

Engagement and Attendance Policy for International Students studying at Varndean College on a Student Visa

This Engagement and Attendance Policy is based on UKVI Student Sponsor Guidance Document 2: Sponsorship Duties

If you hold a Student Visa, we *must* monitor your *attendance* to check that you are *engaging with your studies*, in line with the UKVI visa conditions. UK visa conditions are outlined in Appendix A in detail.

Monitoring your attendance and engagement will also tell us if you need any extra help or support to complete your studies.

This policy includes:

1. How your attendance is monitored
2. If you need to miss a contact point
3. Taking leave during term time
4. Minimum engagement requirements
5. Not meeting the attendance requirement
6. Changes to your study
7. Appendix A: Detailed Conditions of Studying with a Student Visa in the UK

Low engagement or low attendance could mean you are breaching your visa conditions. If this is the case, we may have to report your non-engagement to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI/Home Office), your visa would be cancelled and you would need to return home.

1. How your attendance is monitored

1.1. Your daily attendance at college is required for all your lessons. This is monitored by the college automated swipe card system. Absences are monitored daily and followed up on the 2nd day by a member of the International team.

1.2. In addition, your attendance at 17 'contact points' (scheduled academic activities) throughout the year is required to meet your visa conditions. You must attend contact points in person.

1.3. A spreadsheet of the contact points is kept and made available to UKVI inspectors on request.

Schedule of Contact Points		Y1	Y2
Autumn 1			
1	Attendance at Induction Tuesday 3 rd Sept	✓	
2	Attendance at minimum 95% of first week's lessons checked at end of 1 st teaching week Sept	✓	✓
3	Attendance at first 1:1 with International Tutor Sept/Oct discussing minimum 95% attendance at first week's lessons	✓	✓
4	Attend 1:1 with Host Family Coordinator Sept/Oct re host family	✓	✓
5	Attend tutorial in October, checking minimum of one homework per subject submitted by end Sept	✓	✓
Autumn 2			
6	Minimum 95% attendance at first week's lessons November	✓	✓
7	Attendance at 1:1 – discussing progress and attendance November	✓	✓
	<i>Minimum of 85% overall attendance by half-term Autumn 1. Contact made with individuals between 85%-89%. Letter to parents. See note 5 below.</i>	✓	✓

Spring 1			
8	Minimum 95% attendance at first week's lessons January	✓	✓
9	Attend 1 st group tutorial January	✓	✓
10	Attend 1:1 Host Family review meeting with HF Coord Feb/Mar	✓	✓
11	11a: Y2 Attend mock exams January 11b: Y1 Attend mid-year exams February	✓	✓
	<i>Minimum of 85% overall attendance by half-term Autumn 1. Contact made with individuals between 85%-89%. Letter to parents. See note 5 below.</i>	✓	✓
Spring 2			
12	Minimum 95% attendance at first week's lessons February	✓	✓
13	Attend 1:1 tutorial re exams and report cards March	✓	✓
	<i>Minimum of 85% overall attendance by half-term Autumn 1. Contact made with individuals between 85%-89%. Letter to parents. See note 5 below.</i>	✓	✓
Summer 1			
14	Minimum 95% attendance at first week's lessons April	✓	✓
15	Attend group tutorial re exams prep and final reports April	✓	✓
	<i>Minimum of 85% overall attendance by half-term Autumn 1. Contact made with individuals between 85%-89%. Letter to parents. See note 5 below.</i>	✓	✓
Summer 2			
16	Minimum 95% attendance at first week's lessons June	✓	✓
17	17a. Collect your final report to Short year leavers June 17b. Attend 1:1 tutorial for Y1-Y2 students & reports June	✓	✓
	<i>Overall attendance recorded Y1 & Y2 July</i>		

2. If you need to miss a contact point

2.1 All your absences will be recorded on the College attendance system.

2.2 You need to notify Varndean of your absence from college for any reason. You need to complete the online absence form found at <https://varndean.ac.uk/absence>. If you are unable to access this form, then email attendance@varndean.ac.uk.

2.3 A short absence is very unlikely to affect your visa

2.4 If you miss an exam or assessment you need to email/contact the International team as a matter of urgency.

2.5 A spreadsheet record is kept of your contact points. The International team will contact you immediately if you miss a contact point and you *must* respond by return to international@varndean.ac.uk so we can:

- discuss why you were absent
- support you to resume your studies
- explain how it will affect your visa if you continue to not attend

2.6 If you are absent from in-person contact points for 60 days or more, we *must* tell the UKVI/Home Office and withdraw your visa sponsorship, and you will need to return home. You cannot appeal against this decision.

2.7 If you need to suspend your studies for more than 60 days, we *must* tell the UKVI/Home Office and withdraw your visa sponsorship, and you will need to return home.

