

| International Student Support (ISS) Assigning a CAS Policy | |
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| Date updated: | 23/April/2020 |
| Owner: | International Student Support – M.Colman; K.Munday; R.Downs |

Details:

1. As a UK institution listed on the Tier 4 Register of Sponsors, the University of Sunderland is licensed to assign Certificate of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to migrant students who wish to study in the UK under Tier 4 of the Points Based Immigration System. A CAS is a unique reference number which connects a student to the University of Sunderland for a specific course and their duration of study in the UK.
2. New international applicants will require a CAS from the University of Sunderland if they intend to apply for a Tier 4 student visa so they can travel to the UK for study. This process will be administered by the Student Administration team. This process will include the assigning of CAS to students currently in the UK who can progress from previous studies in the UK to a new course at the same or higher level of the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) in the UK. Included in this category of international students will be University of Sunderland graduates who wish to continue their studies here with the University of Sunderland in the UK.
3. Continuing students may request additional time to complete their current programme of study which results in extended Tier 4 leave. Examples of this include a student;
 - Being required to repeat part of their course,
 - Returning to campus from a leave of absence (LOAB),
 - Extending their leave in the UK to cover a new end date (i.e. after a sandwich year placement),
 - Continuing part of their course on a non-Tier 4 student visa, before transitioning to Tier 4 to complete their course of study, or
 - Wishing to transfer course which extends the student's duration of study beyond their granted Tier 4 visa expiry date.

In any of the instances listed above, this process is administered by International Student Support (ISS). Before a CAS is assigned the student must provide evidence to enable the University to evaluate whether the student meets its (i) Tier 4 sponsor duties and (ii) CAS criteria.

4. ISS must comply with the UK Visa and Immigration's ([UKVI](#)) Tier 4 Modernised Policy Guidance, the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner's ([OISC](#)) Code of Standards and the UK Council for International Student Affairs' ([UKCISA](#)) Code of Ethics when supporting a student with a CAS and visa application.
5. Before the CAS process can begin, a Student Care Letter (SCL) must be completed and emailed to the student. This letter confirms the requirements the student must successfully complete in order to be assigned a CAS. The student must agree to the terms and conditions of this letter before an ISS Adviser can proceed with the CAS process. The SCL complies with OISC Code of Standards' requirements for a client care letter. Agreeing to the SCL's terms and conditions

includes granting ISS consent to contact the UKVI and act on behalf of the student.

6. All communication regarding the CAS process will be administered via Compass; the University of Sunderland Enquiry Management System. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they check their emails and Compass portal for updated communications on a regular basis when working through the CAS process.
7. The student will be required to provide the following documents in order to be assigned a CAS;
 - Current valid passport or travel document,
 - Current and/or previous visa(s),
 - Academic qualification (i.e. the qualification used to gain entry onto current course),
 - English language proficiency qualification (if applicable),
 - Payment for £21 UKVI administration fee for CAS assignment,
 - Evidence of payment of tuition fees for current or upcoming academic year (unless fee is included in maintenance bank evidence in addition to maintenance funds),
 - Completed Immigration History Form (IHF) and evidence of any previous refused or rejected visa application paperwork,
 - Completed CAS Request PTPM form signed off by the relevant Programme Leader and Faculty Programme Support staff confirming academic approval,
 - Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) Certificate (if applicable),
 - Tuberculosis Test Certificate (if applicable),
 - Police Registration Certificate (if applicable),
 - Bank evidence demonstrating required funds being maintained for a minimum period of 28 consecutive days from a personal current bank account or a parent/guardian's current account,
 - A financial sponsorship letter confirming all tuition and living costs are covered by the sponsor,
 - A birth certificate or court document to prove the relationship between the student and parent/guardian account holder (if the student plans to use their parent/guardian's bank account evidence), and
 - A signed letter of parental consent to confirm the student has permission to use their parent/guardian's bank account documentation as maintenance evidence.
8. An affidavit will not be accepted in place of a birth certificate or court document. This is because an affidavit, even one sworn before a court, is simply a claim to a relationship, but not evidence of that relationship.
9. 45 days is the minimum period of leave that a CAS will be assigned for.
10. A CAS will only be assigned up to the expected course end date that is approved by your faculty.
11. If a student's CAS process factors the requirement of approved ATAS clearance, this CAS check will only be completed upon ISS seeing evidence of either the ATAS clearance certificate or the electronic approval notice sent by the FCO.
12. The visa application must be completed and submitted to the UKVI within 31 days of the bank evidence's date of print or within 6 months of the financial sponsorship letter's date of print.

