

Job Description

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| Job title | Visa Compliance Officer |
| School / department | Student Services |
| Grade | 5 |
| Line manager | UKVI Compliance Manager |
| Responsible for (direct reports) | N/A |
| Date of creation or review | 06/02/2023 |

Main purpose of the job

The UKVI (United Kingdom Visa & Immigration) Compliance team plays a pivotal role within UWL (University of West London) to ensure the UKVI sponsor license is maintained and fully compliant with student visa sponsorship duties.

The postholder is required to have an overview of UKVI student visa holders, have a clear understanding of the sponsor duties and support the UKVI Compliance Manager to ensure the University remains complaint under the UKVI sponsorship license duties.

The postholder is required to work collaboratively and liaise with colleagues across the University departments and undertake the various activities required as part of the UKVI procedures and processes for all student's immigration categories and provide general compliance advice and guidance to students and colleagues.

The postholder is required to liaise regularly with students and maintain up to date records of all student visa holders. Together with the ability to assess and react to any possible UVKI breaches and advise on appropriate measures/actions to be taken to solve the situation.

The postholder is required to ensure accurate student records and documentation is kept, maintained and up to date, ready for audit purposes in line with UKVI requirements.

Key areas of responsibility

Arrival & enrolment

To support the UKVI Compliance Manager in the operation for processing and distribution of all Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs) received by the University under the Alternative Collection Location (ACL) provision and ensure that all aspects of the Home Office guidance relating to this are adhered to.

To assist in the enrolment process to ensure thorough Right to Study checks are carried out while students are provided with a high level of service and provide guidance on acceptable visa status to students before and during the enrolment process.

Attendance/engagement monitoring

To maintain an ongoing record of student attendance, non-attendance/engagement using data obtained from Dashboard/SEAtS, in liaison with School Academic Officers.

To identify any erratic patterns of attendance and take appropriate action.

To ensure that any courses that are not linked to SEAtS (student class attendance system), have a monthly attendance/engagement monitoring report which is received, and appropriate action taken where necessary

To ensure all required immigration documentation has been received, recorded, and uploaded onto SITS student record system.

To assess, discuss and conduct interviews with students for any potential breach of UKVI regulations. Working with the student to establish the issues surrounding the non-engagement and outlining an improvement engagement monitoring plan with intervention with Schools/Colleges or other university support services, together with maintaining a record of the interview for audit purposes.

To escalate any concerns where necessary to the UKVI Compliance Manager for action.

Withdrawals/ Course transfer/ Deferral requests

To ensure Compliance authorise all relevant student visa holder Change of Circumstances forms, in line with the SITS on-line process and ensuring SMS (Sponsorship Management System) is updated in a timely manner, plus mirroring any reports on SITS, and notifying the student once completed.

Authorised absence requests

To log, approve and process all authorised absence forms and ensure all associated documentation is obtained e.g., medical certificates etc. and stored appropriately.

Placement students

To record and update SMS and SITS all student's placement details as advised by the placements team.

Academic Technology Approval Scheme

To be responsible for ensuring that all courses attracting the ATAS (Academic Technology Approval Scheme) requirement are flagged appropriately on the student record system and that any changes to the list of courses flagged is flagged to the relevant internal teams to ensure all international students requiring ATAS clearance obtain this prior to commencing their studies. To be required to carry out an annual audit.

Reports/Appendix D documentation

To regularly run reports to identify any missing immigration documents or highlight expiring immigration documents and liaise with students to obtain their documentation.

To ensure the University has the systems and checks in place to ensure that all documents listed in Appendix D of the Student Visa Sponsor Guidance are retained and easily accessible in the event of a UKVI audit and maintenance of the student file.

Internal and external stakeholder

To manage relationships with departmental contacts to ensure they are aware of their Student Visa compliance obligations.

To develop and maintain internal relationships to advise staff on current and developing immigration legislation relating to Student Visa compliance and its impact on university policy and procedures.

To collaborate closely with colleagues in Student Experience and Retention and other areas of the University to ensure good practice is maintained for Student Visa compliance.
To participate and contribute to activities and projects in relation to Student Experience.
To keep abreast of any changes to sponsorship duties, regulations etc. from UKVI.

General

To arrange and minute the monthly UKVI Compliance meeting (if required).

To manage, together with others, the generic email account.

To regularly advise visa holding students of their responsibilities of attendance/engagement requirement and permitted working hours.

To maintain and ensure visas holding students' files, both soft and hard copies are kept up to date in line with the University guidelines, retention policy and UKVI audit requirements.

To lead and run ad hoc mini audits to ensure the University is audit ready.

To hold an active and key role in the undertaking of a UKVI audit by gathering appropriate information and data required.

To deputise for the Compliance Manager at any meetings on UKVI compliance matters.

To always undertake duties with due regard to the university's Equal Opportunities Policy and Equality and Diversity Policy

To be aware of, and always comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Freedom of Information Act.

Adhere to all the university's procedures and policies.

In addition to the above areas of responsibility the post-holder maybe required to undertake any other reasonable duties relating to the broad scope of the position, commensurate with the post, and in support of the University.

Dimensions / background information

The Compliance officer will be part of a small team ensuring that the university remains compliant in all aspects of its student visa sponsorship duties as set by the Home Office. The Compliance Team does not work alone and liaises with other university wide departments.

Person Specification

| | Criteria | Essential or Desirable ¹ | Demonstrated ² | | |
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| | | | Application | Interview | Test / Exercise |
| Qualifications and/or membership of prof. bodies | Degree or equivalent | Essential | X | x | |
| | Understanding of the issues in Further/Higher Education, either through personal experience or previous work in Higher Education | Essential | X | x | |
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| Knowledge and experience | Previous work experience in Student visa compliance | Essential | X | X | |
| | Knowledge of current UKVI visa sponsorship regulations | Essential | X | X | |
| | Extensive administration office experience, including management of sensitive personal data | Essential | X | x | |
| | Excellent IT skills – particularly, MS office (word, excel, outlook) and excellent knowledge and experience of databases e.g. Tribal SITS or similar | Essential | X | x | X |
| | Experience and ability to manipulate different sets of data | Essential | X | | X |
| | Experience of providing excellent customer service in person, by telephone and via email. | Essential | X | x | |
| Specific skills to the job | Methodical - ability to follow set processes and procedures | Essential | x | x | |
| | Ability to balance conflicting workloads and prioritise own workload effectively | Essential | x | x | |
| | Understanding of data integrity and attention to detail regarding data quality | Essential | x | x | |
| | Ability to respond quickly to changes in legislation and regulations | Essential | x | x | |
| General skills | Excellent spoken and written communication skills with a | Essential | x | x | |



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| | wide range of stakeholders at all levels | | | | |
| | Resilience and the ability to perform consistently well under pressure in an environment where the pace of work is demanding. | Essential | | X | |
| | Experience of planning and prioritising competing and complex workloads, frequently under pressure. | Essential | | X | |
| | Proven ability to use initiative and work independently | Essential | | X | |
| | Understanding of cross-cultural awareness, working with a diverse community | Essential | X | X | |

Disclosure and Barring Scheme Is a DBS Check required: DBS (This post does not require a DBS check)

Before making a selection, please refer to the University's [Disclosure and Barring Checks Guidance for Staff](#) and [Criminal Convictions, Disclosures and Barring Staff Policy and Procedure](#). If a DBS check is required for the role, a **Check Approval Form** will need to be completed.