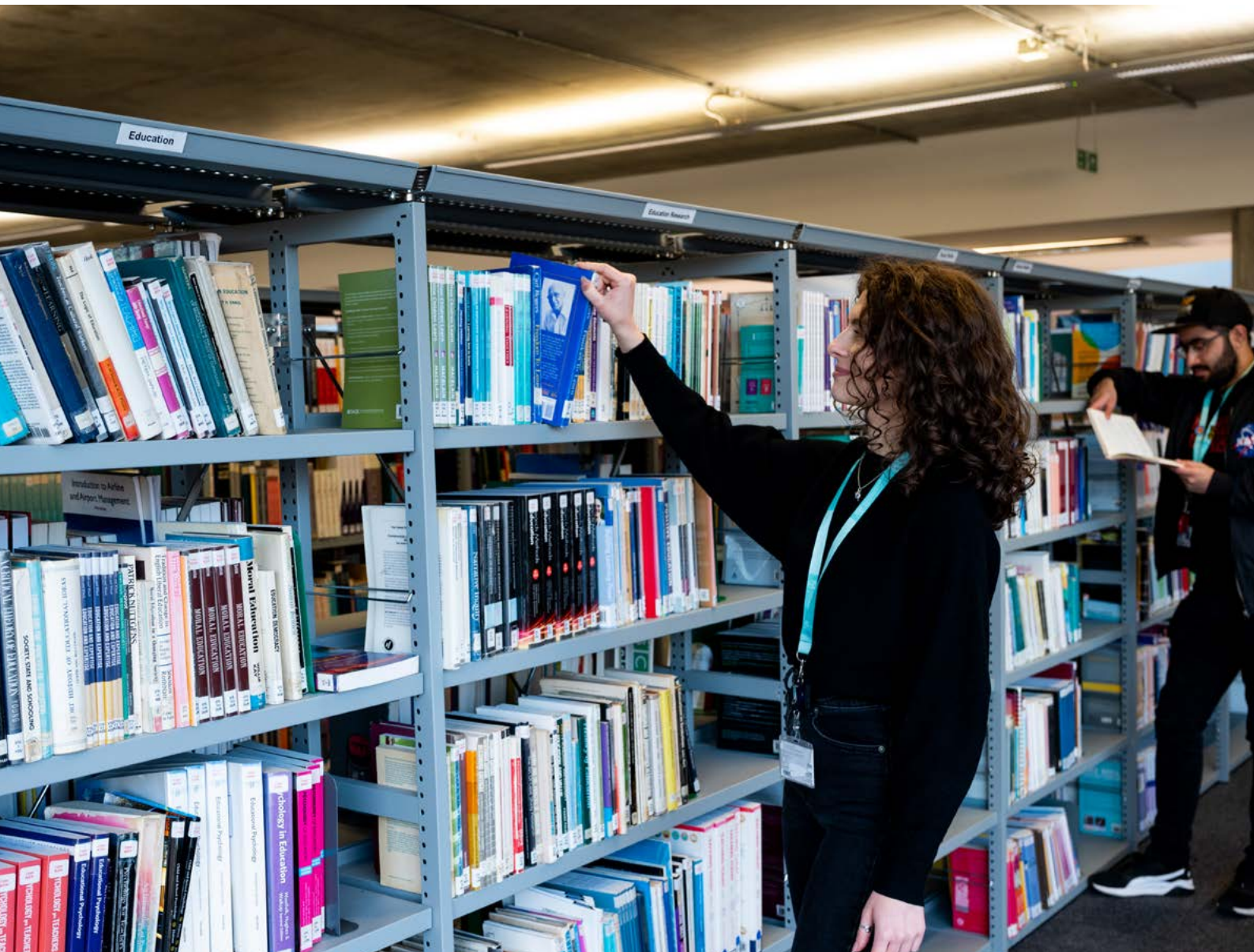




BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



Marketing, Recruitment and the Admission of  
**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

# Marketing, Recruitment and the Admission of International Students

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**Related documents:**

- *Agent recruitment and management procedure*
- Issuing a CAS
- Admissions interview process and protocols
- Applicant guidance notes
- Financial documents guide and checklist
- International arrival guide

**Related forms:**

- International student application form
- Admissions interview form
- UKVI consent form
- Under 18's parent consent form
- Student disclaimer form

Note: Hyperlinks have been provided for ease of reference. For other documents please see the Policies page on the main University website (<http://bucks.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-policies/policies>).

