

# Student Engagement Policy



**Harper Adams  
University**

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**Approved by:** Academic Board  
EIA approved 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021  
**Review due:** Spring 2025

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

## 1. What is the purpose of this policy?

Academic success is based on our students' proactive engagement with their timetabled learning and teaching events, course-related learning resources on the learning hub and in our Library, as well as timely and proactive engagement with our academic and support staff. We take a whole-university approach to promoting student engagement, through:

- Welcome and induction programmes and other support for student transitions by course teams and our specialist professional services (student services, learner and disability support and academic guidance teams);
- 24/7 student support arrangements including out-of-hours and broader services provided through our Student Assistance Programme.
- Curation of our resources and learning opportunities through our virtual learning environment and library resources.
- The nature and quality of our courses that are practically-based and vocationally driven, supported by specialist teaching teams.
- Opportunities afforded by the size of university community that enable staff and students to get to know one another and work well together.

This policy sets out how we support our students to engage with their studies successfully and Annex A also provides information about how we support international students to remain compliant with the additional visa requirements set by the Home Office.

## 2. Who is this policy for?

This Policy applies to all registered students with the exception of Postgraduate Research students, whose policy is outlined in the Postgraduate Research Handbook, and those studying at the Harper and Keele Veterinary School whose policy can be found on the Harper and Keele Veterinary School website. Overseas students with a Sponsored Student visa ("Visa-Sponsored Student") have additional engagement and monitoring arrangements, as set out at Annex A.

## 3. What are our principles and our approach?

- We will monitor your engagement principally through attendance records of learning and teaching events and the submission of assignments and assessments. We may also review your engagement with the virtual learning environment and the library.
- Attendance is expected at all timetabled learning and teaching events and you are expected to contact the Course Tutor (copied to the relevant module leader) in advance via email if you are unable to attend a session, explaining why. If your absence was longer than five consecutive working days you should submit an Absence Form, which is available in Appendix 1 of this policy, and you may be asked to provide medical or other evidence if appropriate.
- Attendance at learning and teaching events is recorded through the Harper Adams App (available through the Apple App Store or Google Play) and it is your responsibility to record your attendance at each event. Students are provided with information on how to access and use the app at the start of the academic year and should contact Service Desk with any questions
- You are required to submit assignments and other assessments by the specified date and time via Turnitin, PebblePad or any other means as specified in the Assignment Brief. Any extensions to the deadline need to be sought in advance of that deadline and with evidence to support an extension request under the provisions of our [Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#).
- Postgraduate Major Project Supervisors for all Master's Degree students are responsible for maintaining records of student engagement in supervisory meetings, by posting the agreed and action notes of dated supervisory meetings on to a shared folder.

- Students on placement are required to attend meetings and review calls with their Placement Tutor.
- Your course team will be monitoring your attendance and engagement and will ask to meet with you if you have persistently poor attendance at your studies. They will apply their professional and academic judgement to determine the impact of your engagement with your studies on your ability to successfully complete the year and your course. The nature of the course content and professional accreditation requirements will all form part of their judgement (see section 6 below).
- You will be offered support to help get you back on track with your studies. Support may include:
  - A special support package agreed with Student Services and Disability and Learner Support where applicable (according to the terms of our [Health and Wellbeing Policy](#) )
  - An offer of extra support by Learner and Disability Support or Academic Guidance team.
  - In other circumstances outcomes may include postponement (an approved break in studies) or being withdrawn from the University. The latter is a last resort, which happens if you continue to not engage with your studies and fail to take the steps required of you by your course team.

