



University of
St Andrews

Location of studies

Document type	Policy
Scope (applies to)	All students
Applicability date	31/03/2016
Review / Expiry date	31/07/2027
Approved date	15/01/2025
Approver	Senate Policies
Document owner	Administrative Officer
School / unit	Education and Student Experience
Document status	Published
Information classification	Public
Equality impact assessment	None
Key terms	Academic policies/Learning and teaching/Location of studies
Purpose	This policy relates to the expectation that all students reside at a term address within a commutable distance. The policy excludes Distance Learning students.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.6	Senate approval for policy update prompted by expanding online provision and ScotCOM MBChB	Approved	Administrative Officer Education and Student Experience	January 25

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS
POLICY ON LOCATION OF STUDIES

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University has a duty of care to all students. It must be able to contact all students at any point during their programme of study and hold the current address for all students as well as an historic trail of previous addresses. All students, regardless of mode of attendance, are required to keep their address and contact information up to date on MySaint.
- 1.2 For students requiring a visa to study in the UK, the Home Office has introduced regulations requiring Student Visa Sponsors to hold the current address of study for students as well as an historic trail of previous addresses. The University must be able to show that the address we hold for a student, who has leave to remain in the UK on a Student Visa, is accurate and that where students are not resident in St Andrews in term-time, they have permission to be outwith St Andrews. We must also demonstrate that students can engage appropriately with their studies at this location. Non-compliance with these Home Office regulations could entail a loss of the University's visa sponsor licence and seriously affect the University's ability to admit overseas students. In response to these requirements the University has introduced procedures to monitor where students are located during the course of their studies, as outlined in this policy.

2. Location requirements

2.1 For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- 2.1.1. **Term address:** The address at which a student lives while pursuing academic study. If the term address is a UK address, it must contain a full valid postcode for reporting purposes. This is also known as the student's **location of studies**.
- 2.1.2. **Commutable distance from St Andrews:** A distance from St Andrews permitting students to attend the University during core working hours on a daily basis if required to do so. This is usually understood to be within 75 miles of St Andrews.
- 2.1.3. **Academic purposes:** Activities relating to a student's programme of studies, such as conducting research in another laboratory, accessing libraries, and conducting fieldwork.
- 2.2. The University does not require students i) registered on an online programme of study, or ii) undertaking the online component of a hybrid or blended programme of studies, to reside within a commutable distance from St Andrews. These students must still keep their contact information up-to-date, as per 1.1 above.
- 2.3. The University expects all students i) registered on an in-person programme of study, or ii) undertaking the in-person components of a hybrid or blended programme of study, to reside at a term address within a commutable distance from St Andrews during their programme of studies.
- 2.3.1 All students who require their term address to be outwith the commutable distance from St Andrews for any reason must seek formal approval prior to the commencement of their programme of study, or prior to changing address, following the change of location processes laid out in Sections 3 and 4 below.

- 2.3.2 Formal approval will only be granted on limited grounds, as per Sections 3 and 4 below.
- 2.3.3 Whenever any request is approved, a record of the approval and the student's new address must be placed on the student record maintained by Registry.
- 2.3.4 Senate regulations on attendance continue to apply, even where a student has permission to be away from St Andrews.
- 2.3.5 In cases where it becomes apparent that a student has changed their location for a period exceeding the maximum limits stated in this policy without obtaining permission, this should be referred to the relevant Associate Dean Students or Associate Provost Students and the relevant Registry Officer for consideration.
- 2.4. If a student holds a student visa, they must seek advice from the International Advice Team (advint@st-andrews.ac.uk) on the conditions of their visa before leaving the UK for any reason.
- 2.5. If a student holding a student visa changes their location of studies without seeking or receiving approval, or exceeds the maximum limits stated in this policy, their case will be referred to the Student Immigration Compliance Team.
- 2.6. All PGT and PGR students required to be resident in St Andrews, who are on fieldwork or undertaking a placement outwith the commutable distance from St Andrews as part of their academic studies, must have change of location requests approved via MySaint. Such students should consult the [Guidance on travel and fieldwork risk assessments](#). Additionally, PGR students should consult the [Fieldwork for postgraduate research students](#) policy. All students who are on fieldwork for longer than 28 days must inform Registry of their intended location. A reliable local contact must also be declared on the student's risk assessment form during the process of applying for approval.
- 2.7. There are some programmes, as specified in their programme requirements, during which students must engage in activities (for example, placements) for an extended period of time outwith the commutable distance from St Andrews. For these students and programmes, individual approval of change of location of studies is not required. However, these students are still expected to maintain updated address details on MySaint as per 1.1. above, before changing their location. The Registry Support Officers will liaise with Schools to maintain a list of such programmes. Students will be reminded of these requirements before undertaking any such activities.

3. Change of Location for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate students

- 3.1. **Undergraduate students** who wish their term address to be outwith the commutable distance from St Andrews or plan to be away from their term address for a period of more than two weeks or 10 consecutive academic days during teaching weeks at any time during their programme of study may only request a change of location for academic purposes as defined in Section 2.1.3 above. This requirement does not apply to programmes covered by Section 2.7. Students are expected to reside within commutable distance of St Andrews until they have completed assessment (including examinations) for all modules, or made arrangements for adjustments (such as deferral) to assessment.
- 3.1.1. Before changing their location, students must first seek approval by submitting a change of location request through MySaint.