## Background

- 1 This document supports Buckinghamshire New University's (BNU) *International Student Policy*, and in particular those sections of the policy that relate to the marketing, recruitment and admission of international students.
- 2 The document has been drafted in line with the Quality Assurance Agency's 'UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B2'<sup>1</sup>, The Immigration Acts 1971 and 2014, The Immigration Rules, The Data Protection Act 1998, Equality Act 2010, The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and The Human Rights Act 1998.

## Purpose Statement

- 3 The purpose of this document is to set out the protocols, criteria and processes that are used to select and admit international students to programmes of study at BNU and its registered sites.
- 4 Specifically, this document also details the processes by which the University meets its duties as a Student Sponsor Licence Holder to ensure that prospective students to the University are genuine applicants who can comply with the Immigration Rules and related legislation and intend to pursue and complete their studies at BNU.

## Applicability and Scope

- 5 This procedure is applicable to all University employees who are involved in, or responsible for, the marketing of the University's portfolio of courses for the benefit of recruiting international students and anyone contracted to work with the marketing of such courses to international students. This procedure is also applicable to University employees or contractors who are involved in the recruitment, selection and admission of international students to its courses.
- 6 The scope of this document predominantly refers to admissions onto full-time foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (taught and research degrees) leading to approved awards of BNU for courses delivered on the University's Campuses.
- 7 If the applicant is applying through UCAS, this procedure should be read in conjunction with the University's main *Admissions Policy and Procedures* document. The present document is aimed at highlighting those areas specific to international students, as defined below.
- 8 This procedure has been drafted specifically to provide clarity and transparency regarding the recruitment, selection and admission processes, protocols and procedures for international students (specifically holders of a Student route visa).

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<sup>1</sup> The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2013), Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality, Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admissions to higher education. Published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

## Responsibilities

- 9 Responsibility for implementation and oversight of this procedure lies with the Compliance and Administration Team (within MSRC), who will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the document to reflect good practice, research and changes to relevant legislation and guidance of relevant regulatory bodies.
- 10 BNU aims to assist international students in overcoming the challenges they face when applying and/or enrolling to study in a country other than their own. In this respect, the University aims to maintain an inspiring student community that is balanced and diverse in terms of background, recognising the educational as well as the cultural benefits that this brings to all BNU students. The Compliance and Administration team within BNU plays an important role in ensuring compliance by the University overall with its obligations as a Student Sponsor of international students.

## Definitions

- 11 In the context of this policy, an **international student** is defined as a student who registers on a BNU award at the University or one of its registered sites from a country outside the UK that requires a Tier 4/ Student Route visa to study in the UK.
- 12 Where this policy refers to the **student**, this term encompasses the entire 'student journey' from enquiry and application stage through to graduation.
- 13 **Direct admission** refers to the application process that lies outside of UCAS, by students for programmes delivered in the UK on our main High Wycombe, Uxbridge, Aylesbury or Pinewood campuses.

## Marketing and recruitment

### Information for applicants

- 14 International applicants can find all the information relating to making an application and studying with BNU in the UK on the University website. The University will ensure that such material remains up-to-date.
- 15 A guide to which documents are required to support an international application is published on the website and applicants should be encouraged to send all such documents attached to the application form when submitting to prevent a delay in a final decision being made.
- 16 Several courses may have additional non-academic requirements, and these are fully listed on the website under the course specific entry criteria.

### International Recruitment

- 17 The International recruitment activities are led by the Recruitment and Outreach Team (MSRC) and outlined in the Recruitment and Outreach Plan.

- 18 The University Recruitment and Outreach plan is reviewed annually, considering a variety of external market developments, as part of the wider University strategy; including internationalisation and partnerships agendas, and return on investment. The plan will only ever look to actively carry out marketing and recruitment activity, including agent recruitment, within countries listed under the 'differential evidence requirement' by UKVI.
- 19 All recruitment staff undertaking recruitment and outreach activity will receive explicit training from Compliance and Administration (MSRC) on an annual basis.
- 20 Recruitment activity will utilise the use of Education Agents internationally that are managed by a legally binding contract and governed by the *Agent Recruitment and Management Procedure*.