#### 4. Who is responsible and what are our responsibilities?

Role	Responsibilities
<b>Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Download and access the Harper Adams App to be able to register attendance.</li> <li>• Record attendance at all learning and teaching events via the app.</li> <li>• Attend all learning and teaching events and submit assignments and assessments on time.</li> <li>• Contact your Course Tutor or Manager in advance if you are going to miss a class or need an extension of a hand-in deadline.</li> <li>• Speak to a member of your course team if you are having difficulties, respond promptly to their emails, Team messages or phone calls, and take the steps they require of you to ensure you are fully engaged.</li> <li>• Seek help from your course team or Student Services, Learner and Disability Support or Academic Guidance, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Respond promptly to communications from the course team and support staff. You should check your university email account on a daily basis so that key communications are not missed.</li> <li>• Visa-Sponsored Students are required to comply with additional engagement checks (described at Annex A).</li> </ul>
<b>Module Tutors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require students to register attendance at every session you are timetabled to be with the students.</li> <li>• Escalate concerns about attendance with the Course Manager or Course Tutor.</li> </ul>
<b>Course Managers and Course Tutors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with Module Tutors, monitor individual student attendance at learning and teaching events, engagement with the Virtual Learning Environment and the timely submission of assignments and assessments.</li> <li>• Identify and advise students of remedial action where their attendance is deemed to be unsatisfactory. The requirements may vary by course.</li> <li>• Support students who are having difficulties engaging with their studies.</li> <li>• Approval of student 'Break in Studies', working with Student Services.</li> </ul>
<b>Head of Department or nominee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of complex cases where there is a pattern of poor or inconsistent engagement.</li> <li>• Decisions concerning withdrawal of a student due to inadequate engagement.</li> </ul>
<b>Student Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of wellbeing and other support.</li> <li>• Work with Course Managers to agree support packages for individual students under the provisions of our <a href="#">Health and Wellbeing Policy</a> when appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>Admissions and Visa Compliance Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake independent reviews of attendance and engagement of Visa-Sponsored Students, according to the procedures set out at Annex A.</li> <li>• Escalate cases of unsatisfactory engagement for action by the Academic Registrar, in cases requiring a warning or withdrawal.</li> </ul>
<b>Academic Registrar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue formal warnings and withdrawal notices to Visa-Sponsored Students according to the procedures set out at Annex A.</li> </ul>

## 5. How we deal with poor engagement

If you have two periods<sup>1</sup> of unauthorised absence within one term or a single period of absence for longer than 5 working days, you will be asked to meet with a member of your course team. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss any challenges you are facing and to agree actions (and timescales) you need to take, which may include accessing support from student services, and/or learner and disability support.

If you continue to have periods of absence, fail to hand in your work on time and/or if you do not undertake the actions agreed with your course team, your case will be referred to your Course Tutor, who will meet with you to discuss your options. If you are suffering from ill health or a major life event, for example, you may be offered a break in studies (also known as a postponement) or a special support arrangement within the provisions of our [Health and Wellbeing Policy](#). Your Course Tutor will work with Student Services to ensure appropriate support mechanisms are in place.

Where there is no good reason for the absence, where you fail to undertake actions agreed with the Course Tutor, or there is an additional deterioration in attendance, your case may be referred to the Head of Department, who may require you to follow a closely monitored action plan or may make a decision to withdraw you from the University, based on their professional and academic judgement that you have not made sufficient academic progress to succeed. Within the context of this policy, the Head of Department has the authority to withdraw a student from the course as a result of a continued lack of attendance and engagement.

