the expiry date of your visa.

It is a criminal offence to remain in the UK after the date your student visa has expired, unless you have applied to extend your student visa before the expiry date of your visa, or you have applied for a visa under another immigration category before your student visa expired and are awaiting the outcome (known as '3C Leave').

There is no 'grace period' following the expiry date of your visa. You will become an 'overstayer' if you are in the UK the day after your visa expires without having submitted a valid application for further leave or having obtained other valid immigration permission - you will have no lawful basis to remain in the UK.

If you are in the UK and your visa expires before you have made a new visa application, you will no longer have the right to study and will not be permitted to continue your studies. Your studies will be suspended and, due to the fact that the University of Birmingham does not assign CAS to students whose visas have expired, you will be advised to leave the UK as quickly as possible and – if applicable - make a new visa application from outside the UK.

You will not be permitted to work.

You would also need to declare any overstay of your visa on any future visa application to the UK and many other countries, which could have a detrimental impact on future visa applications.

Please contact the IST as quickly as possible if your visa has expired:

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Emails subject title: VISA EXPIRY

8. Completing your studies

If you complete your course on the expected date as stated on your CAS, then your visa expiry does not change.

If you complete your course earlier than stated on your CAS, the University is required to report this to the Home Office. The Home Office will then curtail your leave so that you have the same period of leave after the new course end date as you were originally given for your original course end date.

If your course finishes early for any other reason, the Home Office will limit your permission to stay to 60 days or however many days you already have remaining on your visa, whichever is the smaller.

9. Working

The Home Office restricts the number of hours you can work in the UK on your student visa and the type of work that can be undertaken, as the primary purpose of your visa is to allow you to study.

Your School may also limit the amount of time their students can work. You must read this section and if you are considering working during your studies, please speak to your school.



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It is very important you understand your working conditions and you should check with the IST if you have any questions before you start working.

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk

Email subject title: WORKING DURING MY STUDIES/WORKING AFTER MY STUDIES

Your visa contains details of any permissions to work in the UK. These are normally restricted to:

- a. 20 hours per week for students studying at undergraduate and above
- b. 10 hours per week for students studying below undergraduate level

Working permissions are also dependent on how long you will be in the UK. If your visa does not permit work or if you think the working hours are wrong, do NOT start to work but instead you must contact the IST as quickly as possible.

The restrictions to working 10 or 20 hours apply during term-time.

During term-time **you must not** exceed the total hours permitted on your visa. This includes any time worked that is paid or unpaid. You are responsible for ensuring that you do not exceed this working time limit.

A 'week' is defined by the Home Office as Monday to Sunday. For further information, you should [contact Worklink](#) and read this document: -

<https://www.worklink.bham.ac.uk/downloads/WorkingHourRestrictions.pdf>

Please note that you are only permitted to work full-time during official vacation periods, not just when your classes end.

Please also understand that even if you are working less than 20 hours per week, any work you undertake should not interfere with your studies. You will not be permitted to miss classes in order to work and you could be jeopardising both your registration at the University and your visa status by doing so.

9.1 University's working restrictions

The University can impose tighter restrictions on the number of hours you can work and you are expected to abide by the University regulations. It is recommended that you check if your School has any particular restrictions on its students. You should adhere to the University restrictions on working during your studies.

9.2 Working outside the University

If you have a job outside the University, you should be given a formal document by the employer such as a 'contract of employment' or a 'worker's agreement' or some other written statement confirming your employment status.

You have personal responsibility to ensure you **DO NOT** work more than 20 hours per week for all the work you do whether with the University or an external employer or both. Please reach out to the IST if you are concerned about your working hours.

9.3 Working for the University of Birmingham

If you have a job working for the University, you must have registered with Worklink or HR **before** you start any employment at the University. Depending on your level of study, you must also ensure



Student Route Visa holders - handbook

that you have followed any applicable requirements. During term-time you have personal responsibility to ensure you DO NOT work more than the hours you are permitted per week.

9.4 Working during term time and vacation periods

The University academic calendar can be found at:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/diary.aspx>

'Term-time' and vacation dates will differ depending on your level of study:

a. Pre-sessional Student

Study under six months - if your course is under six months you will not be permitted to work in the UK. If your visa shows working permissions, you must send a scan of your visa to the IST as quickly as possible. You must NOT undertake employment if you do not have permission on your visa.

