

<u>Policy Title</u>	NCG International Attendance and Engagement Policy
<u>Policy Category</u>	Compliant
<u>Owner</u>	International Compliance Officer
<u>Group Executive Lead</u>	Chief Operations & Compliance Officer and Secretary to the Board
<u>Date Written</u>	April 2020
<u>Considered By</u>	Executive Board
<u>Approved By</u>	HE Governance Committee
<u>Date Approved</u>	April 2023
<u>Equality Impact Assessment</u>	The implementation of this policy is not considered to have a negative impact on protected characteristics
<u>Freedom of Information</u>	This document will be publicly available through the Groups Publication Scheme.
<u>Review Date</u>	April 2024
<u>Policy Summary</u>	The purpose of this document is to provide instruction on the overview and management of attendance monitoring relating to those students who require a Student Route / Tier 4 student visa.

<u>Applicability of Policy</u>	<u>Consultation Undertaken</u>	<u>Applicable To</u>
Newcastle	Yes	Yes
Newcastle Sixth Form	N/A	N/A
Carlisle	No	Yes
Kidderminster	No	Yes
Lewisham	No	Yes
Southwark	No	Yes
West Lancashire	No	Yes
Professional Services	No	Yes

<u>Changes to Earlier Versions</u>	
<u>Previous Approval Date</u> May 2021	<u>Summarise Changes Made Here</u>
1. Line added to cover “dissertation” activity as form of engagement. 4. Removal of “Virtual Learning Environments”. 4. Exception added to the 60-day rule for withdrawal of student. 5. Exceptions added to reporting criteria. 5. Clarification added that faculty discretion can be used to withdraw a student based on attendance concerns even if the student hasn’t breached the stated thresholds.	

<u>Linked Documents</u>	
<u>Document Title</u>	<u>Relevance</u>
UKVI Compliance Policy	Links into wider Student sponsor compliance activities



**Note** – This document relates to the monitoring of attendance and engagement of those learners sponsored by NCG under the Tier 4 / Student Visa route as per UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) requirements. For non-Tier 4 / Student route International Students, please refer to the applicable College attendance policy.

## 1. Introduction

NCG, and its member colleges, has a no tolerance policy regarding non-attendance and lateness and as a result the expectation is that all students achieve 100% attendance and punctuality.

Students should attend all classes punctually according to their signed Learning Agreement and course timetable. This gives them the best opportunity to be successful in their studies. It is a requirement of NCG's Student Sponsor status that UKVI is informed of significant periods of student non-attendance. Reporting periods of unauthorised non-attendance to UKVI is mandatory.

As a Student sponsor, NCG is required to implement and operate a robust attendance and engagement policy for its sponsored Students. Any student sponsored under the UKVI Student licence who fail to engage with their programme of study, as set out in this policy, will be reported to UKVI and will be withdrawn from their programme of study, unless there are exceptional extenuating circumstances.

**To be clear** –where a student is reported to the UKVI as a result of failing to engage, where there are no extenuating circumstances, this will result in the student's Tier 4 / Student leave being curtailed (cancelled).

NCG's definition of academic engagement activity is as follows:

- Attending required lectures, seminars or tutorials.
- Undertaking required laboratory work.
- Undertaking research or fieldwork.
- Submitting essays, assignments and attending examinations.
- Academic engagement related to dissertation draft, feedback and submission.

## 2. Unplanned absence due to emergency or illness:

If a student needs to miss a session as listed above, they should:

- Contact the Programme Leader or relevant member of staff as soon as possible to explain the unplanned absence before the start of the relevant class / session.
- Provide a medical note from their GP if the absence is longer than one calendar week and illness is the reason for the absence or suitable alternative evidence for absence if not related to illness.

### 3. Planned absence:

- Discuss the matter with the Programme Leader or relevant member of staff in advance of any unavoidable planned absence.
- Complete an application for authorised absence form, obtain the Programme Leader's signature and submit it to the NCG International Compliance Officer. This will be subsequently shared with the International Office, Newcastle College.
- The NCG International Compliance Officer to check that the planned absence has been inputted correctly into registers.

### 4. For all absence including authorised, the student is responsible for:

- Catching up on missed work by viewing missed sessions / notes via Teams.  
On return to College the student should discuss any outstanding work and make arrangements to catch up with their Personal Tutor (FE Full time) designated programme lead or Lecturer (HE).

### **Student Re-engagement.**

Students studying RQF Level 3-5 who have an attendance record of less than 85% in a given month and students studying RQF Level 6 and above who fail to attend for three consecutive calendar weeks, will be invited to attend a re-engagement meeting with the NCG International Compliance Officer and the relevant course tutor.

Students whose attendance and engagement does not improve, following the re-engagement meeting, will risk being withdrawn from the programme and reported to UKVI. The decision to authorise any period of absence is at the discretion of the programme leader, personal tutor or lecturer and will be in line with either this policy and / or NCG HE Academic Regulations. For example, if a student will be absent for a prolonged period, perhaps because they are ill, the programme leader may decide that this is authorised. It is important to note however that in making this decision, the programme leader will consider whether or not the student will then be able to re-engage with their studies on return, without repeating a previous period of study.

Any authorised long-term leave must be reported to the NCG International Compliance Officer. Where such a student is unable to engage with their study due to illness or personal circumstances and where the absence prohibits the successful completion of the course, the student will be withdrawn and reported to UKVI, with the option to defer at a later date.

If the option to defer results in a new CAS being required for the student to complete the course, the decision to issue the new CAS will be made by the International Compliance Officer.

## **5. Thresholds for withdrawal and reporting to UKVI**

A student studying at RQF Level 3-5 whose attendance falls below 70% for three consecutive calendar months will be withdrawn and reported to UKVI unless there are compelling, extenuating circumstances, supported by evidence and the faculty agrees that the programme of study can still be completed within the original CAS start and end date.

- A student studying at RQF Level 6 and above who fails to engage for 60 consecutive calendar days will be withdrawn and reported to UKVI unless there are compelling extenuating, circumstances, supported by evidence and the faculty agrees that the programme of study can still be completed within the original CAS start and end date.
- The 60-day unauthorised absence threshold for HE and 3 consecutive calendar months of below 70% attendance threshold for FE are not the only triggers that will lead to withdrawal and reporting based on attendance concerns. If the personal tutor, lecturer or programme leader confirms that failure to engage is such that the student cannot progress through and / or complete the course successfully, the student will be withdrawn and reported to UKVI even if they are yet to breach the aforementioned thresholds.

## **6. Monitoring student attendance and reporting to UKVI**

- International student attendance is monitored by the NCG International Compliance Officer on a fortnightly basis using the “Source” ‘learner attendance summary’ report.
- This report is recorded and where a re-engagement meeting occurs, the report is annotated with the details of the meeting and any actions related to the re-engagement plan for a given student.
- International student attendance is reviewed at the termly international committee meeting, with any concerns raised by the HE or academic teams, being addressed with the student by the NCG International Compliance Officer.