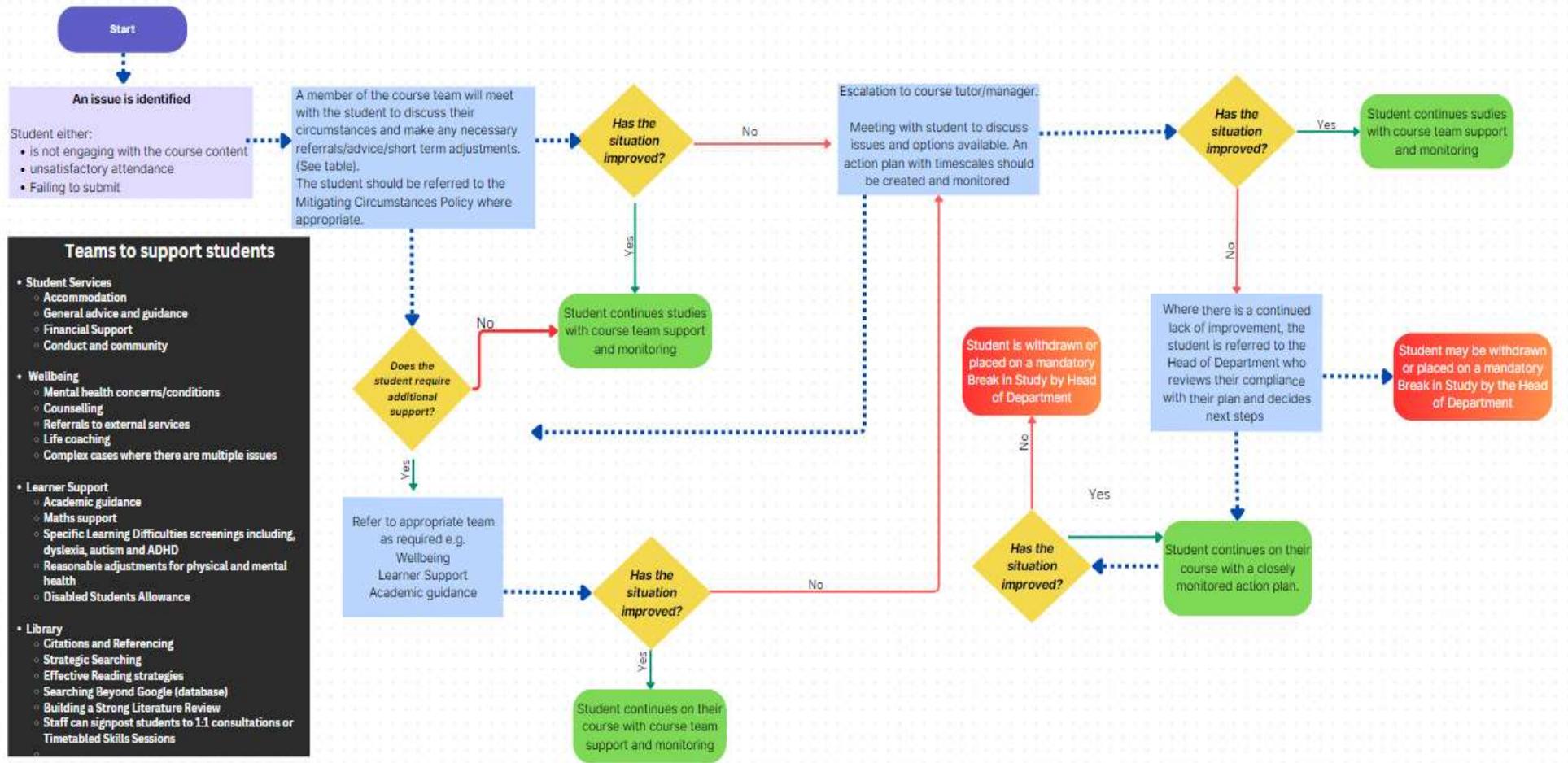
The Admissions Operations and Visa Relationships Manager is kept informed of any engagement issues concerning Visa-Sponsored Students and will contact students directly specifying what action they need to take. This postholder will advise the Academic Registrar of cases requiring formal action, including formal warnings and the ultimate sanction of withdraw from the University if their engagement does not meet the requirements set out by this Policy and/or the Home Office.

The flowchart below outlines the process.

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<sup>1</sup> As courses are taught in different patterns, our course team will determine what a period of absence entails, for example, it may be two key learning and teaching sessions or a number of days. The judgement will be based on the potential impact of a student missing learning and teaching events.

