

Bath Spa University Protocol for Managing and Monitoring the Use of Recruitment Agents by Educational Partners

1. Purpose and Scope

This protocol outlines the procedures and responsibilities for managing and monitoring the use of recruitment agents by Bath Spa University's Educational Partners. The aim is to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, maintain ethical recruitment practices, and safeguard the integrity and reputation of the University.

This protocol applies to all of Bath Spa's Educational Partners.

2. Policy on use of Recruitment Agents

2.1 Agent Selection and Approval

Educational Partners should select recruitment agents based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with Bath Spa University's values and ethical standards. We expect agents to be reliable, professional and trustworthy providers of advice and support to students.
- Proven track record of compliant and transparent recruitment practices.
- Understanding of the regulatory requirements in both the UK and the agent's operating region (if relevant).

The approval process should meet the same level of diligence as if the agent had been recruited by Bath Spa University, including:

- Reviewing agent credentials (e.g., licenses, certifications, references).
- Confirming adherence to legal, ethical, and operational standards.

2.2 Recruitment Agent Contracts

Each agent must sign a written contract with the Educational Partner, which must include:

- A clause requiring compliance with all relevant regulations, including data protection laws.
- Clear terms on fees and commissions to prevent the exploitation of students.
- Responsibilities for maintaining high standards of conduct and ethical recruitment.
- Monitoring of agent activities and circumstances when the contract would be terminated or renewed.

3. Communication and Training

3.1 Training for Educational Partners and Agents

Bath Spa University will provide annual training for all Educational Partners and their recruitment agents. The training will cover:

- The University and its region, courses, entry requirements etc.
- Compliance with UK and international recruitment regulations.
- Ethical recruitment practices and University policies.
- Understanding of safeguarding protocols and the University's expectations.
- Use of University marketing and recruitment materials and branding

Educational Partners must ensure that agents attend and complete all relevant training.

3.2 Communication Channels

Clear communication channels will be maintained between Bath Spa University and its Educational Partners, ensuring that any concerns related to recruitment are promptly addressed. Educational Partners must notify Bath Spa University of any significant issues with agents immediately.

4. Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

4.1 Regular Reporting

Educational Partners must review agent performance and submit quarterly reports to Bath Spa University on the following:

- The recruitment agents used and their locations.
- The number of students recruited via each agent, with detailed demographic information (subject to data protection).
- A summary of recruitment practices, including any challenges or issues encountered.

4.2 Evaluation of Agent Performance

Bath Spa University will also conduct an annual performance review of all recruitment agents used by Educational Partners. This review will assess:

- A sample of admitted students to ensure that all admissions policies were correctly followed and the students met admissions requirements.
- The overall quality of all students recruited, including retention rates and academic success.
- Compliance with Bath Spa University's recruitment standards and ethical guidelines.
- Any complaints or feedback received from students or other stakeholders.

It will therefore be necessary to report which agent was involved in the recruitment of individual students.

Based on the evaluation, Bath Spa University reserves the right to require the Educational Partner to suspend or terminate relationships with underperforming agents or any negligence, incompetence or any other activity likely to bring the University into disrepute.

4.3 Auditing

Bath Spa University will periodically audit the recruitment activities of Educational Partners to ensure full compliance with this protocol. This may involve site visits, document reviews, reviews of marketing and recruitment materials, and/or interviews with recruited students.

5. Compliance with Regulatory Requirements

5.1 Legal Compliance

Educational Partners must ensure that all recruitment agents comply with relevant UK regulations, including the Office for Students (OFS), Consumer Protection Legislation and UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) guidelines. Agents must also adhere to international regulations where applicable, particularly in regard to student visas and immigration laws.

5.2 Ethical Standards

Bath Spa University is committed to ethical recruitment. Recruitment agents **must maintain the highest standards of ethical business practices, including:**

- Providing prospective students with information about the University and course which is objective, clear and accurate - in line with consumer protection legislation – including the subcontracted nature of the course.
- Target in promotion and recruitment activities only students who have the potential to meet academic, language and other entry requirements.
- Target only those students who have a genuine interest in completing the course of study. Any concerns about fraud or inappropriate use of funds should be reported to the Educational Partner immediately.

Recruitment agents **must not engage in any unethical or inappropriate recruitment practices, including:**

- Providing false or misleading information to prospective students about the course and provider.
- Engaging in deceptive practices, including charging excessive fees, misrepresenting academic courses.
- Supporting the applicant with elements of the admissions process which should be completed by the applicant themselves, such as admissions tests, essays and supporting statements, interviews, English Language tests etc.
- Making promises regarding visas, employment, or other matters beyond the University's control.
- Engaging in high-pressure sales tactics.

Educational Partners are responsible for ensuring that agents are properly briefed on these expectations and must take corrective action if any unethical behaviour is detected.

6. Risk Management and Safeguarding

6.1 Risk Assessment

Educational Partners must conduct a risk assessment of any new recruitment agents, identifying potential reputational, financial, or operational risks.

6.2 Safeguarding Protocols

Bath Spa University requires that recruitment agents adhere to safeguarding practices, especially when recruiting minors or students from vulnerable backgrounds. Agents must be trained in recognising and responding to safeguarding issues. Any safeguarding concerns raised by agents must be immediately reported to the appropriate University authorities for investigation.

7. Transparency and Accountability

7.1 Transparency

Educational Partners must disclose to prospective students the use of recruitment agents, including the names and locations of agents, on all public-facing platforms (e.g., website, brochures, and promotional materials).

7.2 Accountability Framework

Educational Partners are accountable for the actions of their recruitment agents. If an agent is found to be in violation of the University's recruitment policies, the Educational Partner will be required to take immediate corrective action, which may include terminating the relationship with the agent or implementing additional oversight.

8. Review and Continuous Improvement

8.1 Regular Review of Protocols

This protocol will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains aligned with current regulations, industry standards, and best practices. Feedback from Educational Partners and recruitment agents will be incorporated into these reviews to facilitate continuous improvement.

8.2 Feedback Mechanism

Bath Spa University will establish a feedback mechanism for students recruited through agents. This feedback will be reviewed to identify areas for improvement in the recruitment process, and any issues raised will be investigated and addressed by the University.