



Home Office

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Study Team

**Edition 7, version 2 - April 2026**

This is a reissue of FAQ 7, originally published 11 December 2025. Additional wording has been added to articles 4 & 11. For ease of reference the additions are shown here in purple text.

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## 1. When is a CAS marked as used?

The decision maker should mark the CAS as 'used' at the point of decision. Marking a CAS as used is normally a manual process and can on occasion be marked as used ahead of a decision being made. Where a CAS is not marked as used, we conduct monthly retrospective "sweeps" to identify where a decision was despatched, but the CAS has not been marked as used. If you want to check the outcome of an application prior to making a decision about withdrawing a CAS, you can request an application update from the customer services team: Study sector support - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

## 2. Will a refusal against a withdrawn CAS count towards refusal rate?

Paragraph 2.14 of the [Sponsor Guidance, Document 3](#) confirms that:

*A CAS is 'used' when it has been submitted in support of an application for entry clearance or permission to stay on the Student or Child Student routes and that application has been decided. If a sponsor withdraws a CAS after the date on which the associated application was decided, the refusal will still count for the purpose of calculating the refusal rate.*

If the CAS was withdrawn **prior to any decision being made on the application**, it would not be included within your BCA refusal rate calculation.

## 3. IHS payment tips

Occasionally students have issues with paying their IHS. Please see below some useful information.

- Before making a payment, the cardholder should make sure there are sufficient funds in their account to cover the full payment. It may be useful for the cardholder to also check with their card issuing bank to make sure there are no restrictions on making the payment.
- If possible, where payment has not been successful, we recommend trying an alternative method of payment and not using the same card multiple times.
- Where the card issuer allows it, there will be a 3D Secure verification which means the cardholder will need to verify the transaction (via a banking app, text message etc) before a payment can be authorised. The cardholder should be ready for this when making the payment.
- If the student cannot pay their IHS they will get an email from UK Visas and Immigration explaining how to pay. It will go to the email address given in the visa application and students should be advised to check their junk folder if they cannot see the email in their inbox.

Please note UKVI have a category on the online Account Management Portal (AMP) with two categories **refund request** and **Top up link** which could be useful if a student is having trouble paying the IHS. Information on AMP can be found on this link [Study sector support - GOV.UK](#).

#### 4. Are those in receipt of a Department for Education (DfE) bursary eligible to bring dependants?

The Home Office and DfE are aligned in our position that the bursaries referred to do not constitute a scholarship or sponsorship from HMG. The funding for the bursary is provided by DfE to providers of teacher training in Physics and Modern Foreign Languages, who subsequently award funding to students enrolled on eligible courses. There is no scholar/sponsor relationship between a recipient student and DfE. Their receipt would therefore not enable an international student to sponsor dependants by virtue of being a sponsored student. Though it's not at the crux of the issue here, it is also the case that these awards would not make a student the recipient of official financial sponsorship [from the Department for Education](#) as per [Appendix Finance](#).

It is not the intention of the policy that such funding cannot be used in a Student application. It is entirely acceptable for sponsors to set out such funding on the CAS as specified by paragraph FIN 9.1. (a) of Appendix Finance of the Immigration Rules, as they would for other scholarships or bursaries that they administer. FIN 9.1. (a) must be relied on in place of FIN 9.1. (b) as the Department for Education does not issue letters of financial sponsorship for these schemes.

#### 5. When to apply paragraph 5.66 of document 2 of the Student sponsor guidance

We have received several questions about the application of this paragraph to students who have already had a period of study in the UK. We wish to clarify that the concession only applies where **the applicant has never studied in the UK before**.

This paragraph explains that:

*If the length of the course applied for in the current application would lead to the applicant spending more than the maximum period permitted, UKVI will refuse the application unless the application is to study a new course, or complete a current course within either 6 months of the time limit being reached and 1) below applies or 11 months of the time limit being reached, and any of 2) or 3) below apply:*

We go on to give three worked examples.

Paragraph 5.66 applies where the student **has never studied as a student (including Tier 4) in the UK before**.

For a degree level student to benefit from this paragraph, the applicant would need to:

- be applying to study at a higher education provider (HEP); and
- be subject to the time limit stated in Appendix Student ST 19.3; and
- have never studied in the UK before; and
- be studying a five academic-year course.

