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Tier 4 Student Attendance and Engagement Policy

Purpose of Policy

Tobias School of Art and Therapy is a sponsor of international students within the UK immigration system (known as 'Tier 4' students) and is required to evidence Tier 4 student attendance and engagement. Tobias is required to demonstrate that sponsored students are attending and engaging in their programme of study and that there are active procedures in place to identify and address attendance/engagement patterns of concern.

The policy also supports the improvement of the overall student experience by identifying where students may be experiencing difficulties and ensuring timely intervention and appropriate support. This policy outlines how the school will do this.

Overview

As a sponsor of Tier 4 international students within the UK immigration system Tobias is required to evidence robust process and systems that demonstrate oversight of Tier 4 students' attendance and engagement with their programme of study.

Tobias School of Art and Therapy is subject to audit visits and data requests by UK Home Office Visas and Immigration (UKVI) officials. One of the key areas used to assess sponsor performance is management of student attendance and engagement.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

This policy applies to **all** Tier 4 international students attending Tobias School of Art and Therapy. The policy applies to on-campus students, those who are registered as writing up their case studies/dissertations, and/or completing clinical placement requirements.

TIER 4 STUDENT ATTENDANCE MONITORING

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy outlines the additional attendance monitoring checks that The Tobias is obliged to carry out as part of its sponsorship agreement with the UKVI.

1.2 The policy should be read in conjunction with the Tobias Attendance Policy found on the school website.

2 Tier 4 Students Non-attendance

2.1 As per the regulations underpinning the sponsorship management policies governed by the UKVI, Tobias is legally required to monitor all Tier 4 sponsored students and to maintain attendance records, reporting non-attendance when necessary.

2.2 Students are expected to attend all sessions scheduled by the school, or institutions/companies supporting them in their placement terms.

2.3 Aside from the expected attendance, students must attend for all enrolment and induction sessions. These are compulsory.

2.4 If a student does not attend enrolment within the stipulated time-periods, this will account for one missed contact.

2.5 If a student does not attend for enrolment they will be reported to the UKVI as a non-attender, their sponsorship will be withdrawn and their student visa is likely to be revoked.

2.6 Students arriving 5 minutes after the start of class will have their attendance marked as late.

2.7 Apart from the above mentioned contact times, students attendance will also be monitored through the analysis of assignment submissions, exam attendance, registers taken in class, tutorials, Twilight lectures, and any other classes or events where attendance is required.

2.8 When a student is on placement their attendance is also compulsory, and attendance will be monitored by the placement team and reported back to Tobias formally, on a monthly basis. However, placement institutions will contact Tobias staff if there is concern over non-attendance prior to the monthly reports.

2.9 In cases of non-attendance (normally after three key contacts are missed), students will be sent a warning letter informing them that they have missed a certain number of sessions

and that they must attend school at the next possible time and engage with their studies and scheduled lectures/tutorials/clinics or practical workshops.

2.10 If, after the initial letter is sent, no records of attendance are seen, the student will be required to attend an urgent meeting in the School to discuss their absence and any reasons given for prior absence will be recorded.

2.11 At this stage, the student is expected to continue attending as normal in full-time mode, unless an agreed period of absence through mitigation is confirmed and recorded at the meeting.

2.12 If the student does not attend the meeting, and has missed 10 key contact points as recorded by the School, the student will be reported to the UKVI as a non-attender. The reporting will occur within 10 working days of the final missed contact point. However, it is likely that due to other checks in place, the student's non-attendance will have been noted prior to this point.

2.13 At this stage, the student will be removed from the school system, and sponsorship for their studies revoked by Tobias. At this moment, the person will no longer be considered a student of Tobias.

2.14 The UKVI at this point is highly likely to withdraw the student's visa and return them to their home country. Further information and guidance on this can be found through the UKVI website.

2.15 Tier 4 sponsored students may choose to defer their studies due to personal or medical reasons. Students must apply for this option, and provide evidence. Tobias will support students who defer their studies but must report this to the UKVI.

2.16 On deferral of a programme of study, a student visa is withdrawn by the UKVI, and when the student wishes to return to study, a new visa must be applied for.

2.17 Tobias will normally support this student in their return; however, it may be necessary to issue a new CAS. This is dependent on the length of time of deferral, and will be clarified on an individual basis with each student concerned.

2.18 If a student elects to finish a course early, either taking an exit award, or leaving the course, this will also be reported to the UKVI. The student's sponsorship will then be withdrawn by Tobias, and the student will be required to return home, as stipulated in the UKVI regulations and guidelines.

For more information on attendance monitoring and student responsibilities, please contact the office at Tobias School of Art and Therapy.

Appendix 1: Suggested initial standard warning letter to be sent by the faculty

Dear

Under UKVI regulations, Tobias has a duty to monitor international students' attendance at various contact points throughout the academic year. It has come to the attention of the faculty that you have missed three class sessions or contact points. It is therefore important that you contact the faculty immediately in order to demonstrate that you are engaging with your course of study.

Failure to contact the faculty will result in you being reported to the UKVI and you being excluded from your course of study. Once excluded from Tobias, your access to Tobias will be withdrawn, and you will no longer be entitled to occupy student accommodation. You will also be required to depart from the UK and return to your own country within the UKVI specified time scale (check the UKVI website for current information).

Tobias only needs to report students to the UKVI in the event of an unauthorised absence. If you can show evidence that you have genuine reasons for being absent from the School which has prevented you from participating in your studies please provide this as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 2: Final warning to be sent by Visa Compliance Officer

Course Engagement: Please respond immediately!

Dear

The faculty has concerns about your engagement with your programme of study at the Tobias School of Art and Therapy. Under UKVI regulations, the School has a duty to monitor international students' engagement. As you have not responded to your faculty's attempt to contact you, **you are now in imminent danger of being reported to the UKVI and being excluded from your course of study.** Once excluded from the school, your access to School Services will be withdrawn, and you will no longer be entitled to occupy student accommodation. You will also be required to depart from the UK and return to your own country within the UKVI specified time scale (check the UKVI website for current information).

Please respond to this email/letter as soon as possible.

If you do not respond to this email within 48 hours, we will be forced to report you to the UKBA.