

# Visa Advice Service

## CODE OF PRACTICE

The Visa Advice Service is delivered by the University's Visa and Immigration Officer, or, in his/her absence, a member of the Immigration Compliance Team.

Advice can be given on the following: submitting visa applications (both inside and outside UK), complying with the conditions of your visa, registering with the police, inviting family members to visit, travelling to other countries, taking paid work during/after studies.

The Visa and Immigration Officer is ordinarily available at the following times:

- By appointment Monday to Friday, 9:00am – 12 noon / 1:00pm – 5:00pm, in CW011, Cornerways, Park Campus
- By drop-in each afternoon between 1pm and 4:30pm, in CW011
- By phone everyday 9:00am – 4:30pm (Tel: 01242 714518)
- By email: [immigration@glos.ac.uk](mailto:immigration@glos.ac.uk)

### Advice Disclaimer

All advice is offered in good faith, based on information that you provide about your current situation. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the advice given is accurate, the requirements relating to visas are complex and change frequently, often at short notice. We cannot therefore accept responsibility for any errors or omissions in information or advice given, for consequences arising from the use of our advice, nor for decisions made by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

### Referrals

The Adviser must advise within the limits of his/her competence and/or authority. If the Adviser considers that your case requires advice or guidance that exceeds these limits, you will be referred to an appropriately qualified professional, either internal or external to the University.

### Conflict of Interest

The Adviser must not act where there is a real or potential conflict of interest between them and the student. The Adviser must explain fully and clearly any circumstances in which they might have any personal interest or advantage in acting for the student and, if necessary, make a referral to another member of staff or appropriately qualified professional.

### Equal Opportunities

The University is committed to providing a service where equality of opportunity is a reality for all students. We aim to ensure that no student receives unfair or unlawful treatment due to race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or age.

### Record Keeping

During your appointment the Adviser may make notes on your enquiry and the information and advice he/she provides. After the appointment, the Adviser should send you an email confirming what was discussed and detailing any advice that may have been given. The Adviser should also create a written record of what was discussed and store this securely.

### Data Protection and Confidentiality

The Visa Advice Service operates in accordance with data protection legislation, which aims to ensure that personal information is used in a way that is fair to individuals and protects their rights. You have the right to confidentiality, meaning that any information received will not be disclosed to anyone outside the Immigration Compliance Team without your express permission. The only exceptions to this are:

- If you or others are in immediate physical danger
- If the provision of such information is required by law, e.g. to comply with Tier 4 Sponsor obligations

We may decide it is in your best interest to contact an external organisation, such as UKVI or the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA), for further advice or opinions. Whenever possible, we will advise you if we intend to do this. However, there may be occasions when this is not practical, and in these circumstances we would act under the assumption that, by coming to us for help, you are allowing us to resolve your situation the most effective way we can.

Please note that, although Immigration Compliance Team members work in an open-plan office environment, there are enclosed office spaces available for private discussion. If you wish to discuss matters in private, please mention this to your Adviser either at the start of your appointment or when booking your appointment, and appropriate arrangements will be made.

## The Regulation of Immigration Advice and Codes of Standards and Ethics

The provision of immigration advice is regulated by the [Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner](#) (OISC) which provides a [Code of Standards and Rules](#). These documents set out the principles and standards with which immigration professionals must comply. The University is authorised to provide immigration advice and services by the OISC.

The University is a member of the [UK Council for International Student Affairs](#) (UKCISA), subscribes to the Association of International Student Advisers (AISA), and operates in accordance with the [UKCISA/AISA Code of Ethics](#).

Only members of the Immigration Compliance Team are qualified and authorised to give visa advice at the University of Gloucestershire. Where the level of immigration advice required is beyond this team's scope you will be referred to an appropriately qualified legal professional. Contact details of some of the relevant organisations can be found at the bottom of this page.

## Feedback

We welcome your feedback and invite suggestions for how we might improve and develop the service we provide. The most effective way to submit feedback is via our [on-line questionnaire](#), but we are also happy to receive comments by email, in writing or in person.

## Complaints

If you have a complaint regarding our service, please let us know and we will do our best to resolve the matter swiftly and informally.

If you are still unhappy, you can submit a formal complaint using the University's [Complaints Procedure](#).

If you still remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you are entitled to contact the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) (OIA). Please be aware that the OIA will only consider cases once the University's own internal complaints and appeals procedures have been exhausted.

If your complaint is specific to a piece of visa advice you have been given, please note that you can make a complaint to the OISC irrespective of whether or not you have made a complaint to the University. Details of how to do this can be downloaded from [here](#).

## Useful Contacts

- [UK Council for International Student Affairs \(UKCISA\)](#): This is a national organisation which gives advice to international students studying in the UK. They have information sheets which can be downloaded from their website. They also operate a free student advice line.

www.ukcisa.org.uk

Tel: 0207 107 9922 between 1pm and 4pm Mon-Fri

- [Immigration Law Practitioners' Association \(ILPA\)](#)\*: Legal professionals who specialise in immigration law are often members of this association. You can search their database for a local solicitor who specialises in the area for which you require assistance.

www.ilpa.org.uk

Tel: 0207 251 8383

- [The Law Society](#)\*: This is the professional association which regulates the legal profession and all reputable solicitors are members. You can search their database for an immigration law solicitor in your area.

www.lawsociety.org.uk

Tel: 0870 606 2555

\*Remember to check the fee a solicitor will charge you before you book a consultation.