

Academic Engagement Policy Addendum for Academic Year 2022-23

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Scope and Purpose

1. This Addendum is for all students who are pursuing research degrees at Northeastern University London (the University) on a Student Route Visa. For the purposes of this Addendum, 'student' shall refer to these students only.
2. This Addendum should be read in conjunction with the Academic Engagement Policy (the Policy). This Addendum should replace the section titled 'Monitoring Academic Engagement' for research degree programme students only.

Academic Engagement Monitoring Process - Research Degree Programmes

3. This section of the Policy applies to all research degree programme students on a Student Route Visa at the University.
4. Research students are required to attend all scheduled study contact points. It is expected that all students will travel to the University to engage with their research or for any face-to-face learning sessions, including supervisory meetings, training courses, or any other study contact points. Remote engagement of any scheduled study contact point will only be permitted where a request has been made and approved, including during the writing-up period.
5. If a student is unable to attend a scheduled study contact point, they must notify the University and obtain authorization as per this Policy. The University reserves the right to withdraw a student's visa sponsorship and withdraw them from the program in case of non-compliance with this Policy.

Research Away from the University

6. If a graduate research student plans to conduct research or collect data away from the University for more than four weeks, they must make an application for Authorised Research Leave. In-person engagement is not expected for students who are on authorised Research Leave. Monthly confirmation of engagement via electronic means such as email and Zoom is acceptable during this period.

Engagement Monitoring Period

7. Research degree programme students will be subject to this Policy starting from the point of registration until the date they are advised by

Registry that they have been awarded a qualification or they are withdrawn from the programme.

Term/Off-Term Time Period

8. Research degrees are considered run continuously and are not confined to the teaching semesters. However, there will be no monitoring of engagement during the Christmas or Easter break or during any other bank holidays.

Stage One (30 days)

9. Students who are absent without authorization for consecutive 30 days across the duration of study or have a demonstrable pattern of non-academic engagement causing concern will be asked to attend a mandatory Academic Engagement hearing with their Head of Faculty Program Supervisor and the Visa Compliance Manager. The student will be required to present evidence or a valid reason related to their absence. It is at the discretion of the Director of the Graduate Research School and the Visa Compliance Manager to determine if the evidence or reasons provided are valid and acceptable.
10. A warning shall be sent in the first instance to the student's official University e-mail address and, in some circumstances, the student's personal email address and recorded term-time and home address by the Visa Compliance Team.
11. During the meeting, academic engagement (including attendance) will be discussed and reviewed in detail to determine if the absence can be authorised and/or if the student can successfully complete their program by the expected end date.
12. If the student attends the meeting, and the University is satisfied with the student's reasons and the evidence provided, then the student's absences will be considered as authorised absences. The timetabling manager will ensure that the authorized absence is correctly recorded. A verbal warning may still be issued to the student, but no further action is required.
13. If the student attends the meeting but fails to provide valid evidence to explain their absences, then they will be asked to read and sign the Stage One warning.
14. If the student fails to communicate and attend the meeting, then the case will progress to Stage Two.

Stage Two (50 days)

15. Students who are absent without authorization for consecutive 50 days across the duration of study or have a demonstrable pattern of non-academic engagement causing concern will be asked to attend a mandatory Stage Two - Academic Engagement Hearing with the Head of Visa Compliance and the Head of Faculty.
16. In the event of unauthorised absences, the student will be invited to attend a mandatory Academic Engagement Hearing. The University will send a warning email to the student's official University email address and personal email address, as well as attempt to contact the student via phone.
17. If the student attends the hearing and provides satisfactory evidence for their absences, the absences will be considered authorised, and the Timetabling Manager will ensure they are recorded as such. The student may receive a verbal warning, but no further action will be required.
18. If the student attends the hearing but fails to provide valid evidence for their unauthorised absences, they will be moved to Stage Three – Withdrawal of Sponsorship.
19. If the student fails to attend the hearing or communicate within the given deadlines, the case will progress to Stage Three – Withdrawal of Sponsorship.

Stage Three - Withdrawal of Sponsorship (within 60 days)

20. At the withdrawal stage, the University will withdraw its visa sponsorship and remove the student from their enrolled programme if they have 50 consecutive days of unauthorised absence or demonstrate a pattern of non-academic engagement that causes concern. For research degree programme students, there will be no academic engagement monitoring during the Christmas or Easter break or any other bank holidays.
21. For information about appeals against the withdrawal decision, please refer to the section on Appeals in the Academic Engagement Policy.

Version History

Title: Academic Engagement Policy Addendum for Academic Year 2022-23				
Approved by: Academic Board				
Location: Academic Handbook/ Policies and Procedures/ Academic Policies and Procedures				
Version Number	Date Approved	Date Published	Owner	Proposed Next Review Date
22.1.0	July 2023	July 2023	Head of Visa and Immigration Compliance	-
Referenced documents	Academic Engagement Policy; Undergraduate Student Attendance Policy; Support to Study Policy; Leave of Absence Form.			
External Reference Point(s)	Student Sponsor Guidance, Document 2: Band 2 – Study at a higher education provider at RQF 6 (SCQF 9/10 and equivalents), RQF 7 (Taught and Research) (SCQF 11 and equivalents), and RQF8 (SCQF 12 and equivalents)			