Study over six months - you would normally be permitted to work 10 hours per week. If your visa shows either no working permissions or more than 10 hours, you must send a scan of your visa to the IST as quickly as possible. During term-time you have the personal responsibility to ensure you DO NOT work more than 10 hours per week.

b. Undergraduate Students - your visa should show that during term time you can work a maximum of 20 hours per week. As noted above, your School can impose restrictions on how many hours their students can work. Before you start working you must first check if your School has any restrictions. You are eligible to work up to full time hours outside of term-time. Term and vacation dates are outlined at:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/diary.aspx>

Please note: - some programmes for example MBChB (Medicine), may have different term dates and shorter vacation periods than the vacation periods set out in the University calendar. You are therefore responsible for ensuring that you check vacation dates for your programme of study before you start working.

c. Taught Masters Students should consult with their School on vacation dates for their specific course. These are normally similar to normal University vacations - limited to short breaks between terms with continuous study during the summer until the end of the course;

i. One-year Postgraduate Taught students - whilst your visa may state that you can work up to 20 hours per week during term time, you must check if your School has placed restrictions on how many hours you can work. However, you would be eligible to work full-time during Christmas and Easter vacations but restricted to term-time hours during summer vacation as you will be expected to be working full-time on your dissertation.

ii. Two-year Postgraduate Taught students are eligible to work full time during the Christmas and Easter vacations but are restricted to term-time hours during summer vacation as you will be expected to be working full-time on your dissertation.

d. Postgraduate Research Students are expected to study full-time throughout the duration of their course. Whilst your visa permissions may state you can work up to 20 hours per week during term time, it is likely that as a PhD student you are restricted to working 15 hours per week year-round except for vacation periods in which you can work up to full time hours. You must speak to your School before you start any work.



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Although you do not have a set vacation period, you may have up to 8 weeks' holiday as a PGR student. If you wish to use any of that time to work full time you MUST:

- Get approval from your supervisor in ADVANCE by applying for an "Authorised Absence";

The University will not process a retrospective request and the work will be deemed as 'working in breach' of the conditions of your visa and as part of its sponsor duties. The University is required to report the breach to Home Office (UKVI). This could have a serious impact on your visa and ability to remain in the UK. It is your responsibility to prepare in advance and seek permission from your supervisor.

More information about the Authorised Absence procedure and a copy of the form is available on the [Authorised Absence for International Students](#) web page.

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/studentrecords/services/authorised-absence-international-students.aspx>.

After your programme is completed, students are restricted to visa working hours until issued with a 'Completion of Course' letter from Registry – even if your classes have finished prior to receiving this.

9.5 Volunteering and voluntary work

During your studies you may wish to do some volunteering or voluntary work to help you get more experience and skills. You should be aware of the differences between what 'volunteering' is and what 'voluntary work' is and whether your visa permits you to carry out voluntary work.

- Voluntary work/workers:** this is unpaid employment and usually has contractual obligations to perform the work, for example, to attend at specific times and carry out specific tasks. The contract does not have to be written. You can carry out voluntary work, however, any voluntary hours worked should be included when calculating the total hours permitted under your visa, even if it is unpaid.
- Volunteering:** this is if you do not have a contract, are not a substitute for an employee, and are not receiving payment in kind. If you are volunteering, you may be reimbursed for reasonable travel and subsistence expenses. Volunteering is usually considered an additional beneficial extra to support work done by employees. Volunteering is not calculated towards total hours permitted under your visa, but you should still exercise caution just in case.

9.6 Working after your course completion

Once you have **completed** your course and while your visa remains valid, the Home Office allows you to work full-time but the restrictions on the type of work, as outlined above, continue to apply. As above, students are restricted to visa working hours until issued with a 'Completion of Course' letter from Registry – even if your classes have finished prior to receiving this.

9.7 Working if there are changes to your academic engagement

If you are on a leave of absence, deferring your studies, have withdrawn as a student or if you are not attending for any other reason (with the exception of an authorised absence) then, regardless of how much time you have left on your visa or any working permissions, your right to work ends immediately. Your right to work is wholly dependent on you being a full-time student who is in attendance and engaging proactively with their studies.

If you are in doubt as to whether you can work, you MUST contact the IST.



9.8 Further working responsibilities

Working during your studies **MUST** not interfere with your ability to engage fully with your course. You would not be granted additional time to complete your studies if the reason you could not finish on time was because you were working.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you note the restrictions on the number of hours you can work per week. You must not exceed the working hours for **ANY** reason. The University is obliged to inform the Home Office of any students found to be working more hours than allowed. This is known as 'working in breach' and has serious implications for you.

You should also note that 'work' can be paid, unpaid/voluntary. You must therefore ensure that you keep a note of any hours you work (whether it is paid or not) and ensure that you do **NOT** work longer than the hours on your visa.

