



Recruitment and Monitoring of International Students SOP

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Responsible Owner:

Senior International Development Manager

Summary of Contents

This Standard Operating Procedure outlines the process the College will follow in the recruitment and monitoring of International Students.

The process will clarify responsibilities on all SERC staff consistent UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) requirements.

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1.0 Change History

Changes to this SOP are documented in Appendix 1 of this document. When reading electronic copies of this document, [you can click here to view the change history](#).

2.0 Summary

- 2.1. This Standard Operating Procedure outlines the process the College will follow in the recruitment and monitoring of International Students. (For the purposes of this SOP, an international student is defined as a student who does not qualify as a resident or citizen of UK/Ireland or an EEA National with pre-settled or settled status in the UK and was granted a Student visa).
- 2.2. Procedures exist for all students and this SOP represents additional requirements for international students.
- 2.3. The process will clarify responsibilities on all SERC staff consistent UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) requirements.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1. The procedure will apply to all staff.

4.0 Procedure

- 4.1. International Office will report the following breaches of agreement to the UK Visas and Immigration using the Sponsor Management System (SMS) for Certificate of Acceptance for Studies:
 - It becomes aware that any of the students it is sponsoring has been granted leave with the incorrect conditions of stay, for instance if they have mistakenly been granted permission to work;
 - Anything it has reported through the SMS is incorrect, explaining why it is incorrect;
 - If the student fails to enrol on the accepted course within the enrolment period;
 - If the student misses 10 expected contacts without permission;
 - If there are any significant changes in circumstances, for example, if the length of a course of study becomes shorter;
 - If the students withdraw from, or defer, their studies
 - If the College stop sponsoring for any reasons
 - Significant changes in student circumstances
 - If there are any suspicions that the student is breaking the conditions of permission to stay.
 - If the student is doing the work placement that is part of their course.
 - College must also provide details to Home Office of any third party, in the UK or another country, which has helped it to recruit students
- 4.2. General course information including entry requirements can be provided by any member of staff without referral to the international office consistent with College procedures for all students. (Information in relation to the equivalency of international

qualifications can be provided by careers staff or the international office using the UK NARIC database.)

- 4.3. All international students who wish to enrol on a course must be referred to the international office. In order to enrol the student must first complete an International Student Application form and submit this to the international office along with a copy of their qualifications.
- 4.4. International students are required to demonstrate that they can speak and understand English, by taking an English Language test with one of the UKVI approved test providers (unless they are a national of a majority English Speaking Country as defined by the UKVI). The College requirements are in addition to those required by the UKVI and are listed below:
 - 4.4.1. For entry to an FE course the student must demonstrate competence at IELTS 5.5 overall (minimum of 5.5 in all skills) or equivalent.
 - 4.4.2. For entry to a course at NQF level 4 or above the student must demonstrate competence in English Language as follows:
 - HNDs - Academic IELTS 6.0 band (minimum of 5.5 in all skills)
 - University Foundation Degrees - Academic IELTS 6.0 (minimum of 5.5 in all skills) or equivalent

Any exceptions to this must be approved by the relevant Head of School, Course Co-ordinator or international office but still must be within the UKVI requirements, which are as follows:

1. Common European Framework (CEFR) B2 in each of the four disciplines is the appropriate level for those coming to study at level 6 (undergraduate) and above.
 2. CEFR B1 is the appropriate level for lower courses, including the Pathways.
- 4.5. When a student has fulfilled all of the academic requirements for entry onto a course, they will be supplied with a conditional offer of acceptance (see Appendix 2). (This offer will be conditional upon the student paying the required deposit/ fee).
 - 4.6. All new directly recruited international students will be required to pay full course fees prior to issuing of a Certificate of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) or acceptance letter. Any deposit of full fee amount will be reimbursed less a £250.00 administration charge only if their visa is refused and the student can provide a copy of the refusal letter. The only exception will be given to the students recruited by agents. The CAS will be issued on 25% deposit of the fee when a student is recruited through the agent. The remaining balance must be paid before enrolment. (This arrangement must be approved by the Senior International Development Manager).
 - 4.7. When a student has fulfilled all obligations for entry on a specified course (fees and entry requirements), they will be supplied with a CAS through the UKVI sponsor management system (SMS). This will be issued by an approved College SMS user. In addition, the student will be supplied with a confirmation letter (see Appendix 3).
 - 4.8. The requirements in relation to international student procedures will be explained to the student prior to enrolment by the International Student Office. An agreement will be signed by the student confirming that they understand their obligations to the College in relation the UK Visas and Immigration requirements (Appendix 4). A copy

of this agreement (letter) will be given to the student and the original kept in the international student file.

- 4.9. Before an international student is accepted onto a full time course of study they will be obliged to present the College with the following (in addition to settling their required balance of their tuition fees):

Original passport

The College will copy the relevant pages showing all personal details (including biometric details) and leave stamps or immigration status documents - including evidence of their entitlement to study in the United Kingdom and the period that they have permission to stay here; the student must keep the original passport.