# Poor engagement Procedure



[Link to flowchart online](#)

## 6. Relationship with other policies

Action relating to:	Is Dealt with via:	Possible referrals:	External
Request for extensions	<a href="#">Arrangements for claiming Mitigating Circumstances</a>	N/A	
Changes to your registration and therefore visa sponsorship	<a href="#">Student Visa Sponsorship Policy</a>	Home Office	
Refunds of fees as a result of being withdrawn from the University	<a href="#">Refunds and Compensation Policy</a>	Student England Other funders/sponsors	Finance
Cases where your engagement calls into question your ability to meet the professional standards of your course (for those with professional accreditation)	<a href="#">Fitness to Practice Policy</a>	N/A	
Cases where support arrangements have been put into place	<a href="#">Student Health and Wellbeing Policy</a>	N/A	
Cases where students are subject to sanctions at the University	<a href="#">Student Conduct and Discipline Policy</a>	N/A	

## 7. Redress

You will be able to appeal the decision made by either your Course Tutor/Manager, your Head of Department or the Admissions Operations and Visa Relationships Manager to withdraw you from the University. You will need to formally write to the Head of Registry Services, via the [appeals@harper-adams.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@harper-adams.ac.uk) email address, within 7 working days of the date of the Withdrawal Letter. You will need to provide evidence that suggests one or more of the following criteria apply:

- Procedural Irregularity in the operation of this Policy
- Bias or failure to reach a reasonable decision in handling the process
- Evidence of material circumstances not available when the decision was made but that may have affected the decision taken.

Your appeal will be reviewed by the Head of Registry Services (or nominee) and normally you will receive an outcome within 15 working days.

## **ANNEX A**

### **Additional Engagement Monitoring – Visa-Sponsored Students**

The [Student Sponsor Guidance \(Document 2\)](#) (“Sponsor Guidance”) states that ‘a student is academically engaging if they are actively and consistently following their course of study’. While the main policy to which this annex is attached outlines the monitoring of all students at the University, and the action it will take where a student is not engaging with their course, the University has a responsibility to UK Visas and Immigration (“UKVI”) to monitor and review students’ academic engagement according to the requirements set out in the Sponsor Guidance. As such, more frequent checks are required in order to ensure that Visa-Sponsored Students remain engaged and that non-engagement is quickly addressed by the University.

#### **Undergraduate Students on campus**

Visa-Sponsored Students studying undergraduate courses and based on campus are subject to a full-time teaching timetable. Their attendance in scheduled sessions is monitored in line with all other students as outlined in the main policy document. All students are required to record their attendance in each class via the online attendance capture system.

#### ***Independent Review***

In addition to the standard engagement monitoring undertaken by course teams (outlined above), reviews are undertaken independent of the course team. To provide assurance that Visa-Sponsored Students are actively and regularly engaging with their course, their attendance will be checked every 2 weeks, during taught weeks. These checks will see if a student has engaged with their course at least once per week, via the attendance capture system. These checks will ordinarily be undertaken centrally within the Admissions and Visa Compliance Office.

Should a student miss an entire week of teaching, this will be flagged to the relevant Course Tutor/Manager, who will be able to confirm if there is a valid reason for the student having not registered attendance. Valid reasons could include, but is not limited to: illness, the patterns of teaching (such as field trips or reading weeks), technical issues students have reported preventing them from recording their attendance.

#### **1) 1<sup>st</sup> advisory warning for non-engagement**

If there is not a valid reason, the Admissions Operations and Visa Relationships Manager will send the student an advisory warning. The student will be expected confirm receipt of the warning and provide an explanation, re-engage with their course of study and discuss any concerns with their Course Tutor.

#### **2) 2<sup>nd</sup> formal warning for non-engagement**

If a student has not engaged with the above process and/or should a student, following the next check, have missed another two weeks of teaching, taking the absence to 3 weeks, the student will be referred to the Course Manager/Course Tutor and the Admissions Operations and Visa Relationships Manager and a meeting will be arranged to discuss their absence and its potential effect on their sponsorship and their ability to successfully complete their course. A second warning will be issued to the student during this meeting.

