



Student Visa Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Policy 2022/2023

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	PURPOSE AND SCOPE.....	3
3	HOME OFFICE REQUIREMENTS	3
4	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	5
5	ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY MONITORING POLICY	5
5.3	Undergraduate Students	6
5.4	Postgraduate Taught Students	6
5.5	Postgraduate Research Students (PGR)	7
5.6	Postgraduate Research Students on Field Work.....	7
5.7	Monitoring students on the Study Abroad programme	8
5.8	Monitoring a Student on a Work Placement	8
5.9	International English Centre (IEC) students	9
5.10	Students undertaking Joint Degrees.....	9
6	DEFINING CONTACT POINTS, OVERALL ATTENDANCE AND ESCALATION PROCESS FOR UG AND PGT STUDENTS	9
7	ESCALATION PROCESS FOR PGR STUDENTS	12
8	AUTHORISED ABSENCES.....	13
9	REPORTING STUDENT ACTIVITY	15
10	ASCERTAINING A STUDENT’S VISA STATUS	16
11	CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION	16
Appendix 1	17
	Student Visa Holder – Study Abroad Programme	17
Appendix 2	18
	Student Visa Holder – Work Placement Programme.....	18
Appendix 3:	19
	Student Visa Holder – Split Site PhD.....	19

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As a UKVI Sponsor, the Home Office requires Aberystwyth University to monitor the engagement and attendance of students who have obtained a Student Visa (previously known as Tier 4 and referred to hereafter as Student Visa). This document relates to holders of both Tier 4 and Student Visas who study at Aberystwyth University.
- 1.2 This guidance is Aberystwyth University's response to the Home Office's expectations. It has been devised to ensure compliance with Home Office regulations, but also to ensure a duty of care towards international students by identifying students who may be experiencing difficulties.
- 1.3 This policy supplements both the University's long-standing regulatory requirement for students to attend their lectures and classes and existing student engagement and attendance monitoring processes in place within the Academic Departments.

2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 2.1 To define Aberystwyth University's approach for recording student attendance and engagement that will apply to Student Visa holders in all Academic Departments.
- 2.2 To ensure that Aberystwyth University's practice is fit for the purpose of evidencing to the Home Office its duties as a UKVI Sponsor of students who require Student Visas.
- 2.3 To clarify where the responsibility currently lies for collecting and holding relevant pieces of information that together comprise our record of engagement and attendance.
- 2.4 The scope of this policy is limited exclusively to students sponsored by the University on Student Visas.

3 HOME OFFICE REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 The Home Office requires Aberystwyth University to monitor a student's engagement by keeping a record of their absence and attendance. If, as a result of this evidence, it is deemed that the student is not engaging with their studies, the University must withdraw sponsorship. This must be reported to the Home Office within 10 working days of the formal decision.
- 3.2 The Home Office explicitly states that the University must inform them if a student does not attend ten (10) expected consecutive contact points and as a result we must withdraw sponsorship. The student would then be required to abandon their studies and leave the UK.

- 3.3 This requirement applies to all Student Visa students at undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research level. This requirement also applies to students studying at below degree level in the International English Centre.
- 3.4 Students must be monitored when on a work placement or on a study abroad programme as part of their course. Students must also maintain contact whilst attending fieldwork whether in the UK or overseas.
- 3.5 The Home Office does not require universities to monitor attendance during recognised vacation periods. The table below details the recognised vacation periods for Aberystwyth University:

