

Confirmation of Acceptance of Study ('CAS') issuing policy for applicants

1. Purpose

1.1. This document sets out the University of Surrey's ('**the University**') policy regarding the issuance of CAS statements to applicants. This policy is specific to the University and does not necessarily set out the full requirements of the Immigration Rules. The University is entitled to revise its policies or procedures relating to compliance with its Tier 4 sponsor duties at any time and will usually do so where there have been any applicable changes to sponsorship requirements made by UK Visas & Immigration ('**UKVI**'). This policy should be read in conjunction with [the Tier 4 Policy Guidance](#), [Tier 4 Sponsor Guidance](#) and [the Immigration Rules](#); where these change the current version applies irrelevant of when the CAS is issued. The Immigration Rules and associated UKVI guidance documents will remain the main source of the University's obligations, regardless of whether any requirements are dealt with in this policy. The University is not legally obliged to issue a CAS statement and will always exercise caution when doing so, to ensure adherence to its obligations as a licensed sponsor under the Points Based Immigration ('**PBI**') system

2. Key Responsibilities

- 2.1. The Director of Student Services and Administration is responsible for the management and implementation of this policy and any accompanying procedures. The Visa Compliance Team, Admissions and International Student Support will also assist in the implementation and management of this policy
- 2.2. All University staff working with applicants from outside the European Economic Area ('**EEA**'), requiring a Tier 4 (General) Visa must ensure that this policy is adhered to

3. Tier 4 Sponsorship and CAS Assignment

- 3.1. Applicants requiring a Tier 4 visa may not defer their admission to the University; they will be required to re-apply to the University for the relevant academic session
- 3.2. All applicants are required to complete a CAS Request Form and provide all supporting documents requested by the University
- 3.3. The Admissions team is responsible for assigning CAS to applicants starting a new course at the University ('**applicants**')
- 3.4. International Student Support is responsible for assigning CAS to existing students extending visas to complete their studies with the University ('**students**')
- 3.5. The University will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that offer of admission are only made to applicants who are likely to be eligible for a CAS statement
- 3.6. However, an offer on a course of study is not a guarantee that the University will issue a CAS and CAS will only be issued after a full assessment of an applicant's previous UK immigration history

- 3.7. The University will only assign a CAS to an applicant if they have:
 - 3.7.1. an unconditional offer to study and
 - 3.7.2. firmly accepted that offer and
 - 3.7.3. have paid any tuition fee deposits where applicable
4. CAS will not be assigned more than 3 months before the official course start date. For example, for courses commencing in September of any given year, CAS statements will not be issued any earlier than June of that same year
5. The University may make any additional checks to ensure it only assigns CAS to applicants who have a realistic prospect of obtaining a Tier 4 visa.
6. These checks may include:
 - 6.1. conducting a Student Eligibility Check with UKVI
 - 6.2. reviewing financial documents
 - 6.3. requesting previous CAS statements relating to previous periods of stay in the UK with a student visa
 - 6.4. and any other checks the University feels appropriate in the circumstances
7. The University will **not** assign CAS in the following:
 - 7.1. Where the intended course of study is not acceptable in accordance with the Tier 4 requirements
 - 7.2. If there is any reason to believe an applicant will not comply with the conditions of their visa if granted (for example, this would include instances where the University is aware that an applicant previously worked in breach of their visa conditions)
 - 7.3. If an applicant has submitted documents which are proven, or there is a reasonable suspicion that they are fraudulent. The University will report such cases to UKVI
 - 7.4. If the course length would mean that the student would exceed any relevant cap on study as outlined by UKVI in their published guidance
 - 7.5. Where the University believes assigning a CAS will put its sponsor licence at risk including where there are concerns about the intention to study and overall genuineness.

- 7.6. If an applicant is unlikely to obtain a visa to commence their studies on time. (Generally, the University will not issue CAS for a course any later than the Friday immediately before the course start date).
- 7.7. If the course does not represent academic progression in accordance with part 8 of this policy.
- 7.8. Where an applicant has a negative immigration history, including a history of visa refusals
- 7.9. If an applicant is unable to demonstrate that they meet the Tier 4 financial requirements
- 7.10. If an applicant has previous criminal convictions and/or has been involved with terrorist activities
- 7.11. If the applicant is intending to apply for Leave to Remain and has overstayed by a period exceeding 14 days
- 7.12. Where an applicant is applying for Leave to Remain (meaning a visa application made inside the UK) within 14 days of their current visa expiring, unless there are exceptional circumstances (for example severe illness meaning that an in-time visa application could not have been submitted, or instances where documents were not available due to unavoidable circumstances including any documents that were previously retained by the Home Office)
- 7.12.1. Before assigning a CAS in accordance with part 7.12 of this policy, the University will carry out checks to ensure that the applicant is eligible to extend their visa inside the UK. These checks may include Student Eligibility Checks conducted via UKVI
- 7.12.2. If a Leave to Remain application cannot be made, the University will not assign a CAS for an Entry Clearance application (meaning a visa application made outside the UK) until the applicant has provided evidence that they are overseas, and able to make a valid visa application in the relevant country (evidence can be in the form of boarding passes, stamps inside the applicant's Passport or other reasonably verifiable documents)
- 7.13. If the applicant does not satisfy the relevant English language requirements, either for visa purposes or academically
- 7.14. Where Academic Technology Approval Scheme ('**ATAS**') clearance is required, unless the University will has obtained a copy of the ATAS certificate