Students who actively engage with the above process, and seek appropriate advice and support to continue their studies, will remain registered on their course of study, provided that they are deemed to be able to meet the learning outcomes of their course and complete within the time allowed on their CAS.

#### **3) Withdrawal of sponsorship**

Following the second warning, if the Student does not actively re-engage during the following review period (i.e. 2 weeks), they will be sent a formal, final written warning and informed that if they do not immediately re-engage with their studies (i.e. during the week that the warning is issued), their course registration and visa sponsorship will be withdrawn. The University must notify UKVI and withdraw sponsorship where a

student is absent for 60 days (unless there are exceptional circumstances). The decision to withdraw a student on this basis rests with the Academic Registrar, advised by the Course Manager and the Admissions Operations and Visa Relationships Manager.

In addition, undergraduate Visa-Sponsored Students have a number of additional 'check-in' events (see table 1 below) throughout the academic year, which they must meet. These points, including enrolment and registration, are to ensure that records are kept up to date and that the student has a point of contact for any concerns which they may have. Failure to engage with any check-in points will result in an advisory warning (in the first instance) or a formal warning.

### **Undergraduate Students on placement**

The University's obligations to monitor and report on Visa-Sponsored Students continues while a student is on a placement. However, as students on placement are largely independent of interaction with the University, to ensure a genuine workplace experience, a different engagement monitoring process is adopted.

Should a student be absent from their place of work without their employer's permission, the employer is required to contact the University immediately. Prior to a student starting placement their placement employer is informed of our Visa Compliance obligations and the student will receive an outline of the engagement points set out below.

Given that placement students start and finish their placement at slightly different times in the academic year, a sequence of engagement points have been developed, whereby the student is in contact with the University approximately on a monthly basis as outlined in Table 1 below. These engagement points will be in addition to routine placement visits and monitoring undertaken by the Placement Tutor and recorded in PIMS.

Should a student fail to engage with an engagement point (as set out below in table 1), an advisory warning will be issued following the first month missed. Should the student miss the following month's engagement point, they will be sent a formal written warning and informed that if they do not immediately make contact with their Course Manager or Placement Tutor (i.e. during the week that the warning is issued), their course registration and visa sponsorship will be withdrawn. The University must notify UKVI and withdraw sponsorship where a student is absent for 60 days.

### **Taught Postgraduate Students**

#### **Taught Sessions**

Taught postgraduate students (MSc and MRes) are based on campus and their attendance in scheduled sessions is monitored in line with all other students as outlined in the main policy document. Students are required to record their attendance in each class via the online attendance capture system.

Due to the nature of MSc and MRes courses, the students do not have taught sessions in every week. However, students are required to actively engage with their taught sessions as these are pivotal to success on the course. Attendance at these taught module sessions is monitored and students are expected to attend at least 50% of any taught module, normally taught in week-long blocks. This monitoring will be undertaken on a weekly basis and ordinarily be carried out centrally by the Registration, Assessment Records and Awards Office. Any student who attends less than 50% of a taught module will be contacted to explain their absence and to see if there is any support required to support their re-engagement.

### **1) 1<sup>st</sup> advisory warning for non-engagement**

If there is not a valid reason, the Admissions Operations and Visa Relationships Manager will send the student an advisory warning. The student will be expected to confirm receipt of the warning, provide an explanation, re-engage with their course of study and discuss any concerns with their Course Tutor.

### **2) 2<sup>nd</sup> formal warning for non-engagement**

If a student has not engaged with the above process and/or should a student, following the next check, have missed more than 50% of another taught module, the student will be referred to the Course Manager/Course Tutor and the Admissions Operations and Visa Relationships Manager and a meeting will be arranged to discuss their absence and its potential effect on their sponsorship and their ability to successfully complete their course. A second warning will be issued to the student during this meeting.

