

Briefing note for Heads of Departments: changes for students and the University as a result of the new Student Route and end of the Brexit transition period

Key points:

- Once freedom of movement ends, EEA nationals will be subject to the same immigration system as the rest of the world and will be able to apply under the Student route in order to study in the UK.
- The UK's new Student route, which replaces Tier 4 and which falls under the UK's new points-based immigration system, opened to international students on 5 October.
- The Student route is open to EEA students as well as international students from 5 October however, EEA students resident in the UK on or before 31 December 2020, should not apply through the route. They, and their family, are eligible to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme and have until 30 June 2021 to do so. More information on the EU Settlement Scheme can be found [here](#).
- EEA students arriving on or after 1 January 2021 will need to apply through the Student route, ahead of arriving in the UK. This includes those who begin their course in autumn 2020. Further guidance for EEA students can be found [here](#).
- All students applying through the new Student route will need to demonstrate they meet the required 70 points. They will achieve the required points if they can demonstrate that they have an offer from an approved educational institution, speak English and are able to support themselves during their studies in the UK.
- The early launch of the route aims to give prospective students maximum time to prepare; those applying will be able to make an application six months in advance of travel to the UK.

DFE further clarification over fee status for those with pre-settled status

- The Department for Education (DfE) has confirmed that current EU principles of equal treatment will continue to apply for those covered by the citizens' rights provisions in the Withdrawal Agreement. This means that EU nationals resident in the UK before the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020, and who qualify for pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme, will continue to be eligible for Home fee status and fee support on a similar basis to domestic students.
- Those EEA and Swiss nationals (and their family members) living in the UK before the end of the transition period who are migrant workers, or are self-employed and who qualify for pre-settled status, will also be eligible for maintenance support, as will those who qualify for settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme, all subject to meeting the usual residence requirements.
- In addition to this, UK nationals living in the EU, EEA EFTA, and Switzerland continue to be eligible for financial support for courses [starting in the UK until 31 December 2027](#). This includes Home fee status and Student Finance support.

Graduate Immigration Route – summer 2021

- The Government is making it easier for international graduates to secure skilled jobs in the UK with the new Graduate route, which will allow international students who have completed undergraduate and master's degrees in the UK to stay for two years and those who have completed a PhD to stay for three years. The Graduate route will open in summer 2021. More details can be found [here](#). The Doctoral Extension Scheme will be replaced by the Graduate Immigration Route.

Warwick's communications to offer holders, new and continuing students – how have we kept people informed?

- Students who enrolled prior to 20/21 – an email was sent to all EU, EEA and Swiss students from the Academic Registrar in October 2019, [web information](#) and drop-in advice sessions were provided.
- Students commencing study in 20/21 – an email was sent to all EU, EEA and Swiss students explaining the implications of physically arriving in the UK after 31 December 2020 to commence studies.
- An email was sent to all EU/EEA and Swiss students embarking on outbound mobility from September 2020.
- Applicants seeking admission in 21/22 – SROAS is working closely with school leaders from the EU, EEA and Switzerland to ensure they are able to guide their students through the new processes; student Brexit website will include links to the new Global Excellence Scholarships as well as to visa advice
- Additionally, we continue to update our student Brexit webpages regularly updated and will offer Live Chat and e-advice sessions in November-December 2020

What action have we taken so far to mitigate the impact on the student administrative journey caused by the end of the Brexit transition period?

- The Universal Admissions process (for postgraduate and non-UCAS applications) has been amended to include two new questions to identify students who are eligible, under the EU Settlement Scheme plus meeting residency criteria, for home fee assessment and categorisation, which will streamline offer making, fee status assignment and the provision of visa related information.
- New visa types have been created in readiness for the requirement to conduct passport and eventually right to study checks on all EU/EEA/Swiss students, who have secured pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme
- A new nationality flag in SITS to help identify EU/EEA and Swiss students so that targeted communication can be sent more easily
- Work is ongoing to review ATAS process as EU/EEA and Swiss students plus a total of 6 nationalities from non-EEA countries will now be exempt from requiring an ATAS certificate regardless of their course of study, if they received their visa after 5 October 2020
- Work is underway with Recruitment to review English language requirements for EU/EEA and Swiss nationals at undergraduate level so that prospective applicants for 2021/22 entry will continue to be exempt from having to take an English language test even when they require a Student visa, if they are currently exempt based on their EU qualification.