EVISA SHARECODE

The College will view the students EVISA at the provided sharecode

Original Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) Card:

The College will copy the BRP for student file.

Local address and contact details

If these change for any reason, then the student will be required to supply these new details to the international office immediately.

Original qualifications (used for acceptance onto the course)

The College will copy the qualifications for file before returning them to the student.

Completed enrolment form

This must be signed by the student and a member of the academic course team

- 4.10. At enrolment a file will be created and maintained for each International Student. This file will contain local contact details and a copy (including details of expiry) of the following:

- Student Enrolment form
- Student Passport ID
- Leave to Remain (LTR)

(A reminder for expiry of the above will be set for the International Office staff using the College MS Outlook accounts. This reminder will be sent to the staff 60 days prior to expiry of any of the above.)

- Course Duration
- Course Coordinator Details
- All relevant correspondence with the student

- A copy of the original qualification certificates provided by the student for
 - entry onto the course of study.
- 4.11. International student attendance will be monitored in the same way as home students and concerns will be referred to SERC extra when appropriate. In addition, all international student attendance will be monitored by the international office using the College e-registers every two weeks.
- 4.12. If a student misses more than 10 expected attendances, then the International Office will liaise with the course coordinator to establish if there a reason for the missing attendance. If a concern exists, then the student will be contacted to establish if there is a valid reason for the absence. Evidence must be produced for any absence due to medical reasons.

SERC define an “expected contact” as any day that the student is expected to attend class. The student will be recorded as missing an expected contact only if they have missed all classes in any given day. The student will be reported to the UKVI if they have missed 10 consecutive expected contacts in the following circumstances:

- If the student is unable to be contacted
- If the student fails to supply a reasonable excuse for the unauthorised absence

This must be reported within 10 working days to the UKVI. For students in possession of a CAS, this report will be supplied through the UKVI SMS by a designated user.

Concerns over attendance to any particular class will be addressed through the normal College procedures.

- 4.13. No less than 1 month before expiry of the student passport or LTR, the International Office will contact the student concerned and warn them that failure to renew and provide evidence of renewal will mean that the College will inform the UK Visas and Immigration of the expiry. NB this does not remove the responsibility on the Student to ensure that all details remain valid.
- 4.14. If the student fails to provide evidence of proof that their application for extension for passport or LTR has been made before the date of expiry then the UK Visas and Immigration will be informed immediately using the SMS (for CAS students).
- 4.15. If a student is withdrawing from their programme, the Course Co-ordinator must submit a Student Withdrawal Form giving the last date of attendance.

A summary of the reporting duties for the College are given in Appendix 5.

5.0 Residency Status and Fee Assessment

5.1. Residency

Any non-EU and EU non-resident status applications should be forwarded to the International office to confirm eligibility to study in UK without prior permission from UKVI.

5.2. Fees

Given the current complexities of establishing the residency status of a student for fee purposes (i.e. home / international rates), the International team will use their

expertise to review a student's circumstances and establish the correct rate to be charged. International team will inform Customer Services of the fee to be charged.

5.3. Payments

For international students where payment in full at point of enrolment is not required (i.e. non-year 1 / those that are considered resident): students can avail of the instalment option (i.e. the normal instalments per the Fees Policy) or can avail of 5% discount for full payment at point of enrolment.

For those not falling under this category, full payment is required at enrolment.

International team will inform Customer Services of payment mechanism.

5.4. Individual Payment Plans

Where a student requires an individual payment plan, this will be discussed / arranged by the international team. The International Team will forward suggested plan for my sign-off (to keep us compliant with the Fees Policy) – they will then maintain this approval on file.

6.0 Evaluation

6.1. The College will monitor all feedback and comments for the purposes of quality control.

6.2. The Head of International Development will conduct a regular evaluation of the process and activity to encourage continuous improvement.

6.3. Category A feedback will be submitted to the College Management Risk Assessment Meetings

6.4. The College will implement any remedial action as necessary in line with the outcome of any evaluation process.

7.0 Responsible Owner

It is the responsibility of the Senior International Development Manager to ensure that this policy is implemented, adhered to and reviewed.

8.0 Communication Plan

8.1. This Procedure will be uploaded to the College intranet and referred to in staff induction and training.

8.2. Staff Development provided for managers and other staff who will be involved in the implementation and operation of the process.

9.0 Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually, or when the need for change has been identified.