You must also not undertake certain types of work, you must not:

- a. be self-employed
- b. be employed as a professional sportsperson or sports coach
- c. be employed as an entertainer
- d. take a permanent full-time job

You cannot engage in business activity. The Home Office defines this as working for a business in a capacity other than an employee in which you have a financial or other significant beneficial interest.

You would not be permitted, for example, to set up a business that is trading or has a trading presence, be employed by a company in which you hold shares of 10% or more, or work for a company where you hold a statutory role, such as a Director. These are only examples, not an exhaustive list, of the types of circumstance in which you would be engaged in business activity.

If you breach the terms of your visa through work, you are putting your place on your course and your immigration status in the UK at risk.

10. Safety of your immigration documents

You must keep your passport and BRP card safe and secure. There is no reason for you to carry your passport or BRP around with you in the UK. If you need to prove your age in the UK, you can use a driver's license or ID card with the "PASS" hologram. <http://www.pass-scheme.org.uk/>

If you travel outside the UK, you will be required to take both your passport and BRP with you as you will require them both to re-enter the UK.

When you are outside the UK it is very important that you do not lose your passport and/or BRP. Please keep them safe. If you lose your passport you will need to apply to the Embassy of your country for a new passport so you can return to the UK.

10.1 What if I lose my passport or BRP card?

If you lose your BRP in the UK you must contact the IST immediately.

If you are inside the UK and your BRP card is lost or stolen, then you will need to apply for a replacement BRP card. Information on how you can do this can be found [here](#).

If you are outside the UK and your BRP is lost or stolen then you will need to apply for a 'replacement BRP visa'. This replacement BRP visa will allow you single entry clearance to the UK. When you are back in the UK you must apply for a replacement BRP card.

You can be fined up to £1,000 if you do not apply for a replacement BRP card within 3 months.



Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Email subject title: LOST IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

10.2 New immigration documents

If you lose your passport or BRP and obtain a new one you **MUST** upload your new documents via the [MyRTS](#).

If you lose any of your immigration documents, you must inform the IST who will provide you with further advice.

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Email subject title: NEW/REPLACEMENT IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

11. Other changes to your circumstances

11.1 Change of immigration status

If you switch to another visa category, you must inform the IST within 7 working days of the change. The University is required to report this change to the Home Office.

11.2 Change of sponsor

If you wish to change to another education provider, you must receive a CAS from that institution and make a new visa application before starting your studies with them. You must speak to your new Sponsor so as they can advise you on your immigration matters. The University of Birmingham will not be able to give advice on behalf of another Sponsor. The University is required to report this change to the Home Office.

11.3 Other changes that you must report

You must keep your address up to date on the University system and you should tell the Home Office by using an online form: <https://eforms.homeoffice.gov.uk/outreach/AddressUpdate.ofml>

If you have a BRP you are required to apply for a new BRP in the following circumstances:

- Change of name, e.g., if you have got married
- Change of nationality
- Change of gender
- Change of appearance

If you have a visa vignette (yellow sticker granted when you apply for a visa outside the UK) in your passport, you will need to update the Home Office on these changes by using: www.gov.uk/change-circumstances-visa-brp/youre-in-the-ukand-dont-have-a-brp

Whether you have a BRP or visa sticker in your passport, you are required to report the following changes to the Home Office using www.gov.uk/change-circumstances-visa-brp

- Criminal convictions
- Change of Passport number
- Dependants' details, for example if your relationship breaks down you must inform UKVI

If you make any reports above, you should let the IST know at:

Contact the IST at: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk
Email subject title: CHANGE IN CIRCUMSTANCES



12. Graduate Route visa

After you have successfully completed your studies, you may be able to apply for the Graduate Route visa. Since July 2021, the Graduate Route allows students on a Tier 4 (General) or Student Route visa who have successfully completed an eligible course in the UK to remain in the UK to seek employment or undertake work.

When you have successfully completed your studies, the University will inform the Home Office and you will receive an email from Registry telling you that you can make your Graduate Route visa application. The email will also include your CAS number that you will need for application.

Please note: When you complete and submit your final work or examination, the Home Office will not be informed until your results are formally confirmed via the University examination process. This means that there could be a number of weeks between you submitting final work and it being confirmed to the Home Office.

12.1 Home Office eligibility criteria

You must successfully complete a course at UK Bachelor degree level or above at a Higher Education provider which has a track record of compliance with its Home Office sponsor licence. The University of Birmingham meets these criteria.

You can only make the Graduate Route visa application from within the UK and you must hold a valid Tier 4 (General) or Student Route visa to apply.

