

Client Care Statement

Our Policy

The University is committed to providing a first class international student advice and support service.

What you can expect from the University:

- a service that is professional, respectful, courteous and accessible, taking into account your individual needs and circumstances;
- we will do our best to achieve the very best results for you but we will be realistic about your chances of success;
- we will always treat you fairly, be open and honest and act with integrity;
- our advice will be clear and concise and any legal terms will be clearly explained to you;
- we take our instructions from you; and
- you will not be charged our advice and support services

What we expect from you:

- to provide us with accurate and relevant information;
- in the event of a change in circumstance, to inform us as soon as is reasonably practical;
- to attend appointments you make on time and/or to let us know if you are unable to attend an appointment or if you are running late; and
- to follow any action points or instructions that we agree with you in the course of our discussions and/or advice.

Although we strive to offer a full service, the University may need to prioritise certain areas of advice during its busy periods. During these times the University will advise you how to seek external advice from an appropriately qualified professional instead.

The International Student Advice Service

The university is only able to provide advice and support services to those who are current or prospective Aston University students. A student is an individual who forms a relationship with the University for the purposes of study.

The University is able to provide immigration advice and support services and those taking part in the University's student or graduate visa schemes. This includes the Doctorate Extension Scheme and Graduate Entrepreneur Scheme.

The University offers advice and support to students with their first work related immigration application for up to three years after completion of their main course of study at the University. The University also offers immigration advice and assistance to those involved in Aston University's student or graduate visa schemes with their next work related immigration application following their sponsorship by Aston University.

The University does not provide immigration advice and services to University staff members.

The University is able to use a variety of means to provide advice and support services including email, telephone, skype and face to face appointments. The University aims to respond promptly to letters, calls and emails to our office about but an immediate reply is not always possible during busy times.

The University will take great care with any original documents which it is given to send to the Home Office. The University will provide you with copies of any such documents as soon as it is reasonably possible to do so. The original documents will be returned to you once they have been received by the University.

The University will keep you informed of the progress of your case and will contact you within 3 working days to notify of the outcome of your case or when any new information about your case becomes available. The University retains full responsibility for any work that is undertaken on your behalf.

The International Student Advice service is part of International Student Services at Aston University. The International Student Services team at Aston University also includes the Student Experience team and the Visa Compliance Team. During busy periods, staff in the International Student Advice Service may undertake tasks and responsibilities to help out other International Student Services colleagues. International Student Services is part of the Student and Academic Services department.

Contact

The University's office hours for international student advice are 9.30am until 5pm Monday to Friday during Undergraduate Term times and 10am until 4pm during Undergraduate vacation periods. You can access the international student advice service in person by visiting The Hub reception desk on the Ground Floor of the Main Building.

You can contact us by email at astoninternational@aston.ac.uk. You can call us 0121 204 4567 or through The Hub reception on 0121 204 4007. We will aim to deal with most queries within 2 working days but it may take us longer in our busy periods. If we expect it to take longer than 2 working days to deal with your query, we will advise you of this when you contact us.

Instruction Form

The University cannot offer you individual advice or assistance if you have not completed our online Instruction Form in relation to your current case. You can terminate your instruction for us to advise and assist you with your case at any time by sending an email to the International Student Advice Team at astoninternational@aston.ac.uk.

Client Care Letter

Once the University has received a completed instruction to act form, the University will provide you with a Client Care Letter. The purpose of the Client Care Letter is to provide you with full details of your instructions, advice given, any follow up work which has been agreed (if applicable) and timescales. You must review the contents of the Client Care Letter carefully before agreeing to its content and confirming this to the University. The University will undertake no further work until the Client Care Letter has been agreed. You will also receive a checklist of the documents required for visa applications.

Withdrawing the International Advice and Support Service

The University will not withdraw its advice or services without good reason. In the event that it does need to withdraw our services, you will be contacted with written reasons as to why this is the case. The University will provide you with at least 3 working days' notice and will provide you with information about how to get alternative advice and support from an external specialist instead.

The University will also inform any other parties involved in your case that we are no longer advising and assisting you.

Queries outside our area of expertise

The University offers advice and services relating to the UK immigration laws as they affect our students. If your query relates to an area of law that is outside the University's area of expertise or regular practice you may be required to seek alternative advice and support from an external specialist instead. We may also signpost other Aston University services such as counselling or the disability team as appropriate.

Confidentiality

All information provided to the University will be treated as confidential. The circle of confidentiality for the International student Advice service includes other staff within the International Student Services. The University cannot and will not discuss the circumstances of your case with anyone else (including parents, friends and agents) unless it has your express permission in writing to do so. If you have signed a form to give the University permission to share information about your study at Aston with an agent or a financial sponsor, this will be limited to University processes and procedures such as issuing an Offer or arranging a CAS number.

The University will only discuss your personal circumstances and the nature of your case with others:

- when you have given your express permission for the University to disclose information to an individual or organisation; and/or
- if it is necessary to discuss your situation with colleagues in the Visa Compliance Team or other university staff to help resolve your query; and/or
- there is reason to believe that your safety or wellbeing, or that of others, are at serious risk; and/or
- if the provision of such information is required by law and/or;
- if there is any risk to the University's Sponsor licence.

The University will always advise you if it intends to contact an external organisation (for example, UKCISA or the UK Home Office) in relation to your case and your personal details or information about your case will be provided.

To help protect confidentiality, your advice will be delivered in a private space.

University Policies and Regulations

The University will comply with its published policies and regulations as amended from time to time. These include its policies on Data Protection, the Complaints Procedure and Equality and Diversity. All policies can be found on the University website.

Record Keeping

By signing the Instruction Form you consent, to your personal details being used and stored by the University for the purposes of the advice and support sought. The University will not keep information and documentation relating your case for longer than is necessary and will normally destroy information relating to closed cases after a period of 6 years.

Conflicts of interest

The University may not offer advice or services where there is a real or potential conflict of interest between them and our clients. In the event of such circumstances arising, the University will explain to you, in writing, the nature of the potential interest or advantage. You will be given sufficient time to consider this information. The University may not continue to act for you until consent is provided in writing to the University. The University may need to refer you to a different team member as a result or will provide you with information about how to get alternative advice and support from an external appropriately qualified professional instead.

Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner

The provision of immigration advice is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner. The University is authorised to provide immigration advice and services by an order made under section 84(4)(d) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (Part V Exemption: Educational Institutions and Health Sector Bodies) Order 2001 (Statutory Instrument 2001 No. P403)). The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner may view your file as part of their regulatory role.

Complaints

Aston University is committed to a partnership approach in its dealings with students through open and transparent communication, by providing clear information and ensuring that all processes are fair.

If you feel dissatisfied with the service provided, please follow the University's complaint procedure which can be found on the University website.

If your complaint relates to immigration advice, you have a right to complain to the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner.

Feedback

The University welcomes your feedback on the services provided. Feedback can be provided anonymously in writing using the feedback box on The Hub reception desk, or, by email at feedback@aston.ac.uk

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