## **Project Phase**

Once taught modules are completed, students move into the project phase of their studies when they will have monthly meetings with their supervisor to discuss their progress on their project. These meetings are recorded and details held centrally for engagement monitoring purposes and their completion will be monitored on a monthly basis by the Taught Postgraduate Programmes Manager. Students who commence their course in September will have monthly supervisor meetings from March onwards.

If a student misses a supervisory meeting, without explanation, they will be contacted by their supervisor to rearrange the meeting and discuss the reason for their absence.

### **1) 1<sup>st</sup> advisory warning for non-engagement**

Should a student fail to meet their supervisor within a week of the missed meeting, they will be required to attend a meeting with the Taught Postgraduate Programmes Manager to account for the absence and to discuss any support required. They will be issued with an advisory warning at this meeting.

### **2) 2<sup>nd</sup> formal warning for non-engagement**

If a student does not engage with the above processes and misses a second supervisory meeting, they will be required to meet with the Taught Postgraduate Programmes Manager and the Admissions Operations and Visa Relationships Manager to discuss the implications of their non-engagement on both their ability to succeed on the course and for their visa/sponsorship.

### **3) Withdrawal of sponsorship (taught/project phase)**

Any student who continues not to engage with their taught modules and/or supervisory meetings for a maximum of 60 days or after two formal warnings will be withdrawn.

In addition, these students have a number of additional 'check-in' points throughout the academic year, which they must meet. These are to ensure that records are kept up to date and that the student has a point of contact for any concerns which they may have.

## **Research Students**

As Research students (PhD and MPhil) do not attend timetabled classes in the same way as taught students, their engagement with their course is monitored through normal course progression and the meeting of key reporting milestones as detailed in the [Postgraduate Research Students' Handbook](#).

In addition to this, students are required to attend a specific meeting with their Supervisor/Director of Studies on a monthly basis to discuss their progress with their studies. Records of these meetings, including meeting notes and action plans are uploaded by the Supervisor after each meeting and are held centrally, by the PGR Office, for engagement monitoring purposes. Completed records are held against each student record and can be accessed by the student for future reference. Completion of this is monitored by the Postgraduate Research Students Office. Where meetings are missed, action will be taken by the Supervisor and Research Postgraduate Programmes Manager which is detailed in the [Postgraduate Research Students' Handbook](#).

In addition to the monthly supervisory meetings, the students are required to complete administrative sign-ins on a termly basis with the Postgraduate Research Students Office to share any detail changes, confirm any working hours and for any key messages to be passed on to the student.

As is the case for all other types of students, failure to engage for a maximum of 60 days or after 2 formal warnings, will result in course registration and sponsorship being withdrawn.

**Table 1: monitored engagement events for Visa-Sponsored Students**

<b>Indicative Month</b>	<b>Postgraduate Research</b>	<b>Postgraduate Taught</b>	<b>Undergraduate on campus</b>	<b>Undergraduate on placement ~</b>
<b>August</b>	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	n/a – vacation period	n/a – vacation period	Confirmation of acknowledgement of placement responsibilities (AVC)
<b>September</b>	Supervisory meeting (DoS) (Re)Enrolment/ Right to Study check/ Administrative sign-in (PRS)	(Re)Enrolment (SR) Right to Study check/ Administrative sign-in (RARA) Normal engagement monitoring in progress i.e. taught modules	(Re)Enrolment (SR) Right to Study check/ Administrative sign-in (AVC)	Re-enrolment/ registration for the year of study (SR) Visa student check in (AVC)
<b>October</b>	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Normal engagement monitoring in progress i.e. taught modules	Normal engagement monitoring in progress i.e. class attendance	Visa student check in (AVC)
<b>November</b>	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Normal engagement monitoring in progress i.e. taught modules	Normal engagement monitoring in progress	Welfare call – 1 <sup>st</sup> Term (approx. Nov) (SA)
<b>December</b>	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Administrative sign-in (RARA) Normal engagement monitoring in progress i.e. taught modules	Normal engagement monitoring in progress	Visa student check in (AVC)

