

Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES) visa

What is Tier 4 DES?

- Tier 4 DES is a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) initiative under which the University of Bristol can sponsor students who have almost finished their PhD or other doctorate qualification to remain in the UK under Tier 4 for one year to look for and start work
- It is designed to encourage students to seek skilled work or to develop plans to set up as an entrepreneur
- Provided you are eligible, the University of Bristol continues to act as your immigration sponsor and will issue you with a new CAS so that you can apply for the Tier 4 DES visa

When can you obtain a CAS?

- You can complete a CAS eligibility form after you have successfully passed your viva. We need to know that you have only minor corrections and will successfully be awarded your PhD at Exam Board
- A CAS can be assigned any day in the 60-day period before your expected successful completion date (the date you will be awarded your PhD at Exam Board)

When can you apply for the DES visa?

- You can apply **after** your viva but **before** you are awarded at Exam Board
- The earliest you can apply is 60 days before Exam Board, as this is the earliest we can issue a DES CAS
- The latest you can apply is before Exam Board OR before your visa expires, whichever is earlier
- You **cannot** apply for DES after you have been awarded at Exam Board

If you are unsure about the timings for DES please contact us:

- Come to a drop-in session: www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/contacts/
- It will be useful if you can tell us:
 - Date you will submit your thesis
 - Date you will have the viva (if known)
 - Date you will be awarded your PhD at [Exam Board](#) (if known)

When can you work unrestricted?

- Full working conditions will only be granted once you have successfully been awarded your PhD at [Exam Board](#)
- Prior to this your conditions remain restricted under the Tier 4 Student rules, i.e. you must not undertake a permanent vacancy and you must not be self-employed
- Even if you receive your DES visa before you have been awarded your PhD, your conditions remain restricted under the Tier 4 Student rules
- If you are not awarded your PhD as anticipated, you will retain your Tier 4 Student working conditions

What are our duties and your duties?

- The University will continue to act as your immigration sponsor for 12 months (from the date of award/Exam Board)
- You must complete and return a monitoring form twice a year. These will be sent by email (once you have secured your visa) in May and November
- You must inform us of a change in your personal contact details or circumstances, e.g. email, UK address, change in visa or if you leave the UK permanently
- Your immigration sponsorship from the University will be withdrawn if you fail to provide this information and your visa will be curtailed by UKVI in this event

What are the requirements?

- You must apply in the UK
- You must be in the UK on a current Tier 4 visa
- You must have a DES CAS issued by Student Visa Services
- You must pay £21 for the CAS. You can pay online at: <https://shop.bris.ac.uk/product-catalogue/education-services/student-visa-services>
- You must show evidence that you have held at least £2030 in your bank account every day for a consecutive 28-day period
- If applicable, you must have a police registration certificate. This must be up to date with your current address and visa
- If you have received sponsorship from your government or an international scholarship agency in the 12 months before you apply for DES, you will require a letter of consent from them to confirm they agree to you making the DES application and to you remaining in the UK
- You must pay the visa application fee (per person):
 - Standard service = £494.20 (a decision within 8 weeks of submitting the online application form)
 - Priority service = £994.20 (a decision within 5 working days of attending biometric appointment)
 - Super priority service = £1294.20 (a decision within 1 working day of attending biometric appointment)
- You must pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) = £300 (per person)

Applying for the visa

- If we approve your DES CAS you will be required to make a Tier 4 DES visa application via Student Visa Services within the University and meet all the normal criteria of this visa application
- Create your account and start to fill in the online Tier 4 visa application form: visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier-4-student
- Stop before you get to the Declaration section. When you agree to the Declaration, your answers become locked and you will not be able to change any answers when you attend an appointment with an adviser
- Email us at student-visa-advice@bristol.ac.uk when you are ready to submit your application. We will make you an appointment with an adviser to check through your application
- You will then submit and pay for your application during the appointment and we will advise how to submit your documents and on the next steps

Dependants

- Your dependants can apply for a Tier 4 DES dependant visa (they will be required to pay the application fee and IHS fee too)
- They must show evidence that they have held at least £1360 (per dependant) in a bank account every day for a consecutive 28-day period
- They can use proof of finances in their own name or in your name

For full details and to check up to date information, please see the following websites:

- Our website: www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/tier-4/apply/inside-uk/
- UKVI Tier 4 information: www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa
- UKVI Tier 4 Policy Guidance: www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visas-as-tier-4-student

For queries about the requirements or applying, email: student-visa-advice@bristol.ac.uk