Tier 4 Student Visas

Applying for Tier 4 student visas outside the UK
FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

How much will a student visa cost?
Please see the UKBA website for the current application fee; http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/studying/adult-students/visa-fees/#

How long will it take to process my application?
Please check the UKBA website for processing times for the Visa Application Centre/British embassy where you will be submitting your application; http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/customs-travel/beforetravel/visas/processing-times/

I want to study a pre-sessional course followed by a degree, will I be given a visa for both courses?
You will only be given a visa long enough to study both courses if you have an unconditional offer to study the degree course. If you have a conditional offer to study the degree course you will only be granted enough time to study the pre-sessional course. Provided the gap between your visa end date for the pre-sessional course and the degree course start date is less than one month you will be able to extend your student visa in the UK. If the gap between your visa end date and the start of your new course is more than one month, you will be expected to return overseas and apply for a new visa from outside the UK. Your new application must be made in the country where you made your original student application. If you apply from within the UK your application will be refused.

When will my Entry Clearance (visa) start?
If you apply as a Tier 4 (General) Student for;

Courses of 6 months or more
   • If you are studying a course at degree level or above for 6 months or more, your entry clearance will start a month before the course.
Courses of less than 6 months
   • If you are studying a course at degree level or above for less than 6 months, your entry clearance will start 7 days before the course.
Pre-sessional courses
   • If you are studying a pre-sessional course of less than 6 months, your entry clearance will start a month before the course.
Study Abroad
   • If you are studying a 'study abroad' programme for 6 months or more, your entry clearance will start a month before the course.
   • If you are studying a 'study abroad' programme for less than 6 months, your entry clearance will start 7 days before the course.

When will my Entry Clearance (visa) end?
You will be granted a student visa for the full length of your course and at the end of your course you will be given extra time to finalise your affairs and leave the UK, or apply to extend your stay as a student or switch into another category.

Courses of 12 months or more
   • If you are studying a course at degree level or above for 12 months or more e.g. BA, BSc, MSc, MA or PhD you can expect an additional 4 months after the end of your course.
Courses of less than 12 months
   • If you are studying a course at degree level or above for 6 months or more, but less than 12 months, you can expect an additional 2 months after the end of your course.
   • If you are studying a course at degree level or above for less than 6 months you can expect an additional 7 days after the end of your course.
Pre-sessional courses

- If you are studying a pre-sessional course of less than 6 months you can expect an additional month after the end of your course.

Study Abroad

- If you are studying a `study abroad` programme for 6 months or more, but less than 12 months, you can expect an additional 2 months after the end of your course.
- If you are studying a `study abroad` programme for less than 6 months you can expect an additional 7 days after the end of your course.

However, if you have official sponsorship and your sponsor limits the time you may study in the UK the student visa will be given for the same length of time.

Can I apply for an extension of my student visa to resit an examination or repeat my studies?

You may be able to apply for an extension to your student visa to resit examinations or repeat any part of your course, however, there are certain restrictions to this. You should speak to your Faculty Office, if they can issue a CAS then you can make an extension to your student visa. If they are unable to issue you with a CAS to support your studies you will be expected to return home. In this case please contact the International Advice and Support office for assistance.

When my Entry Clearance (student visa) is issued, what should I do?

You should check the following details are correct;

- Your name
- That you are a ‘student’ (e.g. not ‘student visitor’)
- It starts on or before you date you want to travel to the UK
- It does not end earlier than you expected (see above; ‘When will my Entry Clearance (visa) end?’); ALSO
- Check if you must register with the police on arrival and;
- Make a note of the expiry date of your Entry Clearance (visa) and make a note in your diary four months before this date to start the process of extending it if you wish to stay in the UK longer. DO NOT REMAIN IN THE UK AFTER THE DATE SHOWN IN YOUR PASSPORT

If anything is incorrect, ask to have it changed immediately, before you travel. If there is not enough time for this, please see the International Advice and Support team when you arrive as the University of Bristol operates the Entry Clearance Correction Scheme and we may be able to have your visa changed for you. Please see our website for further details; www.bris.ac.uk/international/studentsupport/immigration/correctionscheme.html

What happens if my visa is refused?

You have no full right of appeal. Instead you can ask for an ‘Administrative Review’ of the decision to refuse your application. There is no fee for this. You have to make your request for this review within 28 days of the date you receive the refusal notice. The process is explained in Annex 4 of the Policy Guidance; http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/studying/adult-students/apply-outside-uk/ However, please be aware that this means that they will check to see if the correct decision was made based on the evidence you submitted with your form and, therefore, does not usually result in a change in decision as you are not allowed to produce new documents in support of your application. In most case a new application with correct documentation will probably be the most suitable course of action, please contact International Advice and Support for advice is your visa is refused.

I have made false representations and/or submitted false documents and/or not disclosed material facts in relation to my application – what will happen to me?

If you use deception applying for a visa or Entry Clearance you could be refused your visa and face a ban on further immigration applications for up to 10 years.

This information is for guidance purposes only and does not intend to be a full representation of the immigration rules. For full details please see the UK Border Agency (UKBA) website; http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/studying/adult-students/ and see paras 245ZT to 245ZZD of the immigration rules for requirements of the general student category; www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/ These guidelines are always subject to change, so please ensure that you download relevant guidance/application forms at the time of applying.

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