



# Applying for a UK Tier 4 Student visa



UK Visas  
& Immigration



**WELCOME  
TO  
GREAT**

BRITAIN & NORTHERN IRELAND



*The UK recognises the important contribution international students make, and welcomes those who wish to study at our world-class institutions. This leaflet is designed to provide you with some information about the Tier 4 visa routes for those wishing to study in the UK. It also provides information on the routes for short-term study.*

*Visit [www.gov.uk/visas-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration) for detailed and up to date guidance before proceeding with your application.*

## Tier 4 and Short-term student visas

There are two categories under Tier 4:



**Tier 4 (General)** - This category is for students coming to the UK for post-16 education. A Tier 4 (General) student must be at least 16 years old



**Tier 4 (Child)** - This category is for children between 4 and 17 years old coming to the UK for their education. This route can only be used by those studying at independent schools

We also offer short-term study visas for courses that last six months or less (or 11 months if you are studying English language and are aged 18 or over). [www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa/overview](http://www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa/overview).

Non-EEA students who apply to come to the UK to study for longer than 6 months will be required to pay a health surcharge. This costs £150 for students for each period of 12 months that you are allowed to stay in the UK. For guidance visit [www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application](http://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application).

Please refer to our website for more information [www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa](http://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa) and [www.gov.uk/child-study-visa](http://www.gov.uk/child-study-visa).

## What do I need to apply for a Tier 4 student visa from overseas?

You will need:

- **A Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)** – This is completed online by your Tier 4 sponsor (the institution that has offered you a place on a course of study) and contains details about you, your course, qualifications and confirmation of your English language skills. Your sponsor will give you a unique CAS reference number which you will need to make your application.
- **Finance** – You must provide evidence (for example: an original bank statement) showing us that you have enough money to pay for your course fees for the first year and your living costs for each month of your course up to a maximum of 9 months.
- **English language requirement** – If you are a Tier 4 (General) student you will need to show that you have a good level of English. The level of English language proficiency you need will depend on the course you are applying for. You may also need to provide a Secure English Language Test as evidence of your English language ability with your application.
- **Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate** – You will need an ATAS certificate if you intend to undertake studies in designated science and technical subjects. Please check the ATAS guidance at [www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme) for more information.
- **Tuberculosis (TB) certificate** – Please check our TB page at [www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa](http://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa) to see if you need a TB certificate.
- **Suitable travel, reception and care arrangements for children** – If you are a Tier 4 (Child).

➔ Visit our website [www.gov.uk/visas-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration) for more details on the above requirements.

Where documents are requested, you should provide originals unless we specifically state otherwise. Where these documents are not in English you may need to provide a translation.

## How do I apply for my visa?

- 1 Go to [www.visa4UK.fco.gov.uk](http://www.visa4UK.fco.gov.uk) to complete your visa application form, book an appointment and pay your visa fee online.
- 2 Prepare your application package including a printed and signed copy of your application form, your supporting documents, your passport and a passport style photo.
- 3 Visit the visa application centre to submit your application and biometric data at the time of your appointment. You may also be required to sit a short interview.

For top tips on arriving in the UK please visit [www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-arrivals-10-top-tips](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-arrivals-10-top-tips)

## How long will it take to get my visa?

You'll usually get a decision on your visa within 3 weeks.

We recommend that you prepare and apply for your visa well in advance. The earliest you can apply for a visa is 3 months before the start date of your course of study.

Some countries offer a **3-5 day priority visa service** for an additional fee. Check your visa application centre website for information on available priority services [www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre](http://www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre)

## How long can I stay in the UK?

Your visa will be granted for the whole length of your course, with some additional time before the course starts and after the course ends. The maximum amount of time you can spend studying is two years below degree level since the age of 18. You can spend five years at degree level and above, with some exceptions. Time spent studying as a Tier 4 (General) student when you were 16 or 17 years old, or a Tier (Child) student when you were aged 17 or under is not included in the two year limit below degree level.

## Can I work in the UK?

This will depend on the level of the course you are applying to study and the type of sponsor you have. Further information is on our website [www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa](http://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa)

## Can I stay and work in the UK after completing my course?

There are a number of options available if you wish to stay in the UK to work after your studies:

- The Doctorate Extension Scheme for students successfully completing a PhD or other doctoral qualifications at a higher education institution
- Tier 2 (General) for those with a graduate-level job offer which pays an appropriate salary
- Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) for those who want to develop a business idea
- Tier 5 for those undertaking professional training
- Tier 5 (Internship)

Not all further education students are able to extend their visa or switch to another visa route whilst they are in the UK - they will have to leave the UK to make such an application.

For more information on the work routes for graduates visit [www.gov.uk/visas-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration)

## Can I bring my partner and children with me?

Only the following students will be able to bring their partners and children to the UK:

- Postgraduate students at higher education institutions on courses of 12 months or more
- Government sponsored students on courses lasting longer than 6 months

## Can my parent accompany me while I study in the UK?

There is a visa route which allows a parent to accompany a child 12 years or younger and is attending an independent fee paying day school.

For more information visit [www.gov.uk/parent-of-a-child-at-school-visa](http://www.gov.uk/parent-of-a-child-at-school-visa)

## Can I extend my visa in the UK?

Yes, you can apply to extend your leave to study at your current sponsor, or at another sponsor, if your current period of Tier 4 (General) leave is sponsored by:

- a Higher Education Institute (HEI);
- an overseas HEI;
- an embedded college offering pathway courses; or
- an independent school

You can make your application online and make an appointment to submit your biometrics at locations throughout the UK.

For more information please visit [www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa](http://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa)

If you are a Tier 4 (General) student currently sponsored by any other type of institution you must apply for a visa from outside of the UK if you wish to undertake further study under Tier 4.

For more information go to [www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/eligibility](http://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/eligibility)

All Tier 4 (Child) students are permitted to extend their visa from within the UK.