## **International Admissions**

- 21 International applications are managed within the central Admissions Team within the Marketing, Student Recruitment and Communications Directorate (MSRC). The process is managed by the Head of Admissions and overseen by the Senior Admissions Officer.

## **Making an application**

- 22 International applications are welcomed both from applicants overseas and from those already resident within the UK.
- 23 Applications may only be made to full-time programmes at one of the University's campuses. Programmes must be the equivalent of RQF level 3 or above. Where the course contains a placement element this must not exceed 50% of the total length of the course.
- 24 The University will accept applications made through the following routes:
  - Undergraduate applications submitted through UCAS or direct;
  - Direct applications submitted via our online application portal at <https://bucks.ac.uk/applying-to-bucks> for all postgraduate and CPD courses.
  - Applications made via BNU approved Agents or Representatives. See the *Agent Recruitment and Management Procedure* for further information.
- 25 International applicants applying to undergraduate courses are obliged to apply through UCAS. Applicants that apply via this route should read the additional information and guidelines available in the *BNU Admissions Policy and Procedures* document.
- 26 Deadlines for those applying directly or via an agent are published on the University website. Applicants submitting through UCAS should follow the UCAS guidelines and deadlines. The deadlines are set and published separately for overseas applicants and those international applicants already within the UK – this is to accommodate the differing timescales for the international procedures and processes.

- 27 Applications will only be put forward for consideration where:
- a The application has been made through one of the above mentioned routes or channels;
  - b The application form has been completed in full, including all personal data and a comprehensive list of the applicant's academic history to date;
  - c Submission of the form electronically will be considered as an agreement to terms and conditions. *By doing so the applicant acknowledges and accepts all the accompanying Terms and Conditions of application and enrolment. Where a student applies through UCAS they will have to sign separate Terms and Conditions of application.*
  - d All documentation<sup>2</sup> has been received (with the exception of pending results transcripts/certificates);
  - e The qualification(s) provided has been awarded by an ENIC recognised institution.
  - f The course applied for represents an academic progression; at a higher level than previous qualifications obtained, as comparable via UK ENIC.
  - g The length of the course applied for does not, on completion, lead the student to a continuous period of study of more than 5 years in the UK (with the exception of PhD applicants).
- 28 All documents should be in English. Where originals are not available in English, certified translations should be provided by the applicant.
- 29 Documentation must be full and complete and include evidence related to the applicant's previous study in the UK along with copies or information about all UK visas and CAS issued.
- 30 If any documentation – except pending results transcripts or certificates – is omitted from the application pack, the application will not be processed until all information has been received.

### **Applicants under the age of 18 at enrolment**

- 31 Where a student will be under the age of 18 on the course start date, students and parents will receive a letter explaining the guardian requirements and restrictions the student may face.
- 32 Applicants and their parent(s) / guardian must sign a declaration in agreement to the under 18's policy. The University Safeguarding Officer must receive a copy of the declaration. Without this declaration the student may not be enrolled. Copies to be maintained in the student's record.
- 33 A copy of the template letters and declaration form can be obtained from the Admissions team (MSRC).

### **International visa regulations**

- 34 BNU has Student Sponsor status on the Home Office Register of Sponsors for students. This status is rigorously maintained through strict adherence to Home Office regulations and on-going proactive maintenance by

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<sup>2</sup> A detailed list can be found on the University website.

Compliance and Administration (MSRC) of all systems, processes and records relating to international students at BNU.