2.8 If you are on a two year programme and need to need to wish to return to the UK to complete your studies, this would need to be with the approval of the college, and you would need to apply for a new CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies)/visa. For students studying on the one year programme, no return will be offered.

3. Taking leave during term time

3.1 You are expected to attend all timetabled academic activities in person, including tutorial meetings.

3.2 If you have a specific need of absence during term time, this will need to be discussed with the International team and written confirmation for the need of absence to be confirmed with your natural parents. Varndean is aware that students are living away from home, and there may be times that special consideration for absence is given, for life events connected with family.

3.3 Varndean College is also sympathetic to student absence for confirmed sickness; we do not wish an unwell student to try to come to college to study, until they are well again.

3.4 If you attend most of your in-person contact points or you have only a short absence, for example one teaching event for illness, this is unlikely to affect your visa. However, you must meet the attendance requirements of your programme and any absence may affect your academic progress.

4. Minimum engagement requirement

4.1 The minimum engagement requirement we have for our sponsored Student Visa students is outlined in the 17 contact points.

4.2 Varndean College has a minimum attendance requirement of 95%. We do understand there may be reasons outside your control when this may not be achievable for a short period, for instance due to illness.

4.3 You should however, aim to fully engage with your course, complete assessments and homework assignments and attend all scheduled contact points.

5. Not meeting the attendance and engagement requirements

5.1 Reasons for authorised absence:

- The college appreciates that some absence might be unavoidable, and may be authorised, such as absences due to:
- Illness – in which case you need to email attendance@varndean.ac.uk

For all other absences which we can authorise – you will need permission from the International team: for example:

- Hospital, orthodontist and emergency doctors' dentists' and opticians' appointments
- Practical driving tests
- Interviews and Open Days
- Funeral of immediate family members
- Religious festival (maximum 3 days per year)
- We also recognise that we may need to make adjustments for health issues and unexpected family circumstances or life events.

Attendance Chart for International Students on a Student Visa	
100% attendance	The normal daily expectation
95% attendance	Varndean minimum expectation
90% - 94%	Needs explanations. If it is due to illness then we do understand. For other reasons a plan for improvement may need to be made.
80% - 89%	<p>If attendance is below 90% for illness, and it is for a temporary period, the student will not be given a CFA.</p> <p>In the event of a continuing illness and absence, we will need to follow the Fitness for Study process.</p> <p>If the attendance is below 90% due to lack of engagement for other reasons than illness, then the student will be placed on the College Behaviour Support system with a CFA 'Call For Action', and a letter sent to parents and one month given for improvement.</p> <p>This will be reviewed after two weeks. If after one month on the CFA - attendance remains below the minimum for the specified target month, a second letter is written giving notice of a review with the Principal and a possible decision to withdraw the visa</p>
Below 80%	Varnean will inform the student and parents that we <i>must</i> report the student to UKVI and the visa will be withdrawn

5.2 Fitness to Study

However if there is an extended period of absence of 15 days or more, then the college must consider the Fitness to Study Policy and may withdraw the visa. This will be in discussion with the International Students Manager, the student, their parents and the Principal.

6. Changes to your study

As your visa sponsor, we *must* report any changes to your studies. This includes:

- a) Changes in your attendance or engagement which fall below the minimum expectations outlined in the Contact Points Schedule
- b) if you stop studying or attending in person, or if you extend your course from one year to two years, or if you need to leave before the end of your programme

7. Signing the Summary UVI Engagement and Attendance Terms and Conditions

- a) All students will be asked to read the full policy and sign the Summary Terms and Conditions as part of the Application process.
- b) The Summary and Contact points will be discussed and further explained in the Induction process on arrival in September.

UKVI Student Visa terms and conditions

Engagement and Attendance Policy Summary for Students

Varndean College is sponsoring your visit to the UK. You have entered the UK on a Student Visa which has certain terms and conditions that you *must* follow while you are here.

This is a summary of the essential things you *must* do:

- 1) You must have met all the entry requirements and BE ABLE to understand the lessons; and if you find it hard, to ask for, and accept, help from the college.
- 2) You must have an INTENTION to study hard on your course.
- 3) You must ATTEND and ENGAGE in all the lessons. Varndean expects a minimum of 95% attendance.
- 4) You must ATTEND all the CONTACT POINTS throughout the year. The dates of these will be emailed to you by the international team. A schedule of the contact points is on page 2.
- 5) You must inform the International team every time your contact details change, which includes mobile phone numbers, home address, UK address.
- 6) While you are in the UK you are not allowed to get paid work. You may be able to volunteer for a charity, but need to check with the International Office first.
- 7) You must LEAVE the UK at the end of your course.

It is important for you to know that if you do not meet the minimum attendance and engagement requirements, then we *must* inform UKVI and we will withdraw your visa and you will need to return home.

