

CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF STUDIES (CAS) POLICY

Section 1: Purpose

1. Sheffield Hallam University ('the University') is required to comply with [UK Visas and Immigration \(UKVI\)](#) regulations regarding sponsoring international students as part of its sponsor licence. These Sponsorship duties include providing a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS).
2. This policy outlines the University's approach to issuing a CAS to international applicants and specifies the conditions under which a CAS may be extended for international students.
3. For this policy, an international applicant/student is anyone who requires a visa to study at the University.

Section 2: International Applicants to the University

General information about a CAS

4. A CAS is an official document issued by the University to an international student who has been offered a place on a course. It is a unique reference number that confirms the student has met all academic and administrative requirements to begin their studies. The CAS is a critical part of the UK student visa application process, as it provides the UK Home Office with verified details about the student, their course, and the sponsoring institution.
5. A CAS will include:
 - **CAS Number:** A unique 14-digit reference number.
 - **Course Details:** Start and end dates, course title, and any other relevant course information.
 - **Personal Details:** Student number, name as it appears on the passport, date of birth, nationality, and passport number.
 - **Sponsor Information:** The sponsor's license number, confirming the university's agreement to sponsor the visa.
 - **Academic Information:** Qualifications used to assess eligibility, confirmation of academic progress, and English language proficiency.
 - **Financial Information:** Course fees, including any paid fees and any partial accommodation fees.
 - **ATAS:** Whether an ATAS certificate is mandatory for the student visa application. The applicant is responsible for securing ATAS clearance before a student visa application is submitted.

6. A CAS must be issued before a visa application can be submitted to join a course at the University.
7. A CAS does not guarantee success in securing a visa.
8. A CAS confirms that an international applicant has been assessed as posing no risk to the University's sponsor license. The decision to issue a CAS is made by the Universities Admissions Team.
9. 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 will not be accepted as part of a Student Route Visa application.
10. A CAS can only be used to support one application, whether or not that application is successful.
11. A CAS will be issued to an applicant on two occasions only.
12. A CAS can only be issued for a full-time course.
13. UKVI are responsible for issuing visas and any judgment made on any visa application.
14. The University does not accept any liability of failure to obtain a valid visa, or the associated costs or consequences of any failure to secure leave to enter/remain in the UK.

Requirements to issue a CAS

15. For a CAS to be issued and comply with UKVI regulations, international applicants may be asked to provide:
 - Details and evidence of previous UK study
 - Details and evidence of previously issued UK visas
 - Evidence of academic progression
 - Bank statements
 - Permission for a Home Office immigration history check
 - Evidence of current or previous immigration status
 - Length of time spent in the UK to calculate time available under UK Home Office regulations to complete a degree course
 - Information/evidence relating to previous academic failure
 - Requirement to attend an interview to reasonably determine if the intention to study is genuine.

Timescales

16. If all the required documentation has been provided, then a CAS should normally be issued within 5 working days of receipt of the requisite payment.

17. The University accepts no liability for any issues that arise from delays to a visa application that are a result of additional immigration checks that are deemed necessary to confirm compliance in line with UKVI regulations.

Instances where a CAS may be refused or withdrawn

18. A CAS may be refused based on the following reasons (this list is not exhaustive);

- Applicants fail to provide the requirements set out in point 14.
- Failure to disclose relevant information, which is later discovered.
- Previous visa refusals, e.g being refused for fraudulent reasons, irrespective of category of visa.
- If documentation provided is unclear, considered fraudulent or fails to reasonably demonstrate compliance with both our requirements and those of the Home Office.
- Where there are concerns that an application is not genuine or is intended to mislead and could compromise the University's duty to help prevent abuse of the immigration system.

19. In exceptional circumstances, such as fraudulent applications that pose a risk to the University's licence for sponsoring students, the University reserves the right to withdraw an application, retain any non-refundable deposit, and prohibit future applications.

20. A CAS may be withdrawn based on the following reasons (this list is not exhaustive);

- Failure to enrol by the enrolment deadline and or/ not arriving in the UK by the latest migrant acceptance deadline. This is a non-negotiable date as it has been agreed by UKVI.
- Failure to present original versions of documents used to obtain an offer or evidence of application, where requested.