<b>January</b>	Supervisory meeting (DoS) / Administrative sign-in (PRS)	Normal engagement monitoring in progress i.e. taught modules	Administrative sign-in (AVC) Normal engagement monitoring in progress	Visa student check in (AVC)
<b>February</b>	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Normal engagement monitoring in progress i.e. taught modules	Normal engagement monitoring in progress	Welfare call – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term (SA)
<b>March</b>	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Normal engagement monitoring in progress	Visa student check in (AVC)
<b>April</b>	Supervisory meeting (DoS) / Administrative sign-in (PRS)	Administrative sign-in (RARA) Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Administrative sign-in (AVC) Normal engagement monitoring in progress	Visa student check in (AVC)
<b>May</b>	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Normal engagement monitoring in progress	Welfare call – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Term (SA)
<b>June</b>	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Normal engagement monitoring in progress (exam period)	Visa student check in (AVC)
<b>July</b>	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Administrative sign-in (RARA) Supervisory meeting (DoS)	n/a – end of academic year	Confirmation of placement end date in PIMS (PO) Visa student check in (AVC)

~ for placement students the month which engagement points are listed are indicative and may vary depending on when the placement takes place during the academic year.

**Key to staff responsible for each engagement point:**

AVC – Admissions and Visa Compliance Office

DoS – Director of Studies/Supervisor

PO – Placement Office

PRS – Postgraduate Research Students Office

PT – Placement Tutor

RARA – Registration, Assessments, Records and Awards Office

SA – Student Advisor

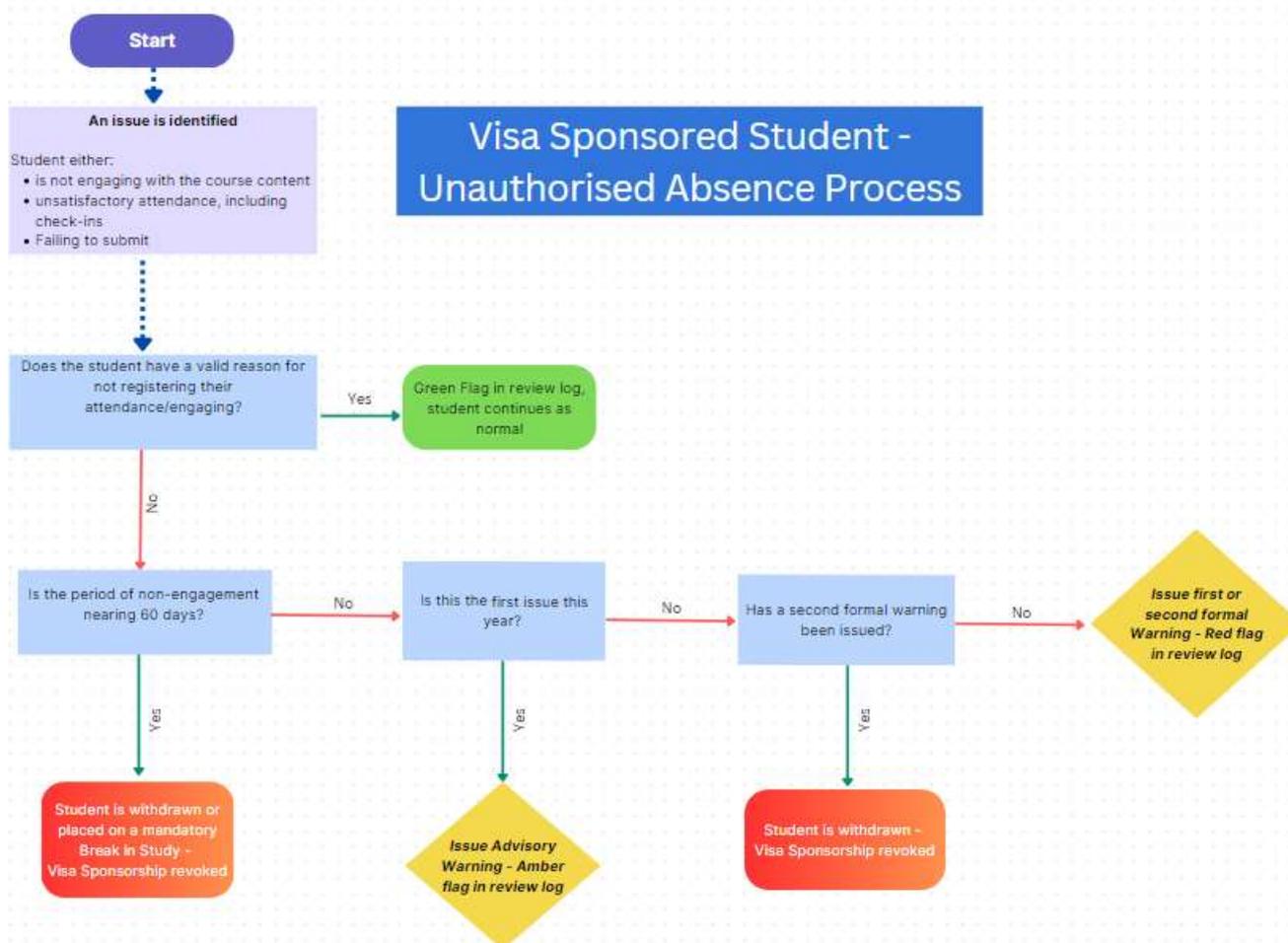
SR – Student Records

## Monitoring of Check-in Events

Visa-Sponsored Students will be made aware of their required attendance at the engagement points listed at the start of each academic year and the relevant member of staff will contact the students to make appointments where necessary. The Admissions Operations and Visa Relationships Manager will make monthly checks with the relevant staff responsible for the above engagement