

# Sotheby's INSTITUTE OF ART

## VISA COMPLIANCE FRAMEWORK

### ATTENDANCE MONITORING POLICY (Document B)

This policy is applicable to all applicants and students under Sotheby's Institute of Art – London's Student Route sponsor licence and all postgraduate students

#### Introduction

1. Sotheby's Institute of Art – London has obligations owed to UKVI as part of their Student Route sponsor licence. This involves monitoring attendance, administering a thorough attendance monitoring system, and ensuring both staff and students are trained and informed appropriately.
2. This Policy forms part of the Visa Compliance Policy framework and should be considered along with Documents A and C in that series, as well as working in conjunction with the wider policies of the Institute. This policy provides students and staff with the rationale and details of the process by which attendance and engagement are measured and reviewed. In supporting an encouraging learning environment through the monitoring of attendance, the Institute aims to safeguard student wellbeing and support academic performance whilst operating within UKVI reporting requirements.
3. In certain cases, a breach of this policy may result in sponsorship of a Student Visa being withdrawn, resulting in UKVI curtailing a student's immigration permission.
4. The attendance rules and expectations as explained in this policy apply equally to all students on postgraduate courses, irrespective of their nationality or immigration status.

#### Overview

5. All students are advised within their Programme Handbook that:

*Students are expected to attend all taught sessions as specified in their timetables and to undertake all preparation and written assignments required of them by the dates specified. Failure to attend classes is a serious matter and advance notification of absence must be given to the Programme Co-ordinator. The reason for absence must be given and this will be noted.*

6. If a student's attendance is deemed to be poor (attendance at any less than 60% of allocated classes), they will receive a written warning, in accordance with the relevant procedure. Continued failure to commit to their study programme could result in sponsorship withdrawal in accordance with paragraphs 38 – 41 of **Document A** (Visa

Compliance Policy). The escalating attendance monitoring response is laid out in **Document C** (Attendance Monitoring Procedure) of the Visa Compliance framework.

7. The attendance monitoring process is carried out using a fortnightly and monthly reporting process.
8. The attendance monitoring system is managed by the Attendance Officer and overseen by the Visa Compliance Manager. The Attendance Officer, the Visa Compliance Manager and the Registrar meet on a fortnightly basis at the Case Review Panel to discuss and review open failure to attend/progress cases and agree on appropriate next steps.
9. If the Registrar has directly received information from a Programme Office or any other source that a student's work, attendance or engagement has been unsatisfactory, any case may also be reviewed at the fortnightly attendance monitoring review.
10. The review panel will take into account evidence of attendance breaches, submitted evidence, and apply the outline procedure and rules contained in Document C (Attendance Monitoring Procedure).

### **Lateness**

11. The Institute's policy is that lateness is not tolerated. Punctuality is essential; coming in late disrupts lectures and may be perceived as lacking in respect for lecturers and fellow students. Consistent lateness may result in a student being marked as 'absent'. Students should also carefully plan journeys in advance, in order to avoid arriving late at scheduled visits.
12. Unsatisfactory attendance includes, but is not exclusively confined to:
  - failure to attend learning and teaching sessions regularly, without providing a satisfactory reason for absence;
  - persistent late arrival or early departure from learning and teaching sessions;
  - failure to attend tutorials and/or interviews with a member of academic staff.

### **Term Time Travel**

13. Students wishing to travel during term time must seek authorisation before leaving the UK. Permission to travel will be issued on the basis of a travel request lodged with the Attendance Officer via an online form.
14. Students can request a form from their Programme Office.
15. The attendance monitoring panel, consisting of the Attendance Officer, the Visa Compliance Manager and the Academic Registrar, meets to consider all applications on a fortnightly basis. All considerations will be taken into account, including

academic progress and whether the request is 'reasonable and consistent' as defined by the immigration rules.

16. The Attendance Officer will provide an authorisation to travel letter if the application is approved by the attendance monitoring panel. Students should not travel without carrying this letter.
17. Periods of absence of more than 60 days will not be considered under any circumstances.
18. Students who do not have authorisation to travel will be classified as non-attending students under the attendance monitoring system.

### **Data Sources and Evidence Considerations**

19. All students are advised within their Programme Handbook that:

*You must swipe in using your student ID card at the start of every taught session. Each classroom has a grey reader which you touch your card against. This automatically maintains your attendance record and is emailed to programme staff daily. Students who have forgotten or lost their ID cards must sign in at Reception by using the QR code before the start of each session. In the case of a lost ID card, a new one should be purchased from Reception at the cost of £10. Where sessions are conducted in locations other than the Institute, including on trips and visits, a paper register will be taken to confirm attendance. If you are late, please ensure that you touch your card, or sign in on a break or when exiting. You will be shown how this works at the start of the semester. You may only swipe in for yourself. If it is discovered that other students have been swiping/signing in on your behalf, or that you have been swiping/signing in on the behalf of other students, then disciplinary action may be taken.*

20. The swipe card data is the normal basis for assessing attendance, along with manually submitted registers when on field trips or engagement outside of the premises.
21. There will be occasionally circumstances where ill health or other legitimate reasons prevent students attending sessions. Students are responsible for informing the Programme Co-ordinator of these circumstances. After three consecutive days of absence students must provide medical evidence to their Programme Co-ordinator. This medical evidence will be assessed along with other submitted documents if the case is elevated to the Review Panel meeting.
22. Evidence submitted before the attendance review panel must be documentary and complete in nature. Under normal circumstances the panel reserves the right to reject hearsay, conjecture or other types on non-founded opinion.
23. It may be possible to provide retrospective evidence; however, this is considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on the general credibility of the situation.

### **Withdrawal of Sponsorship**

24. In line with paragraphs 38 – 42 of the Visa Compliance Policy (Document A), visa sponsorship will normally be reported as withdrawn for any student who has exhausted the three warning letters and meetings laid out in Document C.
25. Fitness to Study procedure may also be instigated prior to visa sponsorship/student status withdrawal if deemed appropriate by the Registrar.

26. Students may pursue academic appeal, but this will not affect the standard requirement for visa sponsorship to be withdrawn at that time.
27. Any reversals in sponsorship withdrawal must be completed within 14 days of the initial report.
28. The student will be advised in writing that the sponsorship of the visa has been withdrawn and they must leave the UK within 60 days from the date of the written notification.
29. The student will also be asked to inform the Visa Compliance department when they have left the UK so the system of re-reporting can take place, therefore meaning the withdrawal of sponsorship will not affect the Institute's Basic Compliance Assessment figures for UKVI reporting.
30. In the event of a successful appeal, the student must approach Visa Compliance to fill out a CAS request in line with paragraphs 38 – 41 of the Visa Compliance Policy (Document A), so the full circumstances can be considered before deciding if the applicant meets the requirements for visa sponsorship to be re-instated at the appropriate time.

<b>Title</b>	Attendance Monitoring Policy
<b>Date first implemented</b>	2023
<b>Approving body</b>	Academic Board
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<b>Policy owner</b>	Visa Compliance Team/ Quality Team