

International Student Support (ISS)

Conditions of Service

Last updated: November 2020

1. Immigration and Advice Service

International Student Support (ISS) provides free, confidential immigration advice and guidance to current and prospective students, graduates and their dependents. This includes:

- Tier 4 & Student Visa extensions
- Tier 4 & Student Visa Entry Clearance applications
- Tier 4 & Student Visa refusals
- Short Term Study & Visit Visa applications
- Doctorate Extension Scheme applications
- Biometric Residence Permit (replacement/lost) applications
- Tier 1 (Graduate) Entrepreneur Visa/Start-up Visa applications
- The EU Settlement Scheme

ISS provides advice in good faith, based on the information you provide at the time. ISS will make every effort to ensure that the advice you receive is accurate and up to date in that moment. Please note that immigration regulations and procedures are subject to change, sometimes at short notice. We cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions arising from your failure to provide us with full information or for decisions made by the Home Office or other agencies.

2. Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) Codes of Standards and Ethics

Immigration advice in the UK is regulated by [OISC](#). OISC provides a [Code of Standards](#), which are followed by all individuals/ organisations that offer immigration advice in the UK. The University of Surrey is permitted to provide immigration advice under ministerial order, as a licensed sponsor. All ISS Advisers offer advice within the procedures of the OISC. Only the designated ISS Advisers outlined in Section 5 of this document are authorised to give immigration advice at the University of Surrey. If your case is beyond our level of training (OISC Level1), ISS will refer you to external qualified professionals listed at the end of this document. In addition to operating under the [OISC Code of Standards](#), the university follows the [UK Council for International Student Affairs \(UKCISA\)/ AISA Code of Ethics](#). University of Surrey is a member of [UKCISA](#).

3. Location

ISS are located on Floor 1 of Senate House on [Stag Hill campus](#).

4. Opening Times

4.1 Appointments

Appointments with an ISS Adviser can be booked from Monday – Friday, 09.30 – 16.00 (later on limited occasions). Appointments can be made in person at the MySurrey Hive or email: hive@surrey.ac.uk.

4.2 Drop-ins

Every Wednesday from 10.00-12.00, ISS run a drop-in session at the MySurrey Hive and online. You do not need an appointment to see an ISS Adviser for a drop-in session in the MySurrey Hive. If you would prefer an online drop-in appointment, [you will need to book this online here](#). During busy times (August – October) drop-in sessions will be limited so students are encouraged to email internationalstudent@support@surrey.ac.uk with their visa/immigration query.

5. Advisers

All ISS Advisers attend UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) training and give advice to Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) Level 1.

5.1 International Student Support Advisers

Tom Pease (International Student Support Team Leader)

Loren McGown (International Student Support Adviser)

Namy Yu (International Student Support Adviser)

Robert Wilson (Money, Housing and International Student Support Adviser)

Maria Luisa Haijima (Student Advice Manager - Money and International)

6. Record Keeping

6.1 Before

Before any immigration or visa advice is given, you will be asked to read and agree to the International Student Support Conditions of Service and Client Care Letter. The ISS Adviser will speak with you to check that you have understood the conditions and answer any questions. If you agree with the statement, you will sign the Client Care Letter and email it to internationalsupport@surrey.ac.uk. This document will be stored on our secure internal records system in accordance with [the University of Surrey Policy and Data Protection Legislation](#).

6.2 During

During your case, an ISS Adviser will make notes on the information you provide and any follow up action required. Notes are stored in our secure internal records system called SID System in accordance with [the University of Surrey Policy and Data Protection Legislation](#).

Examples of data you may share with us:

- Original or copies of bank statements
- Original or copies of your Passport
- Original or a copy of your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

If you provide any hardcopy files, these are locked securely in the ISS back office (located in Senate House, Level 1). BRPs and Passports are also kept and locked in a safe in the ISS back office. If you are collecting a BRP or other documentation, these documents will be passed to the MySurrey Hive Team where they will be held in a locked drawer and cabinet ready for your collection.