- 35 Most applicants from outside UK and who have been offered a place on a course by BNU to study in the UK, and the main purpose for being in the UK is to study, would fall under the Student route of the Points-based System. The UKVI department at the Home Office sets comprehensive regulations that have to be met as part of the UK visa application process; these regulations are set out in the Student visa guidance as amended from time to time and must be rigorously adhered to in every instance. It should be noted that the Immigration Rules are subject to change at any point in time without notice so applicants should be aware that offers, entry criteria and requirements of them as individuals may have to change to meet amended legislation and/or regulatory requirements. Every effort will be made to notify applicants as quickly as possible should this be necessary.
- 36 Whilst this procedure document is updated regularly, applicants must refer directly to the latest [UKVI guidelines](#). The following paragraphs may help summarise some main points for which the University will need to see documentation:
- Every student needs to demonstrate academic progression between their successive study programmes in the UK. The University will require the previous course documents to be supplied along with any corresponding CAS statement if applicable in order to determine if the academic progression requirement is being met. Previous study outside of the UK may also be taken into consideration to build a holistic picture of a student.
  - Additionally, the University will require all previous visas and CAS and completion certificates/transcripts to build a complete picture of previous UK study history in order to calculate if the student has sufficient time remaining within the 5 year study period allowed at Level 6.
  - If it is deemed necessary by the team assessing an application, permission may be requested from the applicant to contact the Home Office; UKVI to check particular aspects of their UK study history. No application to the Home Office will be made for information for that purpose without the consent of the applicant, but the University may be unable to proceed with an application if consent is withheld. All information received will be used for the purpose of making an admissions decision and retained on the student's records held by the University.
  - The University will also need to see evidence of English Language Proficiency in the form of a UKVI-approved Secure English Language Test (SELT); for example International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Pearson Test of English (PTE) or Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), which in the case of IELTS the University will verify via the IELTS website. Applicants do not need to prove knowledge of English if they have recently completed a qualification equivalent to a UK degree in a UKVI-approved country. Further checks and assessment of English may be carried out in addition to this as outlined in paragraph 46. Required IELTS entry criteria are published on the University website and reviewed regularly.

It is of paramount importance that we assess an applicant's intention and motivation for obtaining a visa for study within the UK as well as for their commitment to studying with us. Personal statements will be considered carefully and an admissions interview undertaken with each applicant prior to a CAS being



issued to help establish an applicant's intent and credibility for study. This is done in addition to any checks / interviews carried out by the course leader for academic purposes or by the Home Office; UKVI during the visa application process.

- 37 The above mentioned points are not an exhaustive list of the checks that the University needs to follow during the assessment of international applications. The University may seek any additional information it deems necessary to ensure that all immigration regulations are being met before an offer is made.
- 38 In certain circumstances, additional information may be sought after an offer has been made (at any point up to enrolment). If it is then deemed that an irregularity has been identified, or if the University is exposed to an unacceptable risk from a visa refusal for that student, the offer will be retracted. Students will be asked to offer consent to allow the University to access interview transcripts and other immigration history information and documentation from the UKVI. Again, where consent is withheld, the University may be unable to proceed with an application.

### **Financial information and refunds**

- 39 All international applicants will be informed of the course fees and payment dates at the point of offer; details will be maintained on the Student Record System by the Admissions Department.
- 40 Prior to a CAS being assigned, all applicants are required to provide evidence that they have access to sufficient funds to pay tuition fees and living expenses during their studies (including for any dependents permitted to enter or remain in the UK by UKVI). A copy of the original recent bank statement will also be required. The Admissions Team (MSRC) in conjunction with the Compliance and Administration team will undertake a series of checks to ensure that the information provided meets the UKVI requirements.
- 41 The University may periodically offer fee discounts, bursaries and scholarships. Please refer to the website for further and current information.
- 42 Detailed information on tuition fees, financial information required and payment schedules can be found summarised in the offer letter, with further details provided in the Financial Guide prepared for and made available to international students. International students will also be required to pay a deposit (unless they are being sponsored, by a sponsor as defined by the Home Office; UKVI); this will be set out in the offer letter.
- 43 Financial obligations on students include the following:
  - Students must pay their fees as per the payment dates on the payment schedule;
  - Failure to pay on due dates may result in the University applying sanctions to the student's account and possibly debt recovery;
  - Students will be given support and payment plans in extenuating circumstances that differ to their payment schedule;
  - Where a student fails to pay and cannot commit to a payment plan, the withdrawal process may commence and once the student is withdrawn the student would be reported to the UKVI;
  - A sponsored student is responsible for ensuring their fees are paid by the sponsor; if the sponsor defaults the student will become liable;

- If a student has made a payment to BNU, regardless of whether they have enrolled or not, the International refund process will apply (as referenced in the Application Terms and Conditions);
- If students are entitled to a refund, they must complete the *refund request form* and return it to Compliance and Administration (MSRC) who will submit to the Finance Directorate on their behalf.