A student cannot benefit from this exemption where they are applying for further permission to re-sit examinations or retake part of their course – this must be done within the relevant 2- or 5-year time limit.

Students applying to extend their permission to complete a course due to, for instance, adding a work placement or a study abroad programme which results in the course duration being 5 academic years may benefit from the exception, provided the period of permission granted only exceeds 5 years on the basis of the extra periods granted before the course start date and after the course end date.

## 6. Child Students and study time limits

Time spent studying while holding a Child Student visa does not count towards the study time limit, even after the student turns 18.

In paragraph 5.58 of [document 2](#) of the Student sponsor guidance we explain that:

*Time spent in the UK as a Child Student (including Tier 4 Child), or a Student (Including Tier 4 General) whilst under the age of 18 years does not count towards these time limits. Where a Student turns 18 during a period of permission, the calculation will start from their 18th birthday.*

Therefore, the time limit calculation does not include any time spent in the UK as:

- a **Child Student**; or
- a **Student** whilst under the age of 18 years old

## 7. Do we apply Band 1 or Band 2 attendance monitoring policy for study at more than one level across 2 providers?

In paragraph 7.31 of document 2 the Student Sponsor guidance we explain that:

*When the student's course of sponsored study involves study at more than one level, sponsors must apply the most appropriate academic engagement band for each level of study.*

### **Examples**

1. ***Student is studying a pre-sessional course (RQF3) at one provider followed by an undergraduate degree (RQF6) at a different provider.***

*Apply band 1 for the pre-sessional and band 2 for the remaining course.*

2. ***Student studying a year-long foundation year programme (RQF 5) before moving onto a degree programme (RQF 6) at the same provider.***

*Apply band 2 to all study.*

**Please note** that where a student is assigned a single CAS for a course comprising a **foundation year** at one provider, and degree level study **at a different provider**, the sponsor should apply band 1 for the foundation year and band 2 for the remaining course. Scenario 2 can only be applied where both parts of the course are being studied at the same provider.

## 8. Wrap up periods when reporting early course completion

We have received feedback from sponsors around the expected 4 month wrap up when early completion has been reported.

The [Cancellation and Curtailment of Permission](#) guidance explains:

*If you are cancelling a student's permission because they have successfully completed their course early, you should normally cancel permission so that the individual is left with the same wrap-up period of permission after the new course end date as the period they were originally granted based on their original course end date. For example, if a student was originally granted permission with a wrap-up period that would have expired 4 months after the end date of their studies, you should normally cancel their permission such that they have 4 months permission remaining after the new end date of their studies.*

Where a new end date is not specified in the SMS notification then the reporting date will be used as the new end date. As a sponsor, you are responsible for ensuring the content of your withdrawal notification is accurate.

## 9. Appendix D incorporation into Sponsor Guidance, Document 2

Please note that Appendix D has now been incorporated into Sponsor Guidance, Document 2. It can be found at paragraphs 2.8 to 2.12.

### [Sponsorship Duties](#)

## 10. ETAs are issued for 2 years; can the holder study a course that's longer than 6 months?

An Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) is not a form of immigration permission but rather permission to travel for those who do not need to apply for a visa before travelling to the UK (i.e. non-visa national Visitors). An ETA is valid for two years from the date it's granted, or until the expiry of the passport used to apply, whichever is sooner. It can be used for multiple journeys during this period.

The Standard Visitor visa route is a form of immigration permission and is for people who are coming to the UK for a temporary purpose, usually for up to six months, for example to complete a short course of study or to visit family and friends.

This can be granted either at the UK border (in the case of non-visa national Visitors) or by applying for a UK visit visa (in the case of visa national Visitors).

The Immigration Rules state that where the applicant is seeking to come to the UK to study, the course of study must last no longer than six months unless the course is being undertaken from outside the UK as a Distance Learning Course. This is set out at V 9.1. to V 9.2. of the Immigration Rules Appendix V: Visitor, available here: [Immigration Rules - Immigration Rules Appendix V: Visitor - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

Further information on the conditions of the Standard Visitor visa can be found here: [Visit the UK as a Standard Visitor: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

Someone with an ETA may therefore be refused entry at the UK border if they:

- intend to study in the UK for extended periods through frequent or successive visits in order to complete a course of study of more than 6 months; or
- seek to remain in the UK for extended periods or make the UK their home.

