Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme Policy

1. Purpose

This document sets out the University’s policy regarding its sponsorship under the Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES).

2. Sponsoring students on the Doctorate Extension Scheme

2.1 The University will sponsor doctorate graduates under the DES only in situations where the University is satisfied the student is eligible for the DES and intends to find work, set up as an entrepreneur or gain practical work experience in their field.

2.2 Any student requesting sponsorship under the DES must apply to the University Tier 4 Compliance Team by completing the Doctorate Extension Scheme CAS Request Form and provide their original passport and current valid visa.

2.3 Requests for sponsorship under DES will be considered on an individual basis and the University reserves the right to refuse sponsorship in certain situations including, but not limited to, the following:

- The student has outstanding debts to the University
- The student has a history of prior visa refusals
- The student has had poor engagement throughout their doctorate
- The University is aware of information that could result in the student’s visa application being refused, for example insufficient maintenance funds
- The student is in breach of their current visa conditions
- The University believes a student is not acting honestly

2.4 In the event a student’s current Tier 4 leave expires before their course completion date and the University does not require the student’s continued attendance, the University will not issue a CAS to extend their existing leave if the University cannot meet its sponsorship duties with respect to the student.

2.5 For quality assurance measures and to ensure the University is able to meet its record keeping duties in accordance with section 5.1 of this policy, all applications made for leave under the DES must be made through the Student Batch Scheme operated by the University’s International Advice team.

3. Monitoring

3.1 The University will contact students three times throughout the duration of sponsorship (12 month period). Contact points with the student will occur approximately every 3 months.

3.2 The contact points with the student can include in person meeting, Skype / Facetime interview, phone conversation or contact by email. Each contact point with the student will be recorded in the student’s file whether by paper or electronically.

3.3 If a student misses a contact point the University will make a further two attempts to contact the student within a reasonable amount of time. If the student cannot provide a reasonable explanation for missing the contact point or the University is unable to re-establish contact with the student then the University reserves the right to withdraw sponsorship.

3.4 At the end of the period of sponsorship students will be expected to complete a review form. The review form will be used by the University to assess the success of the scheme. This will only apply to students who have leave under DES for the entire 12 months and to students who voluntarily leave the scheme. Any students who no longer
have leave under the DES because they have been reported to the Home Office or whose visa has been curtailed will not be asked to complete the review form.

4. **Withdrawing sponsorship**

4.1 When the University initially sponsors a student on the DES it does so with the intent to sponsor the student for the duration of the 12 month period that is allowed. However, the University reserves the right to withdraw sponsorship at any time should it become aware the student is in breach of the terms and conditions of their visa or if the University has evidence that the student has not disclosed all relevant information at the time of issuing the CAS or has not acted honestly or in good faith.

4.2 Students are expected to fully cooperate with the University. Any student who hinders the University's ability to comply with its record keeping and reporting duties under Tier 4 Sponsor Guidance, or puts the University's Tier 4 Sponsor Licence at risk, will have their sponsorship withdrawn.

4.3 The University may withdraw sponsorship if it has made a report to the Home Office in accordance with Section 6 of this policy.

5. **Record keeping**

5.1 The University will take copies of a student's passport as well as the Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) or immigration status document to keep on the Document Management System.

5.2 The University will keep a record of the contact points with the student in accordance with Section 3 of this policy.

6. **Reporting students to Home Office**

6.1 The University will report a student to the Home Office in accordance with the Immigration Rules, Tier 4 Sponsor Guidance and any other guidance received from the Home Office.

6.2 The reports to the Home Office will be made by the Tier 4 Compliance team using the Sponsorship Management System (SMS) unless a situation arises where a report must be made by email to the Home Office.

6.3 The University will report to the Home Office as required until the student has successfully completed their doctorate.

6.4 The University will report to the Home Office that a student has completed their PhD to the standard for the award of a PhD along with the date of completion. This only applies to students who have made an application for leave under the DES.

6.5 The University will report to the Home Office that a student has completed their PhD earlier than expected if the student completes their award before the expected end date stated on the CAS. This would be after the student has submitted a DES Tier 4 visa application.

6.6 Students are expected to have at least three contact points with the University throughout the duration of the period sponsored on the DES. If a student misses a contact point without reasonable explanation and the University subsequently are unable to regain contact with the student then the Tier 4 Compliance team will withdraw sponsorship and report the visa to the Home Office for curtailment in accordance with Section 3.3 of this policy.

6.7 If a student informs the University they are permanently leaving the UK then the University will report the student's visa to the Home Office for curtailment in accordance with Section 4 of this policy.

6.8 If the University becomes aware that the student is breaching the terms and conditions of their visa then the University will inform the Home Office of this.
6.9 The University will make a report to the Home Office using the Sponsorship Management System if it withdraws sponsorship of a visa.

6.9 All reports to the Home Office will be made within 10 days that the University becomes aware of an issue that would result in a report being made.

7. **Policy Review**

   This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the University remains compliant with the Tier 4 Sponsor Guidance and Immigration Rules.