Study Level	Excluded Period
Pre-Sessional English Course	None
International Foundation Programme (Pre-Masters)	Christmas Vacation, Easter Vacation
Undergraduate	Christmas Vacation, Easter Vacation, Summer Vacation
Postgraduate Taught	Christmas Vacation, Easter Vacation
Postgraduate Research	PGR students must be studying in Aberystwyth for 44 weeks per academic year. Vacation must be taken when appropriate in line with their research and any teaching events. The current Academic Year runs from 26 September 2022 to 25 September 2023.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 Each Academic Department must identify a 'Departmental Compliance Contact' who will be responsible for a number of UKVI compliance related activities as detailed within this policy.
- 4.2 Each Academic Department should make their expectation of attendance clear at the start of the student's study. It is the responsibility of each Department / Faculty to review on a weekly basis the student attendance data that they have collected and recorded and to inform the UKVI Compliance Office if the review process highlights any Student Visa student for whom there is a pattern of absence in accordance with Section 6 of this Policy. Academic Departments will have a fuller picture of their student's circumstances and are more likely to be aware of any factors that might have an impact on an individual student's engagement and attendance.
- 4.3 The UKVI Compliance Office is responsible for providing Student Visa holders with guidance on their responsibilities and the consequences of non-compliance under the Student Visa permission. The University provides all Student Visa students with a '**Student Visa Responsibilities**' handbook, this is viewable via their Student Record. Information regarding Student Visa responsibilities is also available at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/compliance-information/>
- 4.4 The UKVI Compliance Office is responsible for reporting students who are not engaging with their studies to the Home Office. The UKVI Compliance Office is also responsible for providing information to Academic Departments regarding which students are subject to Home Office requirements.

5 ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY MONITORING POLICY

- 5.1 At the start of the academic year, the UKVI Compliance Office will inform each Academic Department of the names and ID of all their students sponsored on a Student Visa. This evidence is gathered by using report SUR00100 or STR00005 on AStRA. The UKVI Compliance Office will also inform each Academic Department of the names and ID of all their Student Visa students starting outside the main September cohort (as applicable).
- 5.2 The University recognises registration as a contact point at the start of the academic year. Academic Departments must then monitor the engagement and attendance of students with teaching activities throughout the academic year. Please refer to the Academic Regulation on Academic Progress that can be found under the Aberystwyth University Rules & Regulations at www.aber.ac.uk/en/regulations.

5.3 Undergraduate Students

5.3.1 The University will monitor each student's engagement with compulsory teaching activities. For example, but not limited to, lectures, seminars and practicals.

5.3.2 Exam attendance is defined as a contact point for Home Office purposes. The UKVI Compliance Office will highlight any Student Visa taught students 'at risk' of missing more than 6 consecutive contact points following the end of the teaching term and during the exam period to the Departmental Compliance Contacts. The Departmental Compliance Contacts will then be responsible for monitoring the exam attendance of such students and for taking further action as needed as per paragraphs 6.6 to 6.9 of this policy.

5.4 Postgraduate Taught Students

5.4.1 It is a requirement of the Home Office that Postgraduate Taught students sponsored under the Student Visa Route are monitored for the duration of their course. These students will therefore, be monitored during both teaching and non-teaching periods but excluding the recognised vacation periods noted in 3.5.

5.4.2 Monitoring of Postgraduate Taught Students (PGT) during teaching periods

5.4.3 The University will monitor each student's engagement with compulsory teaching activities. For example, but not limited to, lectures, seminars and practicals.

5.4.3.1 Exam attendance is defined as a contact point for Home Office purposes. Dissertation submission is also defined as a contact point for Home Office purposes and will be evidenced from the submission records.

5.4.3.2 The UKVI Compliance Office will highlight any Student Visa taught students 'at risk' of missing **more than** 6 consecutive contact points following the end of the teaching term and during the exam period to the Departmental Compliance Contacts. The Departmental Compliance Contacts will then be responsible for monitoring the Exam Attendance of such students and take further action as needed as per paragraphs 6.6 to 6.9 of this policy.

5.4.4 Monitoring of Postgraduate Taught Students (PGT) during non-teaching periods

5.4.4.1 During the non-teaching period PGT students must meet their supervisors **at least once a month in person** to discuss their progress. Supervisors will email the UKVI Compliance Team to confirm that a meeting has taken place and to provide a brief summary of what was discussed

5.4.4.2 Submission of the final dissertation constitutes a contact point for Compliance purposes.

- 5.4.4.3 Where a student's supervisor is unable to meet with the student for any reason, such as annual leave, the student must meet with an alternative member of academic staff to discuss their dissertation.
- 5.4.4.4 PGT students who wish to write up their Masters dissertation from their Home Country will need to request approval from their Department. If approval is given, they will need to inform the UKVI Compliance Office and provide a copy of their flight departure confirmation in advance of leaving the University. The University will then withdraw sponsorship and the student's visa will be curtailed. Although the visa will be curtailed, the student will remain a student until the end of their registration.

