



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



AGENT RECRUITMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Processes for working with education agents

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Related documents

Agent contract
List of approved agents
International Student Policy

Approved by: **University Operations Board** Date first published: **Oct-2014**
Version No. **2.3** Date updated: **Jan-2016**
Owner: **Compliance and Administration (MSR)** Review Date: **Oct-2016**

This document has been designed to be accessible for readers. However, should you require the document in an alternative format please contact the Academic Quality Directorate.

Background

- 1 This document supports the Buckinghamshire New University (Bucks) *International Student Policy*, specifically its policy statements relating to the use of education agents on selecting and admitting EEA and international students to the University's programmes on UK campuses of the University.
- 2 These procedures have been developed in accordance with the British Council [Guide to Good Practice for Education Agents](#). The University also supports the seven principles for ethical international student recruitment, known as the "[London Statement](#)".

Purpose Statement

- 3 This document outlines the procedures to be followed in the appointment of education agents to represent the University in the European Economic Area (EEA) and overseas markets.

Responsibilities

- 4 Responsibility for implementation and oversight of this procedure lies with the Marketing and Student Recruitment Directorate. The procedure is monitored and reviewed regularly by the Recruitment and Outreach team to reflect good practice, research and changes to relevant legislation.

Definitions

- 5 In the context of this procedure an **international student** is defined as a student who registers on a Bucks award at the University or one of its registered sites from a country outside the European Union (EU), EEA, or Switzerland and requires a Tier 4 visa to study in the UK.
- 6 An **EEA student** is defined as a student who registers on a Bucks award at the University or one of its registered sites from a country outside the UK but within the EU, EEA, or Switzerland.

Appointment of agents

- 7 Before an agent can be appointed, the University will, after appropriate initial due diligence, require the following steps to be completed:
 - A standard Agent Pro-Forma form must be completed by the designated Bucks member of staff (usually a member of the Recruitment and Outreach team) proposing the agent appointment;
 - This form should provide detail of the agent's operation, including the number and location of branch offices, the number of staff employed, details of the other

institutions that the agent represents and information on the scale and nature of business that the agent expects to undertake with the University;

- The prospective agent should also provide bank references and consolidated accounts backdated by a minimum of three years;
- References will be requested from other institutions using the Agent Reference Request form;
- In countries, which have agency associations or other such regulatory bodies, or where education agents are properly licensed, the University will give preference to agents that demonstrate membership of (or can demonstrate an intention to join) such a body.
- In regions where the University has a Representative or Office, all new agent appointments should be referred to the Representative for comment and to verify credentials and claims;
- Agent agreements will require initial approval by the Director of Marketing & Student Recruitment and final sign off by the Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for International recruitment;
- Once the agent appointment has been approved, the agent shall be sent information about the Agent contract and relevant marketing collateral. Initial contact will also be made by the Recruitment and Outreach Manager to welcome the agent on board, introduce the account manager and reaffirm the terms of business;

Ongoing Support of Agents and Relationship Management

- 8 Recruitment and Outreach staff will visit agents in their own country at least once per calendar year so that a full and proper assessment and review of the quality of the agent operation and services can be made. Training will usually be provided within the first three months of appointment.
- 9 Review will include a thorough assessment of the appropriateness of the agent's office facilities, the number and experience of the staff as well as the quality and accuracy of the services they are providing to students. This will be part of the annual review and reporting process.
- 10 Additionally, the University will seek to:
 - Set up a series of paper-based and online training facilities (such as webinars) for agents, which the University will certificate;
 - Ensure systems and processes are put in place that will both allow agents to submit applications electronically and to check on the status of their applications;
 - Introduce an Agent Portal that will give agents read-only access to the applications that they have submitted so that they can track and monitor the progress of these applications and keep their students fully informed;
 - Ensure agents have a dedicated contact in the Recruitment and Outreach team who acts as account manager;
 - Ensure that the payment of agency commissions is transparent, agreed and simplified and is done in a timely and accurate manner;

- Work with agents, where possible, in their own country to deliver joint promotional and information activities for students at key times in the recruitment cycle;
- Work with agents to provide pre-departure briefings for students, utilising all media channels in ways that are of greatest benefit to the student;
- Introduce, where beneficial, pre-departure briefings online / through Skype or similar video conferencing facility into agent offices;
- Develop with each of the key agents a jointly agreed Business Plan that will outline each side's targets, commitments and expectations;
- Host an 'agents and partners conference' every two years. All agents will be expected to attend to share best practice and receive updates on the University and its curriculum.

