POLICY / PROCEDURE TITLE		DATE OF APPROVAL
International Attendance & Engagement Policy		April 2024
APPROVED BY	**VERSION NO.**	**VALID UNTIL**
HE Governance Committee	5	April 2027

OWNER	International Compliance Officer
GROUP EXECUTIVE LEAD	Deputy Principal, Executive Lead HE
DOCUMENT TYPE	Policy ☒ Group Procedure ☐ Local Procedure ☐
PURPOSE	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.
APPLICABLE TO	All NCG employees, as well as consultants, vendors, agency workers, contractors, service users, trainees/students, volunteers and/or any other parties who have a business relationship with NCG.
EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED [POLICIES ONLY]	Yes ☒ / No ☐ / N/A ☐
	(If EA not applicable, please explain)
KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS POLICY	•
EXPECTED OUTCOME	Readers are expected to understand the organisational position on attendance monitoring of students requiring student route/tier 4 student visa, know their responsibilities in relation to the policy and comply with the terms of the policy.

MISCELLANEOUS	
LINKED DOCUMENTS	• UKVI Compliance Policy • NCG Attendance Management Policy
KEYWORDS	• Attendance • Student • Application • Visa

Equality Impact Assessment

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	Yes	No	Explanatory Note if required
EIA 1 - Does the proposed policy/procedure align with the intention of the NCG Mission and EDIB Intent Statement in Section 2?	☒	☐	The answer to this must be YES
EIA 2 - Does the proposed policy/procedure in any way impact unfairly on any protected characteristics below?	☐	☒	
Age	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Disability / Difficulty	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Gender Reassignment	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Marriage and Civil Partnership	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Race	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Religion or Belief	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Sex	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Sexual Orientation	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA3 - Does the proposed policy/processes contain any language/terms/references/ phrasing that could cause offence to any specific groups of people or individuals?	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA4 - Does the policy/process discriminate or victimise any groups or individuals?	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process positively discriminate against any group of people, or individuals?	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process include any positive action to support underrepresented groups of people, or individuals?	☐	☒	The answer to this could be yes or no as positive action is lawful. However, an explanation must be provided for clarity.
EIA 6 - How do you know that the above is correct?	The policy author has consulted with peers and appropriate groups of people in the Group and through the Policy Review Council.		

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 UKVisas and Immigration (UKVI) requirements. For non-Tier 4 / Student route International Students, please refer to the applicable College attendance policy.

1. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

NCG, and its member colleges, has a no tolerance policy regarding unauthorised absence 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 academic staff as soon as possible to explain the unplanned absence before the start of the relevant lecture / 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 academic staff in advance of any unavoidable planned absence.

- Complete an application for authorised absence form, obtain the Programme Leader's or alternative member of the academic team 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 will check that the planned absencehas 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 andmake 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 meetingwith the NCG International Compliance Officer and the relevant member of the academic team.

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 absence in excess of 2 weeks must be reported to the NCG International Compliance Officer. In cases where a student is unable to engage with their studies due to illness or personal circumstances and where the absence prohibits the successful completion of the course, the student will be withdrawn and reportedto 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 theNCG 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 evidenceand the faculty agrees that the programme of study can still be completed withinthe original CAS start and end date. Consultation will be made with the relevant Head of Curriculum and Curriculum Leader. 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. Consultation will be made with the relevant Head of Curriculum and Curriculum Leader. 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 reportedto UKVI even if they are yet to breach the aforementioned thresholds.

If there are exceptional extenuating circumstances, the student may be supported to apply for mitigation.

6. MONITORING STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND REPORTING TO UKVI

- International student attendance is monitored by the NCG International Compliance Officer every 3 weeks in term time.

- 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.

- The "missing in action" (MIA) report is sent to the International Compliance Officer (ICO) on a monthly basis by the Senior Leadership Team of Newcastle College. This report details students who have hit a 4-week absence trigger. The ICO will investigate whether this is a genuine absence or an administrative error. The ICO will take appropriate re-engagement action as detailed above for any international students who appear on the MIA list.

7. STATEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION

Upon approval, this policy will be uploaded to the policy portal and communicated to staff via The Business Round-Up.

8. STATEMENT ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

NCG is committed to providing equality of opportunity. Further details or our aims and objectives are outlined in our [Equality Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Strategy](#).

This policy has been assessed to identify any potential for adverse or positive impact on specific groups of people protected by the Equality Act 2010 and does not discriminate either directly or indirectly. In applying this policy, we have considered eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between people from diverse groups.

9. STATEMENT ON CONSULTATION

This policy has been reviewed in consultation with members of the Policy Review Council as part of the policy review and approval process.

VERSION CONTROL				
Version No.	**Documentation Section/Page No.**	**Description of Change and Rationale**	**Author/Reviewer**	**Date Revised**
1	New policy	N/A	International Compliance Officer	May 2020
2	Subject to scheduled review	Minor amendments	International Compliance Officer	April 2021
3	Subject to scheduled review	Minor amendments	International Compliance Officer	April 2022
4	Subject to scheduled review	Minor amendments	International Compliance Officer	April 2023
5	Subject to full review:	Changes made: Section 2: Clarify student should contact member of academic team. Section 3: Clarify student should contact member of academic team. Section 5: Addition of clause for mitigation in exceptional circumstances. Section 6: Monitoring student attendance: • Change "fortnightly" attendance monitoring to "every 3 weeks in term time". • Insert paragraph to include MIA lists.	International Compliance Officer	April 2024