



# UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

## Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS) and Student Visa Sponsorship Policy

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<b>Summary of any amendments:</b> Primarily formatting and presentational changes to the existing policy.					
<b>Document objectives:</b> This policy outlines the University’s rules and requirements for the issuing of a CAS to new and returning students.  The policy sets out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student requirements upon which the University will issue a CAS to new students.</li><li>• The student requirements upon which the University will issue a CAS to current and resuming students.</li><li>• The circumstances under which the University would refuse to issue a CAS or would cease sponsorship of a Student Visa.</li><li>• The University’s position regarding visa refusals and overstaying.</li></ul>					
<b>Intended Recipients:</b> This policy applies to all students, regardless of programme, who apply for and obtain University sponsorship on a Student Visa. Specific groups of international students, subject to non-Student Visa immigration control, fall outside of the scope of the policy and are clearly identified as such.					
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## Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS) and Student Visa Sponsorship Policy

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### 1. Introduction

1.1 The University of Plymouth ('we'/'us'/'our') is a licenced sponsor under the Student Visa route of the Points Based Immigration System. As a licensed Student sponsor, it is our responsibility to assess all applicants and students ('you') prior to deciding to sponsor you, where appropriate. Part of this assessment is to determine that, in our reasonable judgment, you:

- have the ability and intention to follow the course of study we offer.
- will abide by the Student Visa regulations and immigration law, and;
- will leave the UK at the end of your studies or seek immigration permission to remain in the UK in another category.

1.2 This policy sets out the grounds on which we will issue Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS) documents to you to study at the University of Plymouth and University of Plymouth International College. This policy also sets out the circumstances under which we may refuse to issue a CAS to you as an

applicant, and the circumstances in which we may cease to sponsor you as an enrolled student.

1.3 This Policy is informed by the following documents:

- [Student Visa Guidance for Sponsors documents 1-4](#)
- [Student Visa immigration rules](#)
- [Guide to Creating a CAS for education sponsors \(SMS guide 4a\)](#)
- [University of Plymouth Admissions Policy](#)
- [University of Plymouth International College \(UPIC\) Admissions Policy](#)
- CAS issuing procedure documents.

## **2. CAS data and dates**

- 2.1 The information used to produce the CAS including the course start and end dates, and the final enrolment date is reviewed annually to ensure accuracy. We do our best to ensure that this information is completely accurate, however academic schedules may sometimes alter slightly in terms of final submission dates. If this is the case, we will carry out any reporting required to UKVI, and inform students accordingly.
- 2.2 CAS dates should include all academic participation expected from you on your programme, including taught sessions and submission of coursework or dissertation. CAS dates will not include graduation or the Award Board dates.
- 2.3 You can only apply for CAS within the timeframes set out by UKVI, which for a new student this means not more than 6 months before the course start date.
- 2.4 If you are continuing students or you are resuming study after an Interruption will need to apply for a CAS as instructed by us. For example, if you need to extend your visa after completing a placement, or to apply for further leave required prior to transferring to a longer degree programme.

## **3. Issuing a CAS to applicants (new students)**

- 3.1 If you are an applicant requiring a Student Visa, we will issue a CAS to you under the following criteria and circumstances:
- In accordance with the University and UPIC's academic entry requirements and our admissions policy(s).
  - The course meets Student Visa requirements in terms of mode of study, placement percentage, the location of teaching, hours per week if under Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) Level 6, and it leads to a recognised award.
  - When you have met all offer conditions, including paying the required tuition fees deposit or supplying an official sponsorship letter that we

deem is genuine, and meeting UKVI requirements for official financial or government sponsors.

- A satisfactory interview has taken place, where required.
- Professional body requirements have been met, including criminal records check and fitness to study assessment where required.
- When you have personally completed a satisfactory pre-CAS checklist.
- When University and UKVI English language requirements for Student Visa students have been met.
- The course represents academic progression for you, and you can complete this within your Student Visa time limit.
- If you are under 18 years of age on the day that the CAS is issued, we will have received the signed consent and permission of your parent (s) or legal guardian (s) for you to travel to the UK and to study and live independently.
- Where the Student Visa regulations mean that you are required to apply for new leave outside the UK, we will have received a flight ticket or other information to confirm that you are currently outside the UK.
- Where we reasonably believe you meet the overall threshold of the assessment, as set out in paragraph 1.1.

#### **4. Pre-sessional programmes**

4.1 We will only issue a single CAS for a pre-sessional programme where all requirements are met, including:

- The exit level of the pre-sessional programme is B2.
- You are holding an unconditional offer in all respects aside from English Language.
- You have the required and in date IELTS SELT scores to join the relevant programme.
- The pre-sessional is no more than 3 months long and will end no more than one month before the main degree programme starts.

4.2 If you are undertaking a pre-sessional programme at UPIC, and you do not meet the requirements for a single CAS, you will be instructed to apply for a Visitor Visa for this programme only. In such circumstances, you will need to leave the UK to apply for further leave under a Student Visa for your substantive programme.