## Assessment and selection

- 44 The University is firmly committed to equal consideration of all complete applications received in the Admissions Department by the published deadlines.
- 45 Each application is considered on an individual basis against the assessment criteria for each course. In addition to the academic qualification requirement, the University will be looking for strong motivation and clear demonstration of both the genuine desire to study and the potential to successfully complete the programme they have chosen. This should be shown, for example, through the personal statement / statement of purpose and presentation of a full application with all required documentation.
- 46 In addition to a student holding the required English Proficiency certificate as outlined in paragraph 36, during the admissions interview, English proficiency will also be verified. The applicant as a result may be asked to sit a further in house English assessment as confirmation of their English level and ability.
- 47 Applicants to particular courses may be invited by the University to attend an academic suitability interview (either in person if they are in the UK or via Skype or similar video-conferencing facility if they are overseas). They may also be invited for an academic suitability interview if they are applying on the basis of work experience or if they have non-standard qualifications.
- 48 Applicants to particular courses may also be required to present a portfolio of work. For those who are unable to attend a face-to-face portfolio assessment this may be done via a website link if available or by sending an e-portfolio. If an e-portfolio is required, it will be listed in the entry requirements on the particular course webpage.
- 49 It may be necessary in certain circumstances to request documentation and letters of work experience and / or academic / employment references. These documents should be submitted at the point of application if requested or at any point during the application process if later required as evidence. By submitting such documents, applicants should be aware that they are giving their consent for the University to approach the issuing authority / employer in order to verify the authenticity.

## Admission

### Offers of admission

- 50 Successful applicants will receive an offer of entry from the University (or via their agent where applicable).
- Offers will be conditional where further documentation is required; deadlines will be supplied as to when these conditions need to be met.
  - Unconditional offers will be confirmed subject to the applicant's acceptance (see below) and summary details given of the process to follow through to enrolment, including payment schedules and information.
- 51 The University will consider all requests to defer the offer of entry to the next intake individually but applicants should note that the conditions, details and costs may change. Further information may be requested to ensure that the student information is fully up to date before a deferred offer is released. Any deferral of studies may result in a fresh visa application being required of a student; see further paragraph 54 below.
- 52 The University cannot defer any conditional offer for more than one year but, should the student still be interested in joining the programme beyond this timeframe, a new application should be submitted for consideration, in case of regulation changes. If the offer is made via UCAS, then all conditions must be met in the same academic period.

### Assigning a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

- 53 The University will assign a CAS no more than six months before the prospective student's start date provided that:
- a All requirements of the UKVI as amended from time to time for issuing CASs are satisfied;
  - b The prospective student's offer is unconditional;
  - c The prospective student has paid their deposit and/or fees as set out in the Offer Letter; and,
  - d The prospective student completes a satisfactory Admissions Interview, carried out by a member of senior admissions staff.
- 54 The University will issue no more than two CASs per student in the event of deferrals and / or visa refusal or unused CASs which are later withdrawn.
- 55 Should a second CAS be required (in the case of a deferral) a nominal fee will be charged. This charge will be detailed in the accompanying documentation and will be notified on the BNU website.

- 56 A second CAS will only be issued on the following terms:
- The visa is refused; visa refusal documents are received by Compliance and Administration (MSRC) and checks are made to ensure the reason(s) for the visa refusal have been addressed;
  - In the event that the visa refusal is either overturned following an administrative review and the UKVI requests the student to provide another CAS;
  - Where the University is shown to be at fault or in error. In these instances, the charge for the second CAS will be waived;
  - Where a student has received a visa refusal for failing to meet the “Genuine Student” requirements, the University will only consider assigning another CAS if the visa refusal is overturned.
- 57 If the University deems (at its discretion) that applicants fail to provide satisfactory evidence that they are or will be genuine students with intention and ability to follow the course of study concerned, the University will not issue a CAS to them.
- 58 A CAS will only be issued and sent directly to the applicant or approved agent.
- 59 The University will also make an assessment based on the applicant’s standard country visa processing time, if it is deemed unlikely that the visa can be processed in time for the course start date, a CAS will not be issued.