13. If the currency of the bank evidence used is not British Pound Sterling, a currency conversion assessment can only be made via the online currency converter on the [OANDA](#) website. To calculate the validity periods of Tier 4 financial evidence, the date to date duration calculator on the [timeanddate.com](#) website must be used. These are online tools approved by the UKVI and used by the Tier 4 caseworkers.
14. Any documents not printed in English Language must be accompanied by an official translated version from a qualified professional translator.
15. Students who are nationals from 'majority English-speaking' countries listed in paragraph 322 of the Tier 4 [guidance](#) are not required to provide evidence of English Language proficiency.
16. Students who have previously completed an academic qualification equivalent to a UK degree which was taught in a 'majority English-speaking' country listed in paragraph 322 of the Tier 4 guidance can provide a copy of their qualification and/or transcript and a supporting letter confirming the qualification was taught in the medium of English in place of a SELT.
17. [Appendix H](#) students applying via the differentiation arrangement are not required to supply ISS with bank evidence or financial sponsorship evidence for maintenance and tuition costs for their CAS application, however they must agree (i) they understand the Tier 4 maintenance requirements and the risk of not supplying Tier 4 maintenance evidence for ISS to assess, (ii) they are aware the Tier 4 caseworker can request financial evidence at their own discretion, (iii) they have maintained the required funds in their account and can supply the required financial evidence upon the Tier 4 caseworker's request, and (iv) they are liable for a visa refusal decision based on failure to provide the correct maintenance evidence. Students wishing to apply via the differentiation arrangement must confirm this preference and their awareness of the associated risk on their Compass ticket. Students must pay their full tuition fee before CAS assignment if they decide to apply for their Tier 4 visa via differentiation arrangement.
18. ISS will only issue the CAS once all the requirements described above have been satisfied. In addition to this, where applicable, the student must;
 - Make satisfactory academic progress on their course of study,
 - Have no outstanding financial debts to the University (including payments owed for tuition fees and University accommodation),
 - Not be in breach of their current/most recent leave to remain,
 - Have no pending or outstanding visa applications,
 - Not exceed the 5 year cap permitted to study at NQF level 6 and 7 in the UK on a Tier 4 visa,
 - Not overstayed their most recent Tier 4 leave, unless the student can provide evidence that they have left the UK and are in a position to make a fresh entry clearance application to resume their studies,
 - Resume their course within 28 days of the expiry date of their current/most recent Tier 4 leave to remain, or are applying for entry clearance within three months of the resumption date of their course, and
 - (with the guidance of the ISS Adviser) Identified and considered all possible risk which could result in a visa refusal decision.Failing to complete any of these additional checks will result in a CAS not being assigned.