5.5 Postgraduate Research Students (PGR)

- 5.5.1 PGR students must meet with their supervisors *in person* at least once a month to discuss their progress. **This meeting should take place within the first 3 weeks of the month.**
- 5.5.2 The meeting between supervisor and student **must take place in person.**
- 5.5.3 Supervisors must email their Departmental Compliance contact to **confirm that a meeting took place in person.** The email must include the student's name, the date of the meeting and a brief summary statement of the content discussed.
Many Academic Departments record meetings between supervisors and students on a hard copy form. This is also acceptable for UKVI purposes. A copy of each completed form must be sent to the UKVI Compliance Office **by the 23rd of the month. Where a supervisor is on leave or not available to conduct a meeting in person, students should meet with their second supervisor or other nominated academic member of staff.**
- 5.5.4 The assessment form completed by the student for the Postgraduate Research Monitoring Committee (held in June, September and January) is recognised by the University as a contact point for Home Office purposes.

5.6 Postgraduate Research Students on Field Work

- 5.6.1 The University must report to the Home Office within **ten (10) working days** that the student will be undertaking field work and therefore will not be in Aberystwyth for that duration. This is recorded as a 'change in study location' and does not have any impact on the student's visa.
- 5.6.2 When an Academic Department becomes aware that a student will be attending fieldwork, this **must** be reported to the UKVI Compliance Office immediately.
- 5.6.3 Academic Departments must ensure that they have monthly email contact with students while they are on field work. The email correspondence between the student and supervisor should discuss the work the student is undertaking and where possible attach

evidence of their work. This email must be forwarded to the UKVI Compliance Office no later than the last day of the month.

5.7 Monitoring students on the Study Abroad programme

- 5.7.1 The University has chosen to maintain its monitoring duties for students who are absent from the University on the Study Abroad programme. It is the responsibility of the home department (specifically the Exchange/ Erasmus coordinator within each department) to monitor the attendance of students during their Study Abroad period. A student on a Study Abroad programme is responsible for obtaining signatures each month from a relevant contact at the host organisation as proof of attendance. The Student should sign the Attendance Monitoring Form for Student Visa Holder – Study Abroad Programme (please see template form in Appendix 1). It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the form is properly signed and returned to their home department before the end of the month. The home department must ensure that this form is received once a month as failure to provide this evidence will be recorded as an “Unauthorised Absence” for the student and this can put their visa at risk.
- 5.7.2 If required, the home department can verify the attendance with the identified role holder in the visiting university. The home department must then forward a copy of the form for that month to the UKVI Compliance Office no later than the first working day of the following month. The original form with signatures must be returned at the end of the Study Abroad period.
- 5.7.3 The Certificate of Arrival and Certificate of Attendance sent by the host institution to Aberystwyth University will count as a ‘contact point’ for Home Office purposes and it is the student’s responsibility to forward them to the University. The Study Abroad Office is responsible for ensuring that copies are forwarded to the UKVI Compliance Office.

5.8 Monitoring a Student on a Work Placement

- 5.8.1 The UKVI Compliance Office must report to the Home Office that a Student Visa holder is undertaking a work placement within 10 working days of the start of the work placement. It is the Academic Department’s responsibility to report any work placements to be undertaken by Student Visa students to the University’s UKVI Compliance Office immediately so that this information can be conveyed to the Home Office within the 10-working day reporting deadline.
- 5.8.2 A student on a placement within the UK or overseas is responsible for collecting evidence from the host organisation that they are in attendance. Students must obtain the signature of an identified role holder within the organisation once a month. The signature must be recorded on the Attendance Monitoring Form for Student Visa Holder - Work Placement Programme (please see template form in Appendix 2). This form must be emailed to the home department once a month. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the form is properly signed and returned to their home department before the end of the month.