- 3.1.2. Permission for a change of location of studies can be granted by the Director of Teaching (DoT).
- 3.1.3. Undergraduate students cannot change their location of studies for non-academic purposes.
- 3.2. **Taught postgraduate (PGT) students** who wish their term address to be outwith the commutable distance from St Andrews, or who plan to be away from their term address for academic reasons for a period of more than two weeks or 10 consecutive academic days during teaching weeks and/or during the summer period, may request a change of location for **academic purposes** as defined in Section 2.1.3. above.
- 3.2.1. Before changing their location, students must first seek approval by submitting a change of location request through MySaint.
- 3.2.2. PGT students in the dissertation/project stage should seek advice from their supervisor before submitting a request for formal approval. Permission for a change of location of studies for academic purposes can be granted by the Director of Postgraduate Taught Studies (DoPGT). Supervisors cannot approve such requests.
- 3.2.3. PGT students are expected to remain within a commutable distance of St Andrews during the summer dissertation period unless they have received approval to be away for academic purposes. Student visa holders should be aware that they will not be permitted to study remotely during the dissertation period, notwithstanding the permissibility, for all students, of changing locations for academic purposes as in 3.2 above
- 3.2.4. Under exceptional circumstances, PGT students who do not hold a student visa may be permitted to reside outwith the commutable distance from St Andrews for **non-academic purposes**. In such cases, students must first seek the support of their School and agree mechanisms for continued academic support before submitting a change of location request via MySaint as in 3.2.1. above. The School cannot approve requests. Requests will be considered by the Registry Student Support Officer, who has delegated authority from the Associate Provost Students to approve requests, and who will offer the student advice in consultation with Student Services and the Student Immigration Compliance Team where applicable. Complex cases will be referred to the Associate Provost Students. Student visa holders should note that the University is unlikely to be able to support such requests for non-academic purposes due to UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) requirements (see 3.2.6).
- 3.2.5. If permission to reside outwith the commutable distance is granted, an agreed mechanism for continued academic support must be in place, together with an approved study plan, agreed between the student and supervisor, giving key dates for supervision and production of assessed work, including the dissertation. Any further change to the student's location requires an additional change of location request.
- 3.2.6. Student visa-holders should be aware that if a change of location is approved for *non-academic* reasons, the University may be required to withdraw visa sponsorship to comply with UK Visa and immigration (UKVI) requirements. Student visa-holders considering a change of location should seek advice on the immigration implications of any change prior to requesting it, by contacting the International Advice Team (advint@st-andrews.ac.uk).

4. Change of Location for Postgraduate research students

- 4.1. Postgraduate research students** who wish their term address to be outwith the commutable distance from St Andrews must seek approval prior to changing location. The approval process differs depending on the period the student will be away, as per 4.2 and 4.3 below. This does not apply to PGR students who are undertaking study on an online or distance-learning basis, as in 2.2 above.
- 4.2. PGR students who will be away from their term address for more than 5 consecutive working days and up to 28 days (including weekends), should inform their supervisor and School as a matter of routine. The period of absence from the term address can be extended to 38 days if this includes the University closure period during the Christmas vacation. Students do not need to submit a change of location request via MySaint in these instances. This applies to both academic and non-academic purposes.
- 4.3. PGR students who will be away from their term address for longer than a period of 28 consecutive days (including weekends), or more than 38 consecutive days when the University is closed during the Christmas vacation period, must submit a change of location request through MySaint. This applies to both academic and non-academic purposes. For academic change of location, see section 2.6. For non-academic change of location including annual leave, see section 4.5.
- 4.3.1. The change of location request must be approved by the DoPGR and ratified by the Registry Student Support Officer.
- 4.3.2. The Registry Student Support Officer will offer advice to students in consultation with Student Services and the Student Immigration Compliance Team where applicable. Complex cases will be referred to the Associate Provost Students.
- 4.4 If an applicant PGR student wishes to study their entire programme via distance learning (i.e. at a location outwith the commutable distance from St Andrews), a case must be made in writing by the School's DoPGR to the Associate Provost Students at an early stage of the application process to establish whether this is viable. Students granted such permission will be treated as online students, as per Section 2.2 of this policy, and will not be required to request further changes of location.
- 4.5. PGR students who wish to take annual leave are permitted to take up to 37 days of annual leave per year as outlined in the [PGR Length of Study policy](#).
- 4.5.1. Student visa holders taking approved annual leave within this allowance will be taking their leave within the bounds of UKVI requirements and their student visa will not be affected.
- 4.5.2. Students should always check and discuss their annual leave plans with their supervisor and/or DoPGR. If the planned annual leave is for more than 28 days consecutively (or more than 38 days consecutively during the University closure and Christmas vacation period), a change of location request must be submitted and approved prior to the start of the period of leave.
- 4.5.3. Remote study will not be permitted during a period of annual leave.

5. Additional guidance on requesting a change of location

- 5.1. Students at all levels of study can find further guidance on requesting a change of location at: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/academic/changelocation/>

Registry Student Support Officer Contacts:
 Undergraduate & Taught Postgraduate
 Research Postgraduate

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Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	Revision to UG and PGT section	Updated	-	March 2019
1.1	Changes to titles/contact details to reflect decanal restructuring	Updated		February 2021
1.2	Changes to Associate Provost title		Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	August 2021
1.3	Clarification of rules regarding PGR students studying remotely	Approved	Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	05/01/2023
1.4	Updated following ESGM approval – clarifying existing practices to make it clearer	Approved	Administrative Officer Education and Student Experience	July 2024
1.5	Minor amendment section 3 change of 'outside' to 'during'	Updated	Administrative Officer Education and Student Experience	Sep 24
1.6	Senate approval for policy update prompted by expanding online provision and ScotCOM MBChB	Approved	Administrative Officer Education and Student Experience	January 25