You must be awarded a total of 70 points for your Graduate Route visa application to be successful:

Points Type	Relevant Requirements to be met	Number of points
Successful completion of course	Successful completion requirement Qualification requirement Study in the UK requirement	70

12.2 Duration of visa granted

Undergraduates, Postgraduate taught and PhD students will be granted leave depending on the level of study they completed. Please see table below:

Type of Qualification	Period granted
PhD or other doctoral qualification	3-year work visa
All other qualifications	2-year work visa

The University is only permitted to provide advice and guidance on Student Route visas.

The Graduate Route visa is not a sponsored visa route and, therefore, we are not able to provide you with detailed or specialist advice and guidance.

If our intranet link does not provide the information you should seek the services of an independent legal advisor or you can email the Home Office - [Contact UK Visas and Immigration for help - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](mailto:contact.uk.visas@gov.uk)

University information

[Graduate Route - Launch Date 1 July 2021 \(birmingham.ac.uk\)](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/graduate-route)

Home Office

[Graduate visa - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/graduate-visa)



UKCISA

[UKCISA - international student advice and guidance - Working after studies](#)

Finding an independent Legal advisor

[Find a legal adviser - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Next steps – if you meet criteria

- (1) You should wait for your email from Registry confirming you can make your Graduate Route visa and that contains your CAS number;
- (2) Read all the information sent to you in this email;
- (3) If you have further questions that are not answered in the University link you must speak to an independent legal advisor or the Home Office.
- (4) When you have been advised to make an application, you can then prepare and make your Graduate Route application.

For further information on the Home Office eligibility criteria and how to book onto a Graduate Route visa workshop please read the [IST webpage](#).

Glossary

Academic Technology Approval Scheme

[Academic Technology Approval Scheme](#) (ATAS) approval is required by people who are subject to UK immigration control, studying for a postgraduate qualification in certain subjects. ATAS is managed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and is required for study subjects that could lead to develop weapons of mass destruction or their means of delivery. Students studying subjects with specific JACS coding must apply for ATAS approval before they will be assigned a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) certificate and must present evidence of their approval with their visa application. The University is required to keep a copy of the student ATAS certificate.

Administrative Review

When a visa application is refused, the applicant can submit a request for administrative review (AR) of the decision. The refusal notice, sent to the applicant, will detail the reason for refusal and whether they have the right to submit a request for AR. Usually this will require the applicant to demonstrate that the Home Office made a material error in law. At the University, staff in the International Student Team (IST) are the only staff permitted to provide advice and guidance to students whose visa has been refused.

Biometric Residence Permit

A Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) is a small credit card sized identity card that is proof of the holder's right to stay, work, and/or study in the UK. Students making a visa application outside the UK can collect their BRP card from the University. The University must keep a copy of both sides of the students BRP card.

Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies

Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) is a virtual document with a unique reference number allocated by the University using the Home Office Sponsor Management System. A CAS is assigned when a student has met the conditions of their offer of a place to study and is 'UA'. A University is not legally obliged to assign a CAS and should only assign a CAS to a student who meets the criteria for making a visa application. The University has very strict Policy Guidance including when it will or will not assign a CAS and withdrawing a CAS.

Entry Clearance Visa Vignette

A vignette is a 'sticker' that is inserted into the immigration documents of a person making a visa application outside the UK. The vignette contains information about the type of visa and grants entry to the UK. People coming to the UK for less than 6 months will be given a vignette for the duration of the stay. People coming to the UK for more than 6 months will have a vignette granted for 30-days This may now be 90 days due to the



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current travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. When they arrive in the UK, they will be required to collect their BRP within the 10-day period.

Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC)

Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) is the office that regulates immigration advisors in the UK. Universities have Ministerial Exemption from registering with the OISC; however, its advisors (who are OISC trained) must act in accordance with OISC codes of practice. Staff in the IST are the only staff in the University of Birmingham permitted to provide immigration services e.g., advice and guidance to staff, students and visitors.

Sponsor Licence Number

Each University is given its own unique Sponsor Licence Number (SLN). The University SLN is: T7N18X2X1 Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies certificate (CAS) assigned by the University of Birmingham, contain its SLN and applicants and student use it when making their visa application.

Student Route Visa (previously Tier 4)

The Student Route visa is part of the UK Points Based System for Immigration in the UK which allows the University to assign CAS for students to study in the UK.

Student Route Sponsor Licence

In order to recruit and retain international students to study, the University must hold a UK Home Office Student Sponsor licence.

UK Visas and Immigration

The section of the Home Office responsible for immigration to the UK is known as UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). UKVI decide who can come to and remain in the UK. UKVI monitor Sponsor Licence holders to ensure that they remain compliant with their sponsor duties.