The home department must ensure that this form is received once a month as failure to send this evidence will be recorded as an “Unauthorised Absence” for the student and it can put their student’s visa at risk. If required, the school can verify the attendance with the identified role holder. The home department must then forward a copy of this form to the UKVI Compliance Office no later than the first working day of the following month. It is the student’s responsibility to return the original completed form to the UKVI Compliance Office when they return to AU.

5.9 International English Centre (IEC) students

- 5.9.1 A register of attendance is taken in every class for students attending programmes within the IEC. Unauthorised and unexplained absence for a maximum of two (2) consecutive days is brought to the attention of the IEC Administrative Manager by the programme leader and arrangements will be made to contact the student. If the student does not respond and subsequently is absent for a further three (3) consecutive days, this must be reported to the UKVI Compliance Office. The UKVI Compliance Office will then contact the student at 5 missed contact points and issue a formal warning that failure to re-engage may result in the withdrawal of their visa. If the student does not re-engage and misses a further 5 missed contacts, sponsorship will be withdrawn.

5.10 Students undertaking Joint Degrees

- 5.10.1 Where a student studies a joint degree across different Academic Departments, the UKVI Compliance Office will nominate the Academic Department responsible for monitoring attendance as appearing on the AStRA record of the relevant student. The nominated Academic Department will be responsible for communicating to the UKVI Compliance Office if a student has not been attending the mandatory teaching activities across both Academic Departments as detailed in Section 6.

5.11 PGCE Students

- 5.11.1 During teaching periods PGCE students will be monitored in the same way as UG/PGT students. Whilst students are on school placements, the UKVI Compliance Office will request monthly assurance reports from the student’s department confirming that they have been engaging with / attending the placement.

6 DEFINING CONTACT POINTS, OVERALL ATTENDANCE AND ESCALATION PROCESS FOR UG AND PGT STUDENTS

- 6.1 All students are expected to **engage fully** with their course of study by attending **all** scheduled teaching activities and engaging regularly with online teaching and learning resources.

- 6.1.1 The University will monitor each student's engagement with compulsory teaching activities. For example, but not limited to, lectures, seminars and practicals.
- 6.2 All students should engage fully with compulsory teaching activities. The only exception is where a student has had approval to study remotely for a short period of time or has informed the University that they are self-isolating. In those circumstances, students will not be able to attend timetabled (face-to face) teaching activities but will be expected to engage fully with online resources. For example, Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard), Lecture Capture (Panopto), E-submission of coursework and assignments etc.
- 6.3 The **minimum engagement requirement** is **two** instances of engagement with the above listed activities or resources each week (for these purposes, a week is defined as Monday-Sunday). Each instance of engagement will count as a contact point up to a maximum of **two contact points** each week. The two instances of engagement **must** be on separate days to register as contact points.

6.4 *Escalation process for UG and PGT students*

- 6.4.1 If a student misses (does not register) **two (2)** consecutive contact points (i.e., has not registered any contact points / evidence of engagement with face-to face teaching activities for one week) the **Academic Department** will contact the student to account for their absence, encourage them to re-engage with their course and to determine whether the University can offer any additional support to the student to ensure that their attendance improves.
- 6.4.2 If a student misses (does not register) **four (4)** consecutive contact points (i.e., has not registered any contact points / evidence of engagement with face-to face teaching activities for two weeks) the **Academic Department** will contact the student to account for their absence, encourage them to re-engage with their course and to determine whether the University can offer any additional support to the student to ensure that their attendance improves.
- 6.4.3 If a student misses (does not register) **six (6)** consecutive contact points (i.e., has not registered any contact points / evidence of engagement with face-to face teaching activities or online resources for three weeks) the **UKVI Compliance Office** will contact the student with a warning about their poor engagement, and to encourage them to re-engage with their course and to determine whether the University can offer any additional support to the student to ensure that their attendance improves.
- 6.4.4 If the student does not respond to initial queries from the Academic Department and subsequently misses (does not register) a further **two (2)** consecutive contact points (i.e. has not registered any contact points / evidence of engagement with face-to face teaching activities or online resources for four weeks) taking the total number of contact points missed to **eight (8)**, the **UKVI Compliance Office** will contact the student via email and letter with the following information:

