



International Student Visa Advice Team – Confidentiality Policy

ISVAT works within a strict code of confidentiality as outlined in the Data Protection Act 1998 and following the Office of the Immigration Service Commissioner (OISC) code of standards. LSE is a member of the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) and ISIS subscribes to the UKCISA / AISA Code of Ethics.



We are regulated to give immigration advice under OISC guidelines. The OISC (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner) is an independent organisation that monitors immigration advice and services. We attend regular training to be able to do this.

Any information about you is kept confidential to the service. ISVAT consists of:

- International Student Visa Advice Manager: Bethan Owens
- Senior International Student Visa Adviser: Laura Dyson

Location

ISVAT is located within an open plan office in the Student Services Centre (SSC). The SSC consists of the following:

- Advice, Communications and Operations team
- Financial Support Office
- Registry
- Assessment and Regulations Team

If you use our service in person, other members of the SSC may be aware that you have contacted ISVAT. If you attend our drop-in service in the SSC reception it is an open public space. We can also offer individual appointments in a private room within the SSC if you need to discuss personal or private details about your situation.

Anything discussed in our meetings, all records of advice and communication with you remains confidential within ISVAT but please note the exceptions.

When we will disclose information about you

We will only share information about you in the following circumstances:

1. you have given your explicit verbal or written consent; or
2. where we are required to do so by law and where failure to do so would lead to civil or criminal court procedures - this includes any situation which may impact on the LSE Tier 4 licence or Tier 2 licence; or
3. when we believe you or someone else may be in danger.
4. When the Home Office or an embassy contact us regarding your immigration status.

We will always seek your consent. However, there may be circumstances in cases two, three and four where we may need to raise your case as a Tier 4 sponsor and for safety purposes.

Liaison and correspondence

We may need to communicate with someone outside our team – for example staff in your academic department. Before we do this, we will agree what information we will share and will offer you the chance to approve any written information or communication before we send it, if this is necessary.

Consultation

ISVAT staff may discuss your case together. If we need to contact an external agency regarding your case, for example UKCISA, we will not identify you by name.

Record Keeping and Data Protection

OISC rules state we must keep a record of any immigration advice that we give you. Electronic records are stored within areas with restricted access. This includes all e-mail advice. Casenotes are kept securely with access restricted to ISVAT. After seven years they are securely destroyed.

Under the Data Protection Act, you have the right to see notes that we keep about you. If your notes contain references to other people, this information will not be available to you. If you want to see your file, please ask a member of ISVAT staff and allow at least one week's notice.

Statistics

We keep records of students who use our service. These details are used anonymously in any reports.

Gifts

Immigration Advice is provided free of charge. We can only accept gifts of nominal value, when there is no intention to influence our conduct. Gifts to staff are recorded in-line with institutional policy. A list of names and gifts are sent annually to the LSE Academic Registrar. No other information about you or your case is disclosed.