Appendix 1: Document Change History

Version	Date	Change Detail
1.0	Oct 2023	Transferred to new Accessibility Template
1.1	May 2024	Section 4.6 – sentence added to end of paragraph - “This arrangement must be approved by the Senior International Development Manager
1.2	Sept 2025	4.9 - Add section title: EVISA Sharecode 4.9 - Add text: The College will view the students EVISA at the provided sharecode Appendix 5: attach website link Responsible Owner changed to “Senior International Development Officer”.
1.3	August 2026	Remove point 5.5 above

Appendix 2: CONDITIONAL LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

Date:

Conditional Offer of Acceptance for _____

Dear

I am pleased to let you know that based upon your qualifications I can confirm that you are eligible for a place on _____. Please note that this is a full time course commencing with effect immediately. The details of the course location and start dates are provided below.

Student Details:

Name of Student: Surname: _____

First Name: _____

Nationality: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Passport Number: _____

Sponsor's Details:

Licence Number: QN7R513C1

College Name: South Eastern Regional College (SERC)

Course Detail: _____

Course Title: _____

Course Level: _____

Start Date of Course: _____

Expected End Date: _____

Evidence used to obtain offer:

Fees:

Course fees charged per year: _____

Main study address in the United Kingdom: Castle Park Road, Bangor BT20 4TD

I will be able to issue you a CAS (and therefore an unconditional offer) on receipt of £_____. I wish to congratulate you on this offer. Please note that this amount is only refundable (less a £250.00 admin fee) if you can provide appropriate evidence that your visa has been denied.

Kind Regards

Name of member of international office staff

Appendix 3: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

Date: _____

CAS Reference Confirmation

CAS Reference Number: _____

Sponsor's Details:

Licence Number: QN7R513C1

College Name: South Eastern Regional College (SERC)

Student Details:

Name of Student: Surname: _____

First Name: _____

Nationality: _____

Date of Birth: __/__/____

Passport Number: _____

Course Detail:

Course Title: _____

Course Level: _____

Start Date of Course: __/__/____

Expected End Date: __/__/____

Evidence used to obtain offer: _____

APPENDIX 3...ctd...

Fees:

Course fees charged for first year of the course (in pounds sterling):

Course fees paid to date (in pounds sterling):

Fees Paid so far:

Main study address in the United Kingdom

Address:

City or town:

Postcode:

Name of SMS User who issued CAS

Appendix 4: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AGREEMENT (To be signed at enrolment)

This form will be maintained in the International Student File

On enrolment to the South Eastern Regional College I have supplied the following:

1. My passport to enable the College to make copies of the relevant sections (including evidence of Leave to Remain). This has been copied and returned to me.
2. My local contact details (including local address where I will be residing and the telephone number where I can be contacted). If during the course of study my contact details change then I will inform the College immediately.
3. Evidence that I have informed the UKVI of my intention to switch sponsor (if relevant)

I understand that the College (under their obligation as a sponsor) will contact the UK Visas and Immigration to report:

- If I miss 10 expected days in class without permission from the College;
- If my passport or leave to remain expires (based on the information that the College has on file, supplied by me at enrolment);
- If the College stops being my immigration sponsor for any reason;
- If there are any significant changes in my circumstances, for example, if the length of a course of study becomes shorter;
- If there are any suspicions they may have that I am breaking the conditions of your permission to stay
- If I fail to pay my fees as agreed at the time of enrolment
- If there are any suspicions they may have that I am breaking the conditions of your permission to stay

APPENDIX 4...ctd...

The above conditions have been explained to me and I am clear who I can contact if I have any concerns about any of them

Signature

Date

Print Name

I have received the above details listed at 1 & 2 above.

Signature (on behalf of the College)

Date

Print Name

Office Use Only

Received by		Date		Logged by		Date	
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Appendix 5: Summary of College Reporting Duties to the UKVI

The College will report the following information or events about sponsored students to the UKVI within the time limit given using the sponsorship management system:

- If the student does not enroll on their course at the expected time. The College will report this within 10 working days giving the reason the student gives for non-attendance (for example, a missed flight).
- If they are absent from College for more than 10 expected contacts on their course of study without permission. The College will report this within 10 working days of the 10th day of missed contact.
- If they leave the course or are withdrawn. The College will report this within 10 working days of this event, giving the name and address of any new institution that they have joined if known.
- If the College stops sponsoring them for any other reason (for example, if they move into a immigration category with a different sponsor or one that that does not need a sponsor, or their permission to stay in the United Kingdom ends because their course of study ends). This will be reported within 10 working days.
- If there are any significant changes in their circumstances - for example a change in the length of their course of study. This will be reported within 10 working days.
- If the College has any information which suggests that they are breaching the conditions of their leave. This will be reported within 10 working days.
- If there are any significant changes in the College circumstances. This will be reported within 28 calendar days.
- The College will also send the UKVI details of any third party or intermediary, in the UK or abroad, that helped recruit students.
- Full information on reporting duties can be found at the Tier 4 of the Points Based System's Guidance for Sponsors Document 2: Sponsorship Duties which can be downloaded by visiting the following link:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/705319/Tier_4_Sponsor_Guidance_-_Doc_2_-_Sponsorship_Duties_2018-05.pdf