6.3 After

Once your case has been closed, your case notes are stored in our secure internal records system called SID System in accordance with [the University of Surrey Policy and Data Protection Legislation](#). Depending on the nature and use of the hardcopy document, these will either:

- Be returned to you
- Disposed of in a confidential waste system
- Locked securely in the ISS back office and destroyed after 7 years

7. Data Protection

ISS operate in accordance with the [Data Protection Legislation](#). This means that ISS ensures personal information is used according to the principles, in a fair manner that protects your rights.

8. Confidentiality

You have the right to confidentiality when accessing ISS for immigration and visa advice. This means that information you give us will not be disclosed to any third party outside the University, unless an exemption below applies.

8.1 Exceptions

There are occasions when confidentiality cannot be adhered to, this includes:

- When you are in immediate physical danger
- When others are in immediate physical danger

- When you have given your consent for ISS to contact another individual/organisation on your behalf and disclose information
- If the information is required by law
- If the information is required by the police
- Meeting Home Office immigration compliance obligations under the Points Based System
- An OISC inspection/investigation

8.2 Consent

In specific circumstances, ISS may encourage you to consent to or pass on information yourself if it is deemed to be beneficial your case. For instance, contacting UKCISA or the Home Office to get a second opinion or further guidance on your case.

8.3 Consent cont.

The ISS Adviser will inform you if it is beneficial to share information with a third party (for example UKCISA or the Home Office). If there is a tight time frame, for example your visa expires on the same day your case needs to be resolved and we do not hear from you to confirm if we can contact the third party (for example, UKCISA or the Home Office), we will share your data unless you have expressly told us not to by signing the Data Sharing Declaration in the Client Care Letter.

8.4 Anonymity

ISS will also ensure you are informed in instances where UKCISA or the Home Office are contacted about your case in an anonymous basis. This would usually be to get further guidance on your case without disclosing your details.

9. Conflict of Interest

The role of the ISS Adviser is to provide immigration advice and also to protect the University's sponsorship license. This means that there may be instances where there is a real or potential conflict of interest.

9.1 Examples of this would be:

Example 1: *A Tier 4 postgraduate student asks an ISS Adviser for visa guidance and at the same time discloses that they have been working over 20 hours a week.*

In this scenario, a Tier 4 postgraduate student who's BRP states a 20-hour working limit would be in breach of their visa conditions. The conflict of interest occurs when the ISS Adviser tries to help the student with the visa application but at the same time knows that they are breaching their visa conditions. In this scenario, as the student disclosed this information, ISS have a duty to report the suspected breach to Visa Compliance.

Example 2: *A Student visa holder is planning on applying for a Start-up Visa and tells an ISS Adviser that they have been selling goods for a profit and have registered the business.*

Student visa holders are prohibited from engaging in any business related activity. The conflict of interest occurs when the ISS Adviser tries to help the student with their visa application but at the same time knows that the student is breaching their visa conditions by engaging in trade and registering the business. In this scenario, as the student disclosed information that they are engaging in business activity, ISS have a duty to report the suspected breach to Visa Compliance.

9.2 Communication

ISS will ensure that instances such as the above are minimised as much as possible. The ISS Adviser will explain if there is a real or potential conflict of interest and you will be given sufficient time to consider whether you wish to seek external immigration advice.

10. Referrals and Withdrawals

ISS Advisers will not advise you if the case requires them to act beyond their level of training or authorisation. An ISS Adviser will inform you immediately if they are unable to continue with your case. An ISS Adviser may also suggest external legal advice if needed.

11. Complaints

Information about the University's complaint handling process can be found on the website of the [Office of Student Complaints, Appeals, and Regulations](#) (OSCAR). If you are an applicant and still have not registered with the University, please visit the [Admissions Complaints Procedure](#).

12. Useful Links/ Contact Details

- **The UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)**

www.ukcisa.org.uk/

UKCISA can give you immigration guidance and advice whilst you study in the UK. They have a free advice line.

T: +4420 7788 9214 (Monday – Friday, 1 -4pm)

- **Immigration Law Practitioner's Association (ILPA)**

www.ilpa.org.uk

If you need external legal assistance, you can use ILPA to search for a solicitor that is right for you.

- **Law Society**

www.lawsociety.org.uk/

The law society regulates legal professionals and has a database which will allow you to search for a lawyer in your area.