8. **Academic Progression**

- 8.1. The University will apply the academic progression rules in all cases regardless of where the applicant intends to apply for a Tier 4 visa
- 8.2. Details about how academic progression has been satisfied will always be included on the CAS statement

8.3. The University will not normally issue a CAS to an applicant who has failed to successfully complete a programme of study in the UK unless there are exceptional mitigating circumstances.

8.4. Academic progression cases will be considered by a panel. If the panel does not consider that academic progression can be justified, then the University will not issue a CAS.

Panel membership: Deputy Head of Admissions, Visa Compliance Manager, Student Data & Records Manager, Faculty Student Services Managers, Admissions Manager

9. Programme Transfers

9.1. Tier 4 students are generally prohibited from changing courses once a CAS has been used to support a visa application (and this includes adding a placement or integrated Master's year)

9.2. Where an applicant requests to change course, they will be required to submit a supporting statement and this will be considered by a panel.

9.3. Transfers will only be approved if they are permissible within the current version of the Immigration Rules and/or Tier 4 Policy and Sponsor Guidance

9.4. Transfers will not be approved unless the new course represents academic progression from the course for which the CAS was originally assigned

10. Visa Refusals

10.1 The University will only consider assigning one additional CAS following a visa refusal and only if the applicant can provide evidence to show there is minimal or no chance of their visa being refused a subsequent time

10.2 Further CASs will not normally be assigned where an applicant has had a refusal due to failing a credibility interview

10.3 Any applicant with a visa refusal will be reported to UK Visas & Immigration

10.4 Any applicant with a visa refusal who requests a new CAS must provide to the University all pages of their Home Office refusal notice

10.5 Provided the conditions of paragraph 6.1 are met, the University will issue one additional CAS to an applicant following a visa refusal. If a visa is refused a second time the University will not issue a further CAS.

10.6 The University reserves the right to not issue a CAS to any applicant who has had their visa refused.

11. Pre-sessional English Language Courses

In line with Tier 4 of the Points Based System: Guidance for Sponsors, the University will issue a single CAS for the Pre-sessional 12 week English Language programme (PS12) and the main course of study where an applicant;

- holds an unconditional offer for PS12;
- has a valid Secure English Language Test at B1 level that is accepted by the University of Surrey;
- holds an offer for a degree programme at the University of Surrey starting in September;
- has met all other conditions of offer for the degree programme, except for English language;
- has paid their deposit for PS12, and
- has paid their deposit or provided satisfactory evidence of sponsorship (where the degree programme is at PG level)
- meets the conditions of this policy

Should an applicant fail to successfully complete PS12, they will be rejected for the degree programme and Tier 4 sponsorship will be withdrawn.

In line with Tier 4 of the Points Based System: Guidance for Sponsors, the University will issue a single CAS to cover the Pre-sessional 5 week English Language programme (PS5) and the main course of study where the applicant;

- holds an unconditional offer for PS5;
- has a valid IELTS, TOEFL or Pearson Test of English at a minimum of B2 level;
- holds an offer for a degree programme at Surrey starting in September;
- has met all other conditions of offer for the degree programme, except for English language;
- has paid their deposit for PS5;
- has paid their deposit or provided satisfactory evidence of sponsorship (where the degree programme is at PG level);
- meets the conditions of this policy

Where an applicant meets the above, the offer for the degree programme will be updated to unconditional. Students are expected to successfully complete the Pre-sessional programme in order to progress to the degree course

In all other cases a separate CAS will be issued for the pre-sessional course and a new CAS will be assigned for the main course when the student successfully completes the pre-sessional course, meets all conditions of their offer on the main course of study as well as meets the conditions of this policy.

12 Terms and Conditions of Tier 4 Sponsorship

All students sponsored by the University are expected to abide by the University's Tier 4 Institutional Policy. The University reserves the right to withdraw sponsorship at its discretion.

13 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains compliant with the Tier 4 Sponsor Guidance and Immigration Rules as well as good sector practice.

Version	Amended By
November 2016	Katie Salt, Deputy Head of Admissions