points to ensure that these have taken place. In cases where a student has not engaged with a check-in event the Admissions, Operations and Visa Relationships Manager will determine if there is a valid reason for the student having not registered attendance. Valid reasons could include, but are not limited to: illness, the patterns of teaching (such as field trips or reading weeks), technical issues students have reported preventing them from recording their attendance.

Where staff have been unable to contact students, they should raise this with the Admissions Operations and Visa Relationships Manager who will take steps to contact the student, including contacting the Course Tutor to see if there is any wider non-engagement with academic studies, (as outlined in the main policy), and will follow the unauthorised absence process where necessary. Contact will also be made with Student Services and the Wellbeing Team to see if they have interacted with the student in anyway. Where a student does not engage, and the unauthorised absence process is followed, there is a maximum limit of 60 days non-engagement for Visa-Sponsored Students so any actions, including action plans will take this into account.

## Unauthorised Absence Process



[Link to flowchart online](#)



**Student Absence Form**

Students are required to complete this form to notify their Course Tutor of the reasons behind any absences which have resulted in the student being absent from the course for 5 days or more.

By submitting this form, you are confirming that the details provided are an accurate account of the absence and that documentary evidence is attached.

**Student**

**name:**.....  
.....

**Harper Adams Student ID**

**Number:**.....

**Course Name and**

**year:**.....  
.....

**First Date of absence:**.....

**Date of return to study:**.....

Please provide details of the absence and the reasons behind it. If relevant, please also provide details of you tried to mitigate against the absence occurring.

Please list any documentary evidence which you have included with this form

Please submit this form no later than 2 days after your return. Where appropriate your Course Tutor will arrange to meet with you to discuss the reasons behind your absence, any steps to mitigate a recurrence or any additional support that you will need.

Signed:.....

Date:.....