Student Route – core principles

- The Student route will be a sponsored route. Current Tier 4 sponsors will retain their license at the point of transition and be able to continue sponsoring current students.
- Sponsors will continue to issue a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to prospective students who have been given an unconditional offer of study.
- Students will need to demonstrate English language appropriate to their level of study. The level of English required will be the same as in the current Tier 4 route. The University is now required to indicate on a student's CAS the method used for assessing English language competence.
- Students must also be able to support themselves financially during their studies in the UK.

- Students will pay a visa application fee and the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS). The IHS will continue to be at a discounted rate for those applying via the Student route. The IHS fee will increase from £300 per year of study to £470 per year of study on 27 October 2020.
- Students will submit biometrics and undergo identity, security, and criminality checks. They will also need to meet suitability requirements and be a genuine student.
- The Student route will be part of the new Points-based System for immigration.
- There will be a total of 70 points needed to be granted leave on the route. All applicants who meet the requirements of the route will be awarded the full number of points, which will not be tradeable. In reality, there is no change here to the points required under Tier 4.

Student Route – changes for students

- Applying for further leave as a Student in the UK will be permitted at any level with any sponsor (providing academic progression requirements are met).
- Applications for entry clearance can be made up to 6 months before a course starts.
- Study time limits will no longer be applied to study above degree level. No changes for further study at sub-degree level or at degree level (Bachelor's).
- Students applying to study on a course at degree level and above at a higher education provider (HEP), such as Warwick, with a track record of compliance will not routinely need to provide when making a Student visa application:
 - academic documents used to obtain an offer of study;
 - documents evidencing funds held, when applying for their visa inside the UK having already been living here as a Student for 12 months or longer with a valid visa immediately prior to their application.
- Maintenance levels will be adjusted to match current home student maintenance loan levels (£1334 pcm in London, £1023 elsewhere in the UK). (This is expected in January 2021).
- There will be no maintenance requirement for postgraduate doctors and dentists applying on a recognised Foundation Programme, or for Student Union Sabbatical Officers.
- The list of 'low-risk' nationalities subject to reduced documentary requirements will be expanded to include EEA nationals. The list will continue to be kept under review.
- The Tier 4 Pilot Scheme closed on 5 October 2020.

Student Route – changes for sponsors

- Attendance monitoring will be replaced with a new Academic Engagement policy for students studying at degree level and above. Sponsors will be able to operate their own policy to measure and record engagement with the course and must be able to produce a record for each sponsored student if requested by UKVI. No major amendments are required to Warwick's [Good Practice Guide on Monitoring Student Engagement and Progression 2020/21](#).

However, we are now required to monitor and report non-engagement over a period of 30 days by Student Route students, who are studying remotely either overseas or elsewhere in the UK. Secondly, we are required to track engagement against a set percentage for sub-degree level courses including IFP, PSE the Economics Diploma.

- The UKVI will work to reduce the number of reports sponsors must make through the sponsor management system to reduce the administrative burden for Student sponsors.

- A child safeguarding requirement will be added to the sponsor duties for any institution sponsoring international students under the age of 18.
- Sponsors must record on the CAS how they have carried out their self-assessment of English language.
- Warwick will need to ensure it has made the necessary system and policy changes in order to accurately define and record an EU/EEA/Swiss student in terms of both fee and immigration status and will need to extend current sponsor duties to all students subject to visa control from 1 January 2021. Claire O'Leary is leading on a [Brexit/New Immigration System project](#) to mitigate the impacts on the student administrative lifecycle).

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