Monitoring and Evaluating Performance

- 11 Regional account managers in the Recruitment and Outreach team will be responsible for day-to-day transactional business with appointed agents and will be expected to report regularly on agent performance.
- 12 The University will review agent performance on an ongoing basis and annually against the expectations laid out in the agency contract. An annual report will be compiled by the Recruitment and Outreach team for review by the Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment.
- 13 The University will undertake spot-checks on agent practice and activity to ensure the accuracy of advice and information and that all UKVI requirements are being met.
- 14 Where there is under-performance, mitigation will be required and undertaken as part of the ongoing review process.
- 15 At the discretion of the University, any variance from the agent agreement that contravenes UKVI requirements or the University's Tier 4 sponsor duties (where applicable), or any activity likely to bring the University into disrepute will result in the immediate termination of the agent's contract and if appropriate, report to UKVI.
- 16 Student feedback on agent service provided will also be taken into consideration.

Home Office, UKVI Compliance and Tier 4 (where applicable)

- 17 The Compliance and Administration Manager will continue to monitor Home Office and UKVI guidance and policies to ensure that there is full compliance with their requirements. Where applicable, this will ensure that the University is able to discharge and execute its duties in accordance with the terms and conditions of any Tier 4 Sponsor's license it may hold.
- 18 Changes to UKVI requirements will be notified to all agents in a timely manner.
- 19 Full and relevant documentation will be produced for UKVI (and for other stakeholders) to show how the University manages its agent appointment and monitoring processes.

- 20 Where applicable, the agent's responsibilities in terms of Tier 4 compliance are now included in the agent contract.

Termination of Contracts and Dispute Resolution

- 21 All issues of dispute are to be referred in the first instance to the Director of Marketing & Student Recruitment. Where there is a serious concern that may affect the standing of the University, the issue will be immediately escalated to the Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for international recruitment.
- 22 All contracts are time-limited when issued to a maximum of three years, and include clauses for immediate termination given the agreement of both sides or in the case of a serious (at the University's discretion) breach of trust, breach of compliance responsibilities or breach of the terms of the contract.
- 23 The University's requirements and practices in relation to Tier 4 student visas (where applicable) will be included on the Agent Portal (once available) for ease of access.
- 24 Turnaround times of applications are recognised as a key agent concern and an issue which impacts on the University capacity to be successful in a competitive market. All policies and procedures with regard to increasing turnaround and processing times and setting minimum response times are to be formalised and will be communicated accordingly.

Review

- 25 This procedure will be reviewed and updated annually by the Recruitment and Outreach Manager in October to ensure continued alignment to any legislative changes introduced during the previous academic year.
- 26 All changes to Home Office, UKVI regulations will supersede any element of the contract, where this occurs a contract addendum will be issued.

Appendix one – Agent Profiling Questionnaire

Agent profiling questionnaire

Company name	
Business registration number	
Country of registration	
Main Business Address and post code	
Main contact details	Name: Position: Telephone: Mobile: Fax: Email:
Correspondence address if different to above:	
Other registered business name(s) if applicable:	
Do you use sub-agents? YES / NO If yes, please attach a separate list of names and addresses	
Do you require a licence to operate as an Educational Recruitment agent YES / NO in your country? If yes, please provide the Licence Number. :	
Are you a member of an agent association in your country? YES / NO If yes, please provide details :	

Number of branches (UK & overseas)		Date of establishment	
Three major geographical markets	1. 2. 3.	Number of students recruited from each market in last 12months	1. 2. 3.
Number of students recruited at various levels in last 12 months	ESL: High School: Foundation: FE College: University:	Number of staff	

Number of staff fluent in English		Longest consultant experience in years	
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Please provide details of your services and fees chargeable if applicable:

Do you have links with educational institutions in your area? YES/
NO
If yes please list

Do you have any contractual relationships with other UK or non UK institutions? YES / NO
If yes please provide details below:

University / College	Years contracted	Country	Students recruited last year

Why would you like to represent Bucks?

Please provide details of two student recruitment referees, including one from a UK educational institution:

Name:
Company:
Position:
Address:

Name:
Company:
Position:
Address:

Telephone:
Email:

Telephone:
Email:

I/we declare that the information provided is true and correct to the best of our knowledge

Signed:
Company Stamp:
Date:

Office use only

Date received	Member of staff	Comments
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All information provided is confidential

Appendix two – Agent Reference Request Form

Agent Company Name:			
Agent Address and Country:			
Name of Key Contact:		Role/Position:	
Email Address:			

	Yes	No	Further details / information (if applicable)
Are you currently working with this agent? If yes, how long for?			
Have you worked with them previously?			
Have you found the agent to be reliable and ethical?			
Would you recommend this agent?			

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
How would you rate the quality of their applications?				
How would you rate their recruitment processes and professionalism?				
How would you rate the agent's knowledge of Tier 4 regulations?				
How would you rate the agent's application to enrolment conversion rate?				
How would you rate the agent overall?				

How many students have you enrolled through the agent in the past 3 intakes? _____

Please use this space to provide any additional comments - Is there anything we need to be aware of?

Referee institution / company name	
Contact name	
Job Title	
Telephone	
Email	

Thank you for taking the time to complete the form.

Bucks New University