- a) encourage the student to attend or engage,
- b) encourage the student to contact their Academic Department to let them know of any circumstances which may be preventing their attendance or engagement. In doing so the Academic Department would then be able to consider authorising the non-attendance/ engagement or supporting a leave of absence request,
- c) warn them that their unauthorised on-going absence jeopardises their academic progress;
- d) warn them that their continued failure to respond to correspondence on this issue could result in their sponsorship, and visa, being withdrawn.

6.4.4 If the student fails to respond to the email from the UKVI Compliance Office and subsequently misses (fails to register) another **two (2)** consecutive contact points (has not registered any contact points as a result of engagement with face-to-face teaching activities or online resources by the end of the following week), resulting in a total of **ten (10) missed consecutive contact points**, the UKVI Compliance Office will report the student to the Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for compliance.

- i) The Pro Vice-Chancellor, in consultation with the UKVI Compliance Office will review the case. Where it is evidenced that the student has not engaged in their studies over the 10 consecutive contact points, and has failed to provide a satisfactory reason for the absence, the Home Office must be informed and sponsorship must be withdrawn.
- ii) Prior to withdrawal of sponsorship, the University may use discretion to consider whether any other evidence of engagement with studies can be considered as a contact point, for example, a record of a meeting between the student and an academic tutor where an aspect of the student's course / studies was the subject of the discussion.
- iii) Where a departmental policy on managing absence exists and is more stringent than that outlined in points 6.5 and 6.6 the departmental policy shall take precedence. The policy is designed to ensure that, in the absence of an appropriate departmental policy which complies with the expectations of the Home Office, each student is contacted and offered support within an appropriate time frame before being reported to the Home Office.

6.5 *Escalation Process for PGT students during non-teaching periods*

- 6.5.1 PGT students must meet with their supervisors once a month during non-teaching periods (June, July, August / September, October, November) to discuss their progress. **A record of the meeting must be sent to the UKVI Compliance Office by the last day of the month.**
- 6.5.2 A few days before the end of the month, the UKVI Compliance Office will write to all PGT students and Supervisors who have yet to send a record of a meeting in that month to remind them that **they must meet and ensure the UKVI Compliance Office receive a record of a meeting before the end of the month.**

- 6.5.3 If no report for a PGT student has been received by the end of the month, the UKVI Compliance Office will write to the PGT student (copied to the supervisor and Departmental Compliance Contact) **to inform them that their Student Visa is at risk, and they must confirm the date a meeting took place.**
- 6.5.4 If the student does not respond and / or it is established that no meeting has taken place and there is no evidence that the student has been engaging in the given month, the UKVI Compliance Office will report the student to the Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for compliance. The Pro Vice-Chancellor, in consultation with the UKVI Compliance Office, will review the case. Where it is evidenced that the student has not engaged with their studies for a period of 30 days, and they have failed to provide a satisfactory reason for the absence, the Home Office must be informed and sponsorship must be withdrawn.
- 6.5.5 Prior to withdrawal of sponsorship, the University may use discretion to consider whether any other evidence of engagement with studies can be considered as a contact point, for example, evidence of in-person attendance on campus to conduct laboratory work or training events.