## **Disclosure**

- 60 It is the responsibility of all applicants to supply accurate information at the time of application and to disclose anything which may influence an admissions decision.
- 61 Additionally, applicants must disclose all information related to their previous time spent in the UK, particularly information that could affect any future visa application. Failure to disclose information may lead to an offer being retracted.
- 62 Where a student is found or believed to be in possession of fraudulent documentation or otherwise in breach of the terms and conditions of their application, offer or existing visa, the University reserves the right to withdraw its offer of a place (and / or the CAS if applicable) or withdraw the student from the course.
- 63 Where a student is withdrawn under these circumstances any refund of fees will be calculated in accordance with the University’s policies on refunds.
- 64 In the case of Student visa applicants the University has a responsibility to discharge its duties as a Student Sponsor and will report the applicant / offence to the Home Office; UKVI.

## **Communications with applicants**

- 65 By submitting an application form (including on our online application portal or Terms and Conditions declaration where an application has been made through UCAS), the applicant agrees that the information provided on their form can be used by the University for the following purposes:
- To determine the student’s eligibility for entry to the University;
  - To enable BNU to compile statistical reports for the purpose of monitoring, evaluation and the development of strategy;

- To enable BNU to initiate and maintain the relevant student records for the purpose of compliance and maintenance of the student record;
  - To share information as needed with government departments including, but not limited to, the Home Office UKVI, the Police, UK Embassies, local authorities and other bodies in connection with VISA applications, fraud prevention, and to enable them to carry out their statutory functions.
- 66 In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, acceptance of the terms and conditions of application grants the University permission to process the applicant's personal data for the purpose of intended studies and to correspond with any agreed, named or nominated third party to verify, check and obtain evidence relating to the applicant's prior education history or work experience.
- 67 The University recognises the importance of keeping applicants informed and aims to provide effective updates at key points during the admissions process. The main form of communication with applicants will be via email.
- 68 An applicant can expect to receive the following communications from the University as an absolute minimum:
- Acknowledgement of receipt of an application;
  - Request for any additional information deemed necessary along with invitations to interviews etc. if applicable;
  - Confirmation of the offer of entry including any conditions to which this offer is subject;
  - Confirmation of meeting all requirements, referred to as an Unconditional Offer;
  - Copy of CAS statement along with information on preparation for visa applications (if applicable);
  - Joining instructions.
- 69 The University will acknowledge receipt of applications within 2 working days. The University will also make every effort to undertake an initial assessment within 2 to 5 working days. If additional information or documents need to be requested, this may delay the final decision.
- 70 In cases where the application has been made via an agent, all above correspondence will be sent via the agent (with the exception of the issued CAS). The agent will be responsible for passing on all such communication in a timely manner as detailed and outlined in the University's Education Agent Agreement(s).
- 71 The University reserves the right, however, to contact the applicant directly for the purpose of verifying data or information provided on their application form and checking that their motivation to study in the UK is genuine.

### **Discontinued / Changed Programmes**

- 72 The University will make every effort to inform applicants at the earliest opportunity of any significant changes to the content or format of a course after an application has been received.

In advertising a course on the University website, the intention is very much to run that programme at the specified time. However, it occasionally becomes necessary to vary

or withdraw a course. All applicants will be informed and where possible, alternative courses may be offered.

- 73 If payment of deposits has already been received a full refund will be applicable if the student chooses not to move to the alternative course or defer to the next intake of their original course choice.
- 74 The University shall notify UKVI as appropriate of any change of course or discontinuation of study by sponsored students.

## **Data protection**

- 75 Application information and related data will form the basis of the student record for applicants who are subsequently admitted to the University.
- 76 All information held by the University will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 77 Data may be used to provide the Home Office; UKVI with information at their request and in line with the University's Student Sponsor duties. In accepting the University's Terms and Conditions, the applicant / prospective student acknowledges the University's responsibility as their Sponsor to share their personal data with the Home Office; UKVI.
- 78 Anonymised data from each student record will be used for statistical and reporting processes.

## **Appeals and complaints**

- 79 The University is committed to considering all applicants fairly and in line with the International Student Policy.
- 80 Feedback is welcomed at any point in the admissions process but if applicants wish to have a review of their application, this should be requested by email to Compliance and Administration (MSRC) within 10 working days of the University's decision being sent. The request should state clearly the justification for the review and can only be considered if evidence is provided to show that procedural and / or administrative errors have been made.
- 81 Applicants have no right of appeal on academic grounds or against the professional judgement of those making a decision on an application. In all cases a review of an admissions decision does not guarantee its amendment and the University reserves the right to uphold the original admissions decision.
- 82 The University recognises that there may be occasions where applicants wish to make complaints about its admissions process or the service level given by Admissions Team staff. These should be made in writing to the Director of Marketing, Student Recruitment and Communications.

