

Visa Support Team statement of service on advice and support

The student immigration advisers at Newcastle University are Tracey Aston, Hena Mookerji, Sarah Aittis, Matthew Dundon and Kate Biwer. They can be accessed at Level 2, King's Gate, Newcastle University.

They are authorised to provide immigration advice and services as regulated by the [Office of Immigration Services Commissioner \(OISC\)](#). The OISC sets the standards to which services and advice must comply. Services are offered free of charge to all students registered at Newcastle University or students holding valid unconditional offers for study at Newcastle University.

Immigration Services provided by the Visa Support Team are:

- *Advice on student visas and guidance on student visa renewal in the UK;*
- *Advice on student dependant visas and guidance on student dependant visa renewal in the UK;*
- *Submission of Student Route applications in the UK through the Visa Support Team;*
- *Advice on immigration rules for work during studies;*
- *Guidance on working in the UK after studies;*
- *Guidance on police registration;*
- *Guidance on Schengen visas*

Cost of services

Advice and guidance on student visas issues are offered **free of charge**.

Additional costs such as fees for visa applications, the Immigration Health Surcharge, biometric data collection and associated travel will be the responsibility of the student.

Confidentiality

The Visa Support Team will endeavour to respect confidentiality in most cases. Students should be aware, however, that in order to fulfil the University's obligations to the Home Office, it may be necessary for the Visa Support Team to share information with other members of staff and the Home Office.

Student declarations submitted at registration give the University permission to contact the Home Office should it be necessary to query a student's immigration status and/or history. In order to assess a student's individual circumstances, it may be necessary to seek further permission for enhanced immigration checks.

Contact with external immigration representatives (eg. your lawyer or embassy) will only be made with the express written permission from the student. The University may terminate a discussion with a third party about a case if the discussion is not proving constructive.

Contact with the Visa Support Team

The Visa Support Team's services can be accessed in the following ways:

- Provision of written guidance on making a Student Route application from inside the UK
- Follow-up appointments to check Student Route applications
- Visa advice appointments
- Workshops offered on behalf of the Careers Service to give an overview of graduate immigration routes
- E-mail contact

All immigration advice given to students by email, telephone and video/audio conferencing will be recorded accurately and in accordance with [Newcastle University's Data Protection Policy](#) and OISC requirements.

Conduct during contact

The Visa Support Team will endeavour at all time to carry out their duties in a professional and courteous manner, based on information available to them at the time.

Students using the service are also expected to treat all staff involved with respect and courtesy. Abusive or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated and the Visa Support Team reserves the right to terminate any contact in the event of inappropriate behaviour.

Students are reminded that the Visa Support Team has no authority to change Home Office policy or procedures.

The Visa Support Team must at all times adhere to the University's obligations to the Home Office with regards to immigration control, as outlined in the [Guidance for Student Sponsors](#).

Level of support and advice

The Visa Support Team at Newcastle University operates mainly at OISC level 1. This means that the advice and support must be kept within the parameters of staff competency and training.

Where individual cases exceed the Visa Support Team's level of competency, you will be referred for [external immigration advice](#).

The Visa Support Team will only give specific tailored advice and support to registered and prospective students holding a valid unconditional offer for study at Newcastle University. Students should be aware that this advice may be in line with the University's obligations under its Student Sponsor licence. Where students feel that this advice does not meet their individual needs, an impartial list of external immigration support will be provided so that students can access advice from an alternative source.

Complaints

Complaints about advice, support or the conduct of the Visa Support Team should be followed up in the first instance through the [University complaints procedure](#).

Complaints can also be directed to the [Office of Immigration Services Commissioner](#).

Please note that complaints about the University's decision not to sponsor or maintain sponsorship of a Student visa should be directed to the University, not the OISC.

Hena Mookerji
Student Visa Advice Manager
Updated: May 2023