#### **5. Circumstances in which we may refuse to issue a CAS to an applicant**

5.1 If you have supplied documents, information, or other evidence as part of your application which we have reason to believe are fraudulent, or are not authentic, valid, and genuine. We reserve the right to report such cases to UKVI.

5.2 You have withheld information regarding your study or immigration history in the UK or where you have a history of visa refusals in the UK or other countries.

5.3 We believe that you cannot meet the Student Visa requirements in terms of sufficient funds or other requirements.

- 5.4 You cannot submit a valid Student Visa application at all, or in time to meet our enrolment deadlines.
- 5.5 Where we believe that there is a strong possibility that you would be subject to a credibility interview and would not be found credible.
- 5.6 We do not believe you are a genuine applicant with the genuine intention to study and / or we believe that assigning a CAS would put our sponsor licence at risk.
- 5.7 The course you have applied for is not appropriate for a Student Visa. For example, the mode of study is blended or distance learning, or is a Continuing Professional Development module with no award at the end.
- 5.8 We believe that you will not meet Student Visa requirements in terms of your time limit and academic progression, where applicable.
- 5.9 You have, in the past, breached immigration regulations, for example working conditions or by overstaying beyond a visa expiration date.
- 5.10 You are under 16 years of age, making you ineligible for the Student Visa route.
- 5.11 Where we reasonably believe that you have failed to follow instructions issued by any previous Student Visa sponsor or failed to observe the visa requirements of previous visas. For example, by remaining in the UK after your previous sponsor has stopped sponsoring you or failing to attend studies on a previous course in the UK, and the reason for this is unclear.
- 5.12 If you have previous criminal convictions. Criminal convictions declared on application will be reviewed in accordance with University Admissions policy. If an applicant with criminal convictions is made an offer, you may be referred to the UKVI Compliance team and we may seek guidance from UKVI. If criminal convictions are not declared on application but subsequently become known, we reserve the right to withdraw a CAS.
- 5.13 If there is evidence that you are or have previously been involved with terrorist activities.
- 5.14 If you are a current or previous University of Plymouth student applying to a new course, you should have no tuition fee debt owed to us.
- 5.15 Where we have reason to believe that you will not reside in Plymouth or within daily commutable distance from Plymouth.
- 5.15 You must study full time and cannot apply for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL).
- 5.16 All decisions taken not to issue a CAS are made on a case-by-case basis, based on all the available information at that time. These decisions may be referred to the University's Authorising Officer in some cases to make a final decision.

## **6. Issuing a CAS to enrolled students (current and resuming)**

6.1 We wish to support all current and resuming Student Visa holders to complete their degree programme successfully and will issue a CAS to facilitate this whenever possible. However, given our responsibilities as a licensed sponsor, we will still need to assess your application and only issue a CAS if certain conditions are met.

6.2 We will issue a CAS to you under the following circumstances:

- You have paid the relevant fee for a further CAS to the University as per our instructions, and this has been received.
- Where there is an academic reason for your studies to continue, usually because of an Award Board decision.
- We have the faculty's agreement that your studies are continuing and their confirmation of the new end date.
- You have a good record of attendance / engagement with your course.
- You have no tuition fee debt.
- If your interruption of study was due to ill health, or there are on-going concerns about your health, we have evidence that you are fit to study again. A Fit to Study meeting may also be required by your faculty.
- Your participation on your course is required within 60 days or less and there are no gaps in study.
- Where are satisfied that the further CAS would represent academic progression.
- You have sufficient time left under the Student Visa time limit to complete your degree programme and the programme leads to an acceptable award.
- Where the Student Visa regulations mean that you are required to apply for your visa extension outside the UK, we have received evidence of a flight ticket, or other evidence to show you are currently outside the UK.
- We have no other concerns, and you have in the past followed our instructions, for example to leave the UK following a decision to cease your sponsorship under the Student Visa route.
- We reasonably believe you are a genuine student with the genuine intention to study here and that you can meet the requirements of the Student Visa category.

## **7. Circumstances in which we may refuse to issue a CAS to an enrolled student (current or resuming)**

7.1 The period of the course, for which the CAS is being issued, cannot or will not lead to an acceptable award. For example, if your Student Visa time limit would be met before you can complete your degree and obtain an award, or if the extra time requested is to study for a professional accreditation only.

7.2 Your participation on the course is not required within 60 days, or there are gaps in study. For example, if you are required to repeat in semester two only, we would not sponsor you under a Student Visa in semester one. This also applies where you may decide to defer your dissertation.

7.3 You have a poor record of attendance / engagement with your studies. Exceptions may be made where extenuating circumstances have been upheld or you have

provided evidence to explain your lack of engagement, including medical evidence which covers the period of non-engagement or attendance.