[Visit: caseworker guidance - GOV.UK](#)

### **11. Can a student use the standard visit route, to complete a course of more than 6 months, that was commenced on a Student visa?**

The Standard Visitor route has provisions for study, however the course of study must last no longer than six months unless the course is being undertaken from outside the UK as a Distance Learning Course. This is set out at V 9.1. to V 9.2. of the Immigration Rules Appendix V: Visitor, available here: [Immigration Rules - Immigration Rules Appendix V: Visitor - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

*V 9.1. Where the applicant is seeking to come to the UK to study, they must have been accepted onto a course of study that is to be provided by an Accredited Institution that is not a State Funded School or Academy.*

*V 9.2. The course of study referred to in V 9.1. must last no longer than six months unless the course is being undertaken from outside the UK as a Distance Learning Course.*

Visitors are not permitted to continue a course of study started on the Student route where it forms part of a wider programme of study that lasts longer than 6 months. This would not meet V 9.2. of the Visitor rules above.

Students can still use the visitor route to undertake any of the activities outlined in the [gov.uk webpage](#) on the Visit route or [Visit caseworker guidance](#).

You can visit the UK for up to 6 months to:

- study at an accredited institution (this includes English language courses)
- do a short piece of research that's relevant to your course overseas
- do an 'elective' - an optional additional placement, if you're studying medicine, veterinary medicine and science, nursing, midwifery or dentistry
- sit an entrance exam, retake an exam or course module, or do a PhD oral exam (a viva)
- do an unpaid clinical attachment if you're a graduate from a medical, dental or nursing school
- take the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) test or the Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB) test

Visit Policy colleagues have confirmed that we would also permit someone on a PhD to undertake PHD thesis corrections following their viva as a visitor (provided this does not extend beyond 6 months).

Aside from these permitted activities, a Student who needs more time to complete their course should apply for further permission as a Student. Students attempting to return to complete their course as a visitor for any other reasons may be refused entry.

## 12. Fee waivers and 3c leave

Fee waivers are only available for certain specified human rights applications. This is detailed in the Fee Waiver guidance. The list of applicable routes does not include any of the study routes or the Graduate route.

If a fee waiver request is submitted for one of the specified application types but an applicant instead applies for a different type of leave which is not one of the specified application types, they will not benefit from 3c leave as per the below:

Regardless of whether the fee waiver request is granted or refused, the applicant will benefit from 3C leave if:

- they had valid permission when the fee waiver request was submitted, and which has expired by the time the fee waiver request is decided
- the applicant makes a valid application for permission within 10 working days of the date of the fee waiver decision
- the permission application that is submitted is the one for which the fee waiver request was made

Submission of a further fee waiver request within the 10 working day window will not extend the applicant's 3C leave.

[Fee waiver: Human Rights-based and other specified applications \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#)

## 13. Latest acceptance dates and visa issuing for Entry Clearance

If the University has a latest acceptance date for a student, this must be included on the CAS.

If a sponsor does not specify a latest acceptance date on the CAS and the course start date has already passed, we are unable to issue permission, as in such cases, we must assume that the latest acceptance date has also passed. When we are ready to make a decision, we may contact the Sponsor if the latest acceptance date is nearing.

If the last acceptance date has changed after you have assigned the CAS, please keep this up to date using the Sponsor Notes field. If the last acceptance date has passed and you are no longer sponsoring the student, please ensure that you take the appropriate CAS action. Processing may be delayed if we need to contact you to check if you are still sponsoring the student where the last acceptance date has passed.

## 14. Continued participation during examination re-sits and repeating study

In relation to examination re-sits and repeating study, [document 2](#) of the Student Sponsor guidance explain that:

*5.124 You may continue to sponsor a student during the re-sit or repeat period if you require their continued participation (in classes or by contact) and are confident you can meet your sponsor duties for them during the re-sit or repeat period.*

*5.125 If you do not require their continued participation within 60 calendar days of the next academic period starting (except for recognised vacation periods) you should not continue to sponsor them.*

Please note that recognised vacation periods include the post-study 'wrap-up' period, which is distinct and is not considered part of an academic period for the purposes of this paragraph.

Paragraph 7.30 exempts sponsors from monitoring academic engagement during the post-study period:

*7.30 During the following periods, the sponsor is not required to monitor academic engagement of their students in any way for immigration purposes:*

- *During vacation periods*
- *During the post-study period*



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