19. In addition to the above, the University will carefully consider a CAS request from a student who has previously had their sponsorship withdrawn by the University, and the reasons why the sponsorship was withdrawn.
20. The University will assign a CAS within five working days from the date of receipt of all required documentary evidence which has satisfied the necessary checks.
21. It is the responsibility of the student to fulfil the conditions identified and set out by ISS staff and the SCL before the CAS deadline. Failure to meet these requirements will result in ISS refusing to assign a CAS.
22. Issuing a CAS does not guarantee that an applicant will be successful in securing a visa. The University is not responsible for any decisions made by the UKVI and cannot accept any liability in a student failing to obtain a valid visa, or the associated costs or consequences of any failure to secure leave to enter/remain in the UK.
23. All UK based visa applications for current students must be supported by ISS. In addition, ISS encourage the student to use the University's address as their correspondence address so all documentation and literature from the UKVI is sent to the university. Copies will be taken and provided to the Student Administration team and the original documents will be given to the student.
24. Once a CAS has been assigned it will be valid for a period of six months. After this date the CAS will be marked as expired and the UKVI will not accept the CAS as part of a Tier 4 visa application. Furthermore a CAS can only be used **once**.
25. You cannot make your Tier 4 application more than three months before the start of your course. Therefore your CAS will only be assigned within three months of your new course start date.
26. Any students who are assigned a CAS must make every effort to apply for their visa and arrive in the UK by their course start date. Arriving after this date may result in the UKVI refusing entry to the UK. Any student who is going to arrive late should contact the University at the earliest opportunity and confirm their likely date of arrival. University staff will then confirm if this late arrival is approved.
27. A current student can request to complete their studies from overseas however this can only be approved by the Faculty. If the student cannot complete their repeat studies from overseas, their student record will be processed for closure and they will be awarded the total credits accumulated.
28. ISS must act in the best interests of the University of Sunderland and the student balancing both the legal and ethical framework. Any conflict of interest must result in ISS signposting the student to an immigration solicitor, OISC or UKCISA.

| International Student Support (ISS) Service Agreement | |
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| Date created: | 12/July/2017 |
| Date updated: | 28/August/2019 |
| Owner: | International Student Support – M.Colman; K.Munday; R.Downs |

Details:

International Student Support International Student Support (ISS) is a team that helps international students with immigration queries and with providing guidance and expert information. We offer advice on Tier 4 (General) and Start-up visa applications. We check supporting documents to ensure that your visa application fulfils the necessary criteria to be granted a visa within the rules of the Home Office. We are trained by the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) and are regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC).

Services provided by the International Student Support team include:

- Tier 4 (General) and Start-up visa advice and guidance
- Support through Tier 4 (General) applications in and out of the UK
- Support through Start-up applications in the UK
- Student dependant visa advice and guidance
- Guidance on BRP checking
- Lost/stolen BRP support
- Guidance on police registration
- Advice on working rights in the UK during studies
- Guidance on Schengen visas
- Support with course transfers, leave of absences from studies and course withdrawals

The service that ISS provide is free of charge. Any additional costs will be paid by the student. Examples of these costs are:

- CAS number cost
- Visa application fee
- Immigration Health Surcharge
- Biometric data collection
- Lost BRP cost
- Sopra Steria Front End Service appointment booking fee.

These costs will be confirmed on your Student Care Letter and Plan.

Complaints Procedure

If at any stage you have any concerns regarding the conduct of your case please raise them International Student Support preferably in writing. If you are still not happy with the response and any proposed solution you can take your complaint further through the formal Student Complaints Procedure. Please contact our University Academic Services or the Students' Union for advice on the process and advocacy and support. You can find the formal Complaints Procedure here:

<https://docushare.sunderland.ac.uk/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-2784>

If you wish you can complain directly to OISC you can find full details of their complaints procedure at www.oisc.gov.uk.

ISS Contact Details

You are welcome to contact the International Student Support team via the University's student enquiry management system called Compass.

Kayleigh Munday & Ross Downs
University of Sunderland
International Student Support
Prospect Building Gateway
Sir Tom Cowie Campus at St Peter's
Sunderland
Tyne & Wear
SR6 0DD
United Kingdom

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Office Opening Times

Please note that our office is open from 9am to 5pm on weekdays. This excludes public and bank holidays.

Your File

The OISC require ISS to keep a copy of your student file for up to 6 years. After these 6 years your file will be destroyed.