- 7.4 You have a tuition fee debt.
- 7.5 You are excluded or suspended from the University as a result of disciplinary procedures.
- 7.6 We will not issue a CAS based on provisional results or before results are known, and only after the Award Board decision has been released.
- 7.7 We will not sponsor you further under a Student Visa if, in our judgment, we would be unable to meet our sponsorship duties. For example, if you are repeating a small number of credits, where there is very little, or no participation required. In this event, we would assess each circumstance on a case-by-case basis and take into consideration whether the work required can be completed from your home country.
- 7.8 We will not sponsor you further if this does not represent academic progression.
- 7.9 You have not followed our previous instructions including where you:
  - Remained in the UK following our decision to cease your sponsorship.
  - Failed to complete the Right to Study check; or
  - Failed to supply contact details when required to do so, where there was no justifiable reason for this.
- 7.10 Your Student Visa time limit has been reached or would be reached before completion of your course.
- 7.11 We will not issue a CAS if you cannot submit a valid, in time Student Visa application at all, or in time to meet our enrolment deadlines. Similarly, we will not issue a CAS if we do not believe you would meet Student Visa requirements in terms of maintenance funds held, or other UKVI requirements.
- 7.12 We will not issue a CAS if you choose to drop modules when holding a Student Visa.
- 7.13 We will not issue a CAS specifically to cover attendance at graduation.
- 7.14 If you require a CAS to complete your studies after a placement year, we will not issue this to you if you have not submitted any assessment required as part of that placement.
- 7.15 We will not issue a CAS to you for a blended or distance learning programme, or if your mode of study is Overseas Distance (OS DIST).
- 7.16 Where you are required to apply for your visa outside of the UK, and evidence of this has not been supplied.
- 7.17 We may not issue a CAS to a student in circumstances where there is an on-going University student disciplinary investigation, or where a student has been convicted of a criminal offence.

7.18 We reasonably believe that you have not complied with the conditions of your visa in the past. This may include, for example, breaches of your working conditions, or where you have become an overstayer or where we do not believe you have a genuine intent to study and/or the ability to complete your course.

7.19 All decisions taken not to issue a CAS are made on a case-by-case basis, based on all the available information at that time. Cases may be referred to the University's Authorising Officer in some cases to make a final decision.

## **8. Switching Immigration Category**

8.1 If you switch into the Student Visa route (if your other immigration permission is expiring), you are required to meet the full requirements for a CAS to be issued as set out in section 3 if you have studied with us or at UPIC for less than one full academic year when requesting the CAS.

8.2 We will assess you based on these criteria rather than "progress to date". You will be made aware of this when applying to us with other immigration permission.

## **9. SU Sabbatical Officer**

9.1 If you have a Student Visa, and you have been elected to a full-time, salaried executive union position with the University of Plymouth Student Union (UPSU) or to a national NUS position, you can be issued with a CAS to allow you to extend your visa to take up the position, or to complete your studies afterwards.

9.2 In such circumstances, you must satisfy our general requirements as above, and have completed your studies in their previous academic year in order to take up the position full time. We must have received confirmation of your post from UPSU. The position can be extended for a further year if you are re-elected; subject to requirements again being satisfied, a further CAS would be issued.

## **10. Visa refusals and Overstaying**

10.1 If you receive a visa refusal, we expect you to notify us as soon as possible, and to supply all documents pertaining to the refusal.

10.2 We require you to submit your documents (pertaining to the refusal) for assessment so that we can decide whether to issue a second CAS following your visa refusal.

10.3 If your visa has been refused on grounds of fraud, or credibility, it is highly unlikely a further CAS will be issued.

10.4 If you seek an [Administrative Review](#), we expect you follow our guidance, provided by one of our International Student Advisors, on this matter. You must inform us as soon as possible if you have submitted an [Administrative Review](#). You must also supply all relevant documentation submitted to UKVI as part of the [Administrative Review](#).

10.5 If you cannot submit a valid, in-time application and risk becoming an overstayer, we will instruct your faculty to suspend you from your programme at that point. We may consider sponsoring you again under a Student Visa in the future depending on the circumstances. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.



## **11.0 Ceasing Sponsorship under a Student Visa:**

11.1 We will stop sponsoring you under the Student Visa route and report this to UKVI under the following circumstances:

- Withdrawal from your programme for academic reasons (academic failure, an academic offence or other disciplinary offence), or withdrawal for personal reasons.
- Interruption from study (your decision) or suspension from study (our decision).
- Where we cannot meet our sponsorship duties in terms of your poor attendance or other factors.
- Your failure to respond to immigration related instructions i.e., to supply contact details or to supply immigration documents in a timely manner.
- Tuition fee debt.
- Breaching the conditions of your Student Visa.
- Your failure to obtain required new leave for your programme when instructed to do so.
- Your failure to enrol.
- Where no academic engagement is required in the next 60-day period.
- Changing your mode of study or immigration route.
- Failure to reside in Plymouth or within daily commutable distance of Plymouth.
- Where you will complete your studies from home.

This is a non-exhaustive list. You should be aware of your Student Visa responsibilities and ensure that you are meeting them. These are set out in our Student Responsibilities (Student Visa) Policy. You should also check the [International Student Advice webpages](#) for immigration updates and respond promptly to any communications that we send to you.