Visa Refusals

21. If the Home Office refuses a visa application, the University will not re-issue a CAS within 12 months. A further CAS may be considered where the refusal decision is successfully overturned; however, the University does not guarantee that the student will be able to commence their course, depending on the timing of the decision

Decisions

22. Decisions made by the Associate Director of Admissions (or nominee) on issuing a CAS to an applicant are final. Applicants cannot appeal against the judgment of those making the decision on an application. If applicants are dissatisfied with the application process, they have the right to complain within the grounds and timescales set out in the [Appeals and Complaints Procedure for Applicants](#).

Section 3: Extension to visa (CAS extension)

General information about CAS extensions

23. In some circumstances students may not be able to complete the course within the expected course duration and may need to extend their visa (e.g. due to repeating failed modules).
24. A CAS must be issued before an extension to a visa application can be submitted to extend study on a course.
25. A CAS extension confirms that an international student has been assessed as posing no risk to the University's sponsor license. This decision is made by the Student Policy, Casework and Compliance (SPCC) Team.
26. If students fail a module and subsequently withdraw and/or take an intermediate award then there is no guarantee that a further CAS will be issued for future applications for the same course. Any failure must be retrieved at the next available opportunity whilst continuing to be enrolled on the course.

What is taken into consideration when deciding to issue a CAS extension

27. When considering a CAS extension, the following factors will be considered. This list is not exhaustive, and other relevant circumstances may also be considered;
- Whether a student is a debtor.
 - Student attendance and engagement with studies
 - Whether there is a gap in study of 60 days or more
 - Whether attendance is required e.g. if it is solely reassessment
 - Whether there is a valid ATAS certificate.
 - Any other relevant breach of university regulations e.g. Student Conduct Regulations, and/or UK immigration regulations.

Timescale

28. A CAS to extend studies will normally be issued within 10 working days of receipt of a correctly completed CAS Extension form.

Decisions

29. Decisions made by the Associate Director Registry Services – Student Policy, Casework and Compliance or nominee on issuing a CAS extension are final. Students cannot appeal against the judgment of those making the decision on an application. If applicants are dissatisfied with the application process, they have the right to complain within the grounds and timescales set out in the [Appeals and Complaints Policy](#)

Section 3C leave

30. Section 3C leave is a legal protection under UK immigration law. It automatically applies when someone applies to extend or change their visa before it expires, and the Home Office hasn't yet made a decision. It allows the person to stay in the UK lawfully, keep the same rights (e.g. work, study) as their previous visa and avoid becoming an overstayer (someone who stays in the UK illegally while the Home Office is deciding on the application).
31. Section 3C leave ends if
- the application is refused and not appealed within 14 days of the decision
 - withdrawn
 - if the person leaves the UK.
32. In this instance study will be forcibly interrupted with immediate effect until the required permissions to study is obtained.
33. Where the University becomes aware that a student is relying on Section 3C leave with the intention of obtaining a Student visa through dishonest means, the University reserves the right to suspend a student from the university and the suspension will remain in place until the visa is granted and the appropriate permission to study is confirmed.

Section 4: Withdrawal of sponsorship

Student Responsibilities

34. Once enrolled, student visa holders are responsible for ensuring that they are compliant with UKVI regulations for the duration of study at the University. Information on these responsibilities can be found on the universities [Information for Student visa holders](#) page.
35. Sponsorship is at risk of being withdrawn if students do not meet their responsibilities, which includes attending and engaging as outlined in the [Student Engagement Policy](#).
36. The university will also cease sponsorship in the following circumstances;
- The student decides to withdraw from the course.
 - The student decides to take a break in study.
 - A student cannot progress onto the next stage of the course following an assessment board and is required to repeat an element of the course without

attendance or is only required to repeat part of the academic year with attendance.

37. Any refunds of tuition fees are subject to our refund policy.

Section 5: Graduate Route Visa

38. Students may be eligible to apply for the Graduate Route Visa upon successful completion of their course of study.

39. The University can only confirm the required reporting to UKVI for the Graduate Route VISA upon the award of a degree following an assessment board, not upon publication of provisional marks prior to board.

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