Please read the full Engagement and Attendance Policy for all the details

I confirm that I understand the terms and conditions and have read the full policy:

Student name:

Student signature:

Date:

.....
See policies for more details: <https://varndean.ac.uk/policies/> for more details

Varndean Attendance Policy (Students)

Varndean Fitness to Study Policy
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8. Appendix A: Conditions of Studying with a Student Visa in the UK – essential guidance for students

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) requires that Varndean College and the students it sponsors adhere to the following rules:

Providing current documents for scanning, keeping contact details up to date and abiding by the conditions of your visa:

- 8.1 We will check and keep a copy of your passport, previous UK visas and current UK visa (vignette or Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) card) on arrival in induction week.
- 8.2 If you obtain a new passport or visa, or extend your visa during your time with us, you *must* provide new copies of these to the International office.
- 8.3 You should keep your own copies of all your documents. Carry these with you when you travel but keep them separate from the originals in case of loss or theft
- 8.4 You *must* update the College on any changes to your UK contact address, telephone number and emergency contact details so that we can maintain accurate records. Please email international@varndean.ac.uk with your new details. You should ensure these details are kept up to date at the start of every term
- 8.5 The College *must* report changes in circumstances to UKVI so it is essential you keep us informed.
- 8.6 You *must* abide by the conditions of your visa. These conditions include any work conditions, which for students on a Student Visa at Varndean means that you are not allowed to take any paid work during your stay in the UK. This is shown in your Biometric Residence Permit card or vignette or eVisa.
- 8.7 If we have substantial reason to believe that you have broken the conditions of your visa, we will be obliged to report this to UKVI as it is one of our duties as a Student visa Sponsor.

Changes to your course:

- 8.8 We *must* notify UKVI if you withdraw from your programme, fail to successfully complete your course or if your course ends early. This may result in your visa being curtailed
- 8.9 If you suspend your studies for longer than 60 days we *must* inform UKVI and you *will be required* to leave the UK. You will then need to apply for and obtain a new visa overseas prior to returning to the UK to complete your course. This would be subject to you meeting the visa requirements in place at the time and not exceeding the Student visa time limit.

The Student visa time limit for students studying below degree level, e.g. A-levels/Btec/IB, is no more than 2 years on a Student visa from the age of 18. This 2-year limit does not include any time spent as a Child Student when you were aged 17 years and under, Student (General) when you were 16 or 17 years old or on any other non-Student visa category which permits study.

- 8.10 Your Student visa is issued to study the course listed in your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies. We *must* inform UKVI if you transfer programme as you may be required to obtain a new visa. This may

require a trip home to apply for and obtain a new visa, for example if you are changing from a Short Year programme to a full two year A level or IB programme.

8.11 If changes to your studies mean that you will require a new visa, you must seek advice from the International department. To be eligible for a new Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies you would need to meet the Academic Progression requirement and time limit requirement (see point 2).

8.12 Whenever we must notify UKVI of changes in your circumstances, we are expected to do so within 10 days of the change taking place; we will usually email you 24 hours before making the report.

Engagement in and support during your studies:

8.13 To achieve academic success, students will need to engage fully in studying and attending lessons and tutorials. Everything at Varndean is designed to provide opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully achieve the outcomes needed. Non-engagement can be an indicator that a student is not thriving academically or personally. For international students with a Student visa, engagement monitoring is essential to ensure visa compliance outlined in the Contact Points schedule in

7.14 As part of our duties as a Student visa sponsor, we are required to monitor your engagement with your course of study to ensure you are actively and consistently following your course. You are required to be regularly attending in-person. Please see the following examples of academic activities we will be monitoring; this list is not exhaustive:

- Attending required lessons and tutorials
- Undertaking required laboratory work
- Working on homework assignments and submitting the on time
- Attending tests and exams

Our aim is to provide you with academic and pastoral support so that you can complete your studies successfully. If you are experiencing any difficulties, you should speak with the international team as soon as possible so that they can help you resolve any issues. The college has a range of support available, including the Well-being department, support lessons and pastoral support via the tutorial meeting.

7.15 Should you fail to engage in your course or be absent from studies without permission for an extended period of time, as noted above, we will *be required* to inform UKVI. This can result in your visa being cancelled.

7.16 We monitor attendance and engagement for all students. Please see:

- Engagement and Attendance Policy for International Students outlined above
- Attendance Policy for Students <https://varndean.ac.uk/policies>

Overstaying

7.17 Overstaying is a breach of immigration law and is considered to be a criminal offence. There is no 'grace period' when it comes to overstaying. If you overstay your visa, it is in your best interest to leave the UK as soon as possible: the length of time you overstay by would affect the likelihood of being granted a UK visa in future

Adverse immigration history and criminal convictions

7.18 Certain criminal convictions and adverse immigration history, e.g. overstaying, breaching visa conditions, past visa refusals, deportations, some outstanding NHS debts etc. can prevent you from getting a Student visa as they fall under 'General grounds for refusal'.