7 ESCALATION PROCESS FOR PGR STUDENTS

- 7.1 PGR students must meet with their supervisors once a month to discuss their progress. As outlined in section 5.5, **a record of the in-person meeting must be sent to the UKVI Compliance Office by the 23rd of the month.**
- 7.2 If no report has been received by the 23rd of the month, the UKVI Compliance Office will write to the PhD student (copied to the supervisor and Departmental Compliance Contact). The student will be informed that a record of a meeting has not been received. **The student will be informed that their visa is at risk and that they must arrange a meeting with their supervisor as a matter of urgency.** They must ensure they meet their supervisor before the end of the month. The student will be asked to respond to the email to confirm that they have arranged to meet their supervisor within the next week (i.e. before the end of the month).
- 7.3 If the student does not respond to the warning email from the UKVI Compliance Office a further email will be sent to them a few days later. This email will reiterate what was said in the original email and will inform them that if confirmation of a meeting is not received by the end of the month the University will begin the process of withdrawing sponsorship.
- 7.4 If a record of a meeting is not received by the end of the month the UKVI Compliance Office will report the student to the Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for compliance. The Pro Vice-chancellor, in consultation with the UKVI Compliance Office, will review the case. Where there is no evidence **that the student has engaged with their studies for a period of 30 days**, and they have failed to provide a satisfactory reason for the absence, the Home Office must be informed and sponsorship must be withdrawn.
- 7.5 Prior to withdrawal of sponsorship, the University may use discretion to consider whether any other evidence of engagement with studies can be considered as a contact point, for

example, evidence of in-person attendance on campus to conduct laboratory work or Graduate School training events.

8 AUTHORISED ABSENCES

- 8.1 Authorised absences are determined on a case by case basis and discussed with the relevant Academic Department in the context of the student's course of study and circumstances.
- 8.2 Any such absence must be formally approved by the relevant Academic Department. The student must seek approval from their supervisor / tutor and the supervisor / tutor will need to assure the UKVI Compliance Office that the absence will not impact on the student's latest submission date. Once the absence is authorised by the supervisor / tutor, it will need to be forwarded to the Departmental Compliance Contact for their attention. The Departmental Compliance Contact will forward the request to the UKVI Compliance Office for approval.
- 8.3 If the student is travelling outside the UK they will be issued with a letter which confirms the dates of the period of authorised absence. The student should travel with this letter as they may need to show it to Border Officials when re-entering the UK as evidence that their period of absence has been authorised by the University. The UKVI Compliance Office will also update the student's AStRA record to reflect the details of the authorised absence so that this can be easily identified when looking at the student's International Tab on AStRA.
- 8.4 For Home Office purposes, if an absence is authorised it will not count towards the number of 'consecutive contact points' missed by the student.
- 8.5 Where, either requested or in the judgement of the Academic Department, the student requires a prolonged absence, the student must interrupt their studies by means of the temporary withdrawal process. Students who interrupt their studies in this way will be reported to the Home Office and their visa will be curtailed. They must then reapply for their visa prior to resuming their studies.
- 8.6 Authorised absences do not need to be recorded as a period of formal temporary withdrawal and students do not need to reapply for their visa.
- 8.7 It is essential that authorised absences are documented and that these records are easily accessible. These records will be subject to audit by the Home Office in the event of a site visit.
- 8.8 Authorised Absence for Postgraduate Taught (PGT) and Undergraduate (UG) Students plus IEC Students

Step 1 – Student

You need to email your Departmental Compliance Contacts to make a request for authorised absence. Please provide the following information:

- Start and end of absence.
- The reason for the requested period of absence.
- Where you will be travelling to / your destination during the period of absence.

Please note that verbal authorisation or an informal agreement is **not acceptable**. You must make a request in writing.

PGT students (who commenced their course in September) are expected to be in Aberystwyth from June to September. This is not a vacation period. Any requests to take authorised absence during this period need to be sent directly to your dissertation supervisor. Supervisors do not have to agree to any requests during this period.

If you are unwell, you need to submit a medical note, or any other evidence as requested by your department.

Step 2 – Departmental Compliance Contact

Your Departmental Compliance Contact will forward the request to the relevant member of staff in the department for approval. They will then send this onto the Compliance Office (compliance@aber.ac.uk).

Step 3 – UKVI Compliance Office

The Compliance Office will assess and authorise your request and update your attendance record.

If you are travelling outside of the UK, you will be issued with a letter that will outline your travel details. You should travel with a copy of this letter when you are returning to the UK as you may be asked by UK border control to provide evidence that you have authorisation to be away from the University during term time.