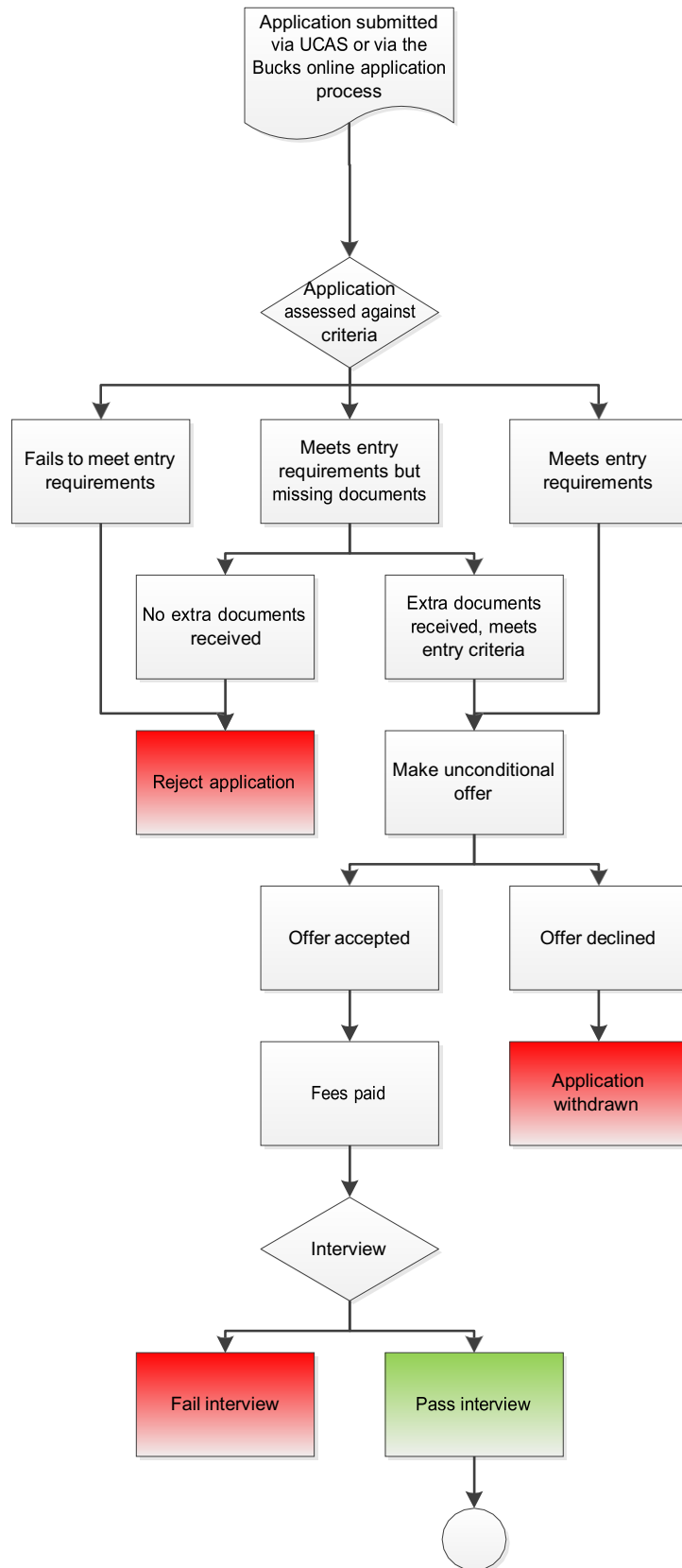
## Further information

- 83 When applicants have received an unconditional offer and the deposit payment has been received (and a CAS sent if applicable), full joining instructions will be sent to the applicant.
- 84 The University publishes full details on the website and prospective students are encouraged to access this information before making their plans for travel to the UK (or within the UK) to enrol.

