

International Student Advice (ISA)

Conditions of Service

Last updated: March 2025

1. Immigration and Advice Service

The International Student Advice (ISA) team provides free, confidential immigration advice and guidance to current and prospective students, graduates, and their dependents. This includes:

- Student visa extensions
- In-country Student visa applications
- Student visa entry clearance applications
- Student dependant visa applications
- Student visa refusals
- Graduate Route applications (Guidance only)
- Short-term Student visa
- Standard Visitor visa applications
- Biometric Residence Permit (replacement/lost) applications
- eVisa
- The EU Settlement Scheme

ISA provides advice in good faith, based on the information you provide at the time. ISA 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. Therefore, 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. Immigration Advice Authority (IAA) Codes of Standards and Ethics

Immigration advice in the UK is regulated by the [Immigration Advice Authority \(IAA\)](#). IAA provides a [Code of Standards](#), which are followed by all individuals/ organizations that offer immigration advice in the UK. The University of Surrey is permitted to provide immigration advice under ministerial order, as a licensed sponsor. Our Advisers offer advice within the procedures of IAA. Only the designated Advisers outlined in [Section 5](#) of this document are authorized to give immigration advice at the University of Surrey. If your case is beyond our level of training (IAA Level 1), ISA will recommend that you contact an external qualified professional listed at the end of this document. In addition to operating under the IAA Code of Standards, the university follows [the UK Council for International Student Affairs \(UKCISA\)/ AISA Code of Ethics](#). The University of Surrey is a member of [UKCISA](#).

3. Location

ISA are located in Level 1, Senate House on Stag Hill campus but hold in person appointments with students in [the MySurrey Hive](#) Room 4.

4. Opening Times

Our Advisers provide coverage from 9:00-17:00 Monday to Friday during both term time and non-term time. ISA are not available during public holidays and the University closure days which are published [here](#).

4.1 Appointments

Online appointments with an Adviser can be booked at available times between Monday – Friday, 10.00am – 12.00pm. In person appointments can be booked at available times from Monday – Friday between 10.00am-12.00pm and 13.00pm-15.00pm. All appointments are subject to the Adviser availability. Appointments can be booked [here](#). Please note that during peak periods of the year (August-October and January-February) appointment availability will be significantly impacted.

4.2 Drop-ins

If you need to see an Adviser for an urgent query (e.g. your visa is expiring soon or you have been asked by UKVI to respond to them urgently), an Adviser may be able to see you in the MySurrey Hive on the same day, but this is subject to their availability. During busy times (August – October and January - February) Adviser availability may be limited. Therefore, students are encouraged to enquire via [Surrey Support](#) with their visa/immigration query and an Adviser will respond as soon as possible.

5. Advisers

Our International Student Advisers attend the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) training and give advice to Immigration Advice Authority Level 1.

5.1 International Student Advisers

Robert Wilson (International Student Advice Manager)

Kwabena Opoku (International Student Adviser)

L Grace (International Student Adviser)

Xiang Li (International Student Adviser)

6. Record Keeping

6.1 Before

Before any immigration advice is given, you will be asked to read and agree to the International Student Advice Conditions of Service and Client Care Letter. An 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 International Student Advice via [Surrey Support](#). 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 Adviser will make notes on the information you provide, and any follow up action required. Notes are stored in our secure internal record system “Surrey Support” in accordance with the University of Surrey [Policy and Data Protection Legislation](#).

Examples of data you may share with us:

- Copies of your bank statements, birth certificate and parents’ consent letters
- Copies of your passport

If you provide any hardcopy files, these are locked securely in the ISA back office (located in Senate House, Level 1). Passports are also kept and locked in a safe in the ISA office. If you are collecting any other documentation, these documents will be passed to the MySurrey Hive team where they will be held in a locked drawer or 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 “Surrey Support” 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 ISA back office for six years, and then securely deleted or destroyed.

7. Data Protection

ISA operate in accordance with the [Data Protection Legislation](#). This means that ISA 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 ISA for immigration and visa advice. This means that the information you give us will not be disclosed to any third party outside the University unless an exception below applies.

8.1 Exceptions

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

- When you are in an immediate physical danger
- When others are in an immediate physical danger
- When you have given your consent for ISA 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 the Home Office immigration compliance obligations under the Points Based System
- An IAA inspection/investigation

8.2 Consent

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

8.3 Consent cont.

Advisers 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

ISA will also ensure you are informed in instances where UKCISA or the Home Office are contacted about your case on 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 Adviser is to provide immigration advice and 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 postgraduate student on a student visa asks an Adviser for visa guidance and at the same time discloses that they have been working over 20 hours a week during term time.*

In this scenario a postgraduate student, whose immigration permission states a 20-hour working limit during term time, would be in breach of their visa conditions. The conflict of interest occurs when the 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, ISA have a duty to report the suspected breach to Immigration Compliance.

Example 2: *A Student visa holder asks an Adviser about their work eligibility after their course end date and at the same time discloses that they occasionally work as a freelance hairdresser.*

Student visa holders are prohibited from being self-employed. The conflict of interest occurs when the Adviser tries to advise the student on working during non-term time but at the same time knows that the student is breaching their visa conditions by being self-employed. In this scenario, as the student disclosed information that they were self-employed, the Adviser has a duty to report the suspected breach to Immigration Compliance.

9.2 Communication

ISA will ensure that instances such as the above are minimised as much as possible. The 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

Advisers will **not** advise you beyond their level of training or authorization. The Adviser will inform you immediately if they are unable to continue with your case. They 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 to Friday (except for public holidays), 1 to 4pm (UK time)

- **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.