8.9 Authorised Absence for Postgraduate Research (PGR) Students

Step 1 – Student

You need to email your academic supervisor to request an authorised absence and send a copy that request and approval to your Departmental Compliance Contacts.

Please note that verbal authorisation or an informal agreement is not acceptable. You must make a request in writing.

You must include **where** you are going, **how long** you are going for, and **why** you are going. Your supervisor will assess your request.

Step 2 – Academic Supervisor

If they are happy to authorise your absence, they must state it in writing i.e. e-mail, that they "approve the absence and that this absence will not impact on your current latest submission date". They will then need to forward their authorisation via email to the departmental contact who will send it on to the compliance team.

Step 3 – Departmental Compliance Contact

Your Departmental Compliance Contact will forward the request to the Compliance Office (compliance@aber.ac.uk).

Step 4 – UKVI Compliance Office

The Compliance Office will assess and authorise your request.

If you are traveling outside of the UK, you will be issued with a letter which will outline your travel details. You should travel with a copy of this letter when you are returning to the UK as you may be asked by UK border control to provide evidence that you have authorisation to be away from the University during term time.

Please ensure that authorised absence requests have been submitted and approved before finalising your travel arrangements. The Compliance Office will need a couple of days to issue the letter but will normally turn these around within 48 hours of receiving the approval of your supervisor. If you have not received your letter, please contact us to ask about the status of your request.

Requests for authorised absence should be made in writing via email. Verbal/informal approval is not acceptable.

9 REPORTING STUDENT ACTIVITY

- 9.1 The UKVI Compliance Office is required to report any 'change of circumstance' relating to a Student Visa student to the Home Office within **10 working days**. Failure to report within the 10-day period would result in the University not complying with Home Office regulations.
- 9.2 Academic Departments must report any 'change of circumstance' relating to a Student Visa holder to the University's UKVI Compliance Office immediately so that this information can be conveyed to the Home Office within the 10-day reporting deadline.
- 9.3 The following are considered a 'change of circumstance' and must be reported to the UKVI Compliance Office immediately:
 - The student withdraws or defers from their studies;

- The student is excluded (for example, for failing to reach academic standards)
- The student does not maintain contact with the Academic Department as stated in Section 6;
- The student finishes the course earlier than expected;
- The student transfers to another University;
- The student begins a work placement, study abroad or field work (whether in the UK or overseas) as part of studies;
- The student changes their course of study. For the most part individual module changes would not need to be reported. Possible changes to study should be discussed with the UKVI Compliance Office in advance of any change taking place.
- The student returns home to write the thesis or to conduct other work;
- The student is doing anything that suggests that they are breaking the conditions of their permission to stay in the UK.

10 ASCERTAINING A STUDENT'S VISA STATUS

- 10.1 The UKVI Compliance Office and/or the International Student Adviser are responsible for checking the visa status of international students.
- 10.2 If a student advises the Academic Department that they do not require a visa, where their ASTRA record indicates otherwise, please refer them to the UKVI Compliance Office in the first instance. If the UKVI Compliance Office (compliance@aber.ac.uk) is not available, the student should be referred to the International Student Adviser (immigrationadvice@aber.ac.uk).

11 CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- 11.1 For queries regarding any immigration compliance issues, please contact the UKVI Compliance Office at compliance@aber.ac.uk or **01970 621769**.
- 11.2 For student queries regarding Student Visas and other sponsored visas, contact the International Student Adviser at immigrationadvice@aber.ac.uk or **01970 621548**.
- 11.3 It is the responsibility of the Faculty Registrars to keep the UKVI Compliance Office informed of changes to their key contacts for compliance purposes. The most up to date list can be found at www.aber.ac.uk/international/compliance-information. Home Office updates will be sent to these contacts only.

Appendix 3:

Student Visa Holder – Split Site PhD

Student Name		Reference Number	E-mail
Department:			
External Organisation		External Supervisor	
Date	Student Signature	External Supervisor Signature	ID (type)

This form must be completed once a month. The form must be sent to your home department and the Compliance office via email at the end of each month. If this form is not submitted to your home department, it will be classed as an 'unauthorised absence'.