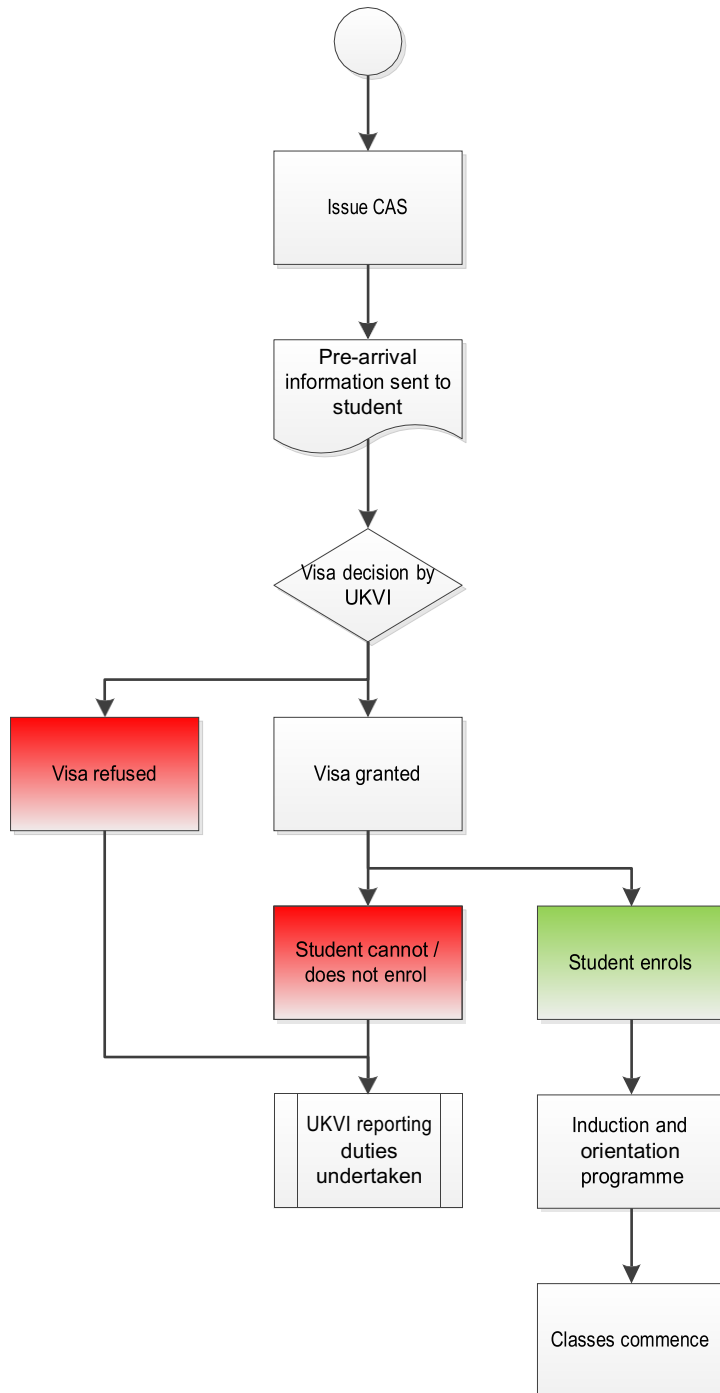
## Review

- 85 This procedure will be reviewed and updated annually by the International Compliance Manager to ensure continued alignment to any legislative changes introduced during the previous academic year.
- 86 This procedure also refers to material on the BNU website. This material will be reviewed on a more regular basis to ensure web-based content remains as accurate and current as possible.
- 87 For the avoidance of doubt, where either this procedure or web-based material is found not to align to UK legislation, these will be superseded by legislative requirements.

## Appendix 1: Issuance of CAS Process Flowchart







## Appendix 2: Abbreviations and Glossary

Abbreviation	Explanation
CAS	Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies
EEA	European Economic Area
Full-time	This includes Foundation, Pre-Sessional, Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Research Degree (i.e. MPhil, PhD) courses
MSRC	Marketing, Student Recruitment and Communications
ENIC / UK ENIC	UK National Information Centre UK ENIC is the designated National Agency responsible for providing information advice and expert opinion on qualifications worldwide
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SELT	Secure English Language Test
Student visa	This refers to Student visa of the Points Based System of the current Home Office <a href="#">Immigration Rules</a> .
UCAS	The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UKVI	UK Visas and Immigration, the department of the Home Office responsible for issuing Student visas and ensuring Sponsors remain compliant.



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