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# General student visa (Tier 4)

## 1. Overview

You can apply for a Tier 4 (General) student visa to study in the UK if you're 16 or over and you:

- have been offered a place on a course
- can speak, read, write and understand English (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/knowledge-of-english>)
- have enough money to support yourself and pay for your course - the amount will vary depending on your circumstances
- are from a country that's not in the European Economic Area (EEA) (<https://www.gov.uk/eu-eea>) or Switzerland
- meet the other eligibility requirements (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/eligibility>)

There will be no change to the rights and status of EU citizens currently living in the UK until 30 June 2021, or 31 December 2020 if the UK leaves the EU without a deal (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policy-paper-on-citizens-rights-in-the-event-of-a-no-deal-brex>). You and your family can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>) to continue living in the UK. The scheme will open fully by 30 March 2019.

## When to apply

The earliest you can apply for a visa is 3 months before you start your course.

You'll usually get a decision on your visa within 3 weeks. You can check visa processing times (<https://www.gov.uk/visa-processing-times>) for your country.

## Fees

It costs £348 to apply for this visa from outside the UK.

You must pay £348 per person for any dependants.

## Healthcare surcharge

You'll also have to pay the healthcare surcharge (<https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/pay>) as part of your application. Check how much you'll have to pay (<https://www.immigration-health-surcharge.service.gov.uk/checker/type>) before you apply.

## How long you can stay

You can arrive in the UK before your course starts:

- up to 1 week before, if your course lasts 6 months or less
- up to 1 month before, if your course lasts more than 6 months

How long you can stay depends on the kind of course you're doing and what study you've already completed.

## What you can and cannot do

You can:

- study
- work as a student union sabbatical officer
- apply from inside or outside the UK
- apply to extend your stay (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/extend-your-visa>)
- work in most jobs - depending on what level your course is and what kind of sponsor you have

You cannot:

- get public funds (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-funds--2>)
- work in certain jobs, for example professional sportsperson or sports coach
- study at an academy or a local authority-funded school (also known as a maintained school)

You may be able to bring in family members (dependants) (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/family-members>).

Read the full guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>) to find out how long you might be able to stay and what you can and cannot do.

## 2. Eligibility

You must have:

- an unconditional offer of a place on a course with a licensed Tier 4 sponsor (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-students>)
- enough money to support yourself and pay for your course - the amount will vary depending

on your circumstances

Read the guide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>) and appendix (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-uk-visa-under-tier-4-general-form-vaf9-appendix-8>) for the full list of documents and how much money you'll need.

## Your course

You can do a course that's one of the following:

- full-time leading to a qualification that's at least level 6 on the Ofqual register (<https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean>)
- part-time leading to a qualification that's at least level 7 on the Ofqual register (<https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean>)
- an overseas course of degree level study that's equal to a UK higher education course and is being run by an overseas higher education institution
- full-time, with at least 15 hours per week of organised daytime study, leading to a qualification which is at least level 3 on the Ofqual register (<https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean>)
- a recognised foundation programme as a postgraduate doctor or dentist
- an English language course at level B2 or above on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale>)

## Postgraduate doctors and dentists

You can apply for this visa if you're sponsored to do a recognised foundation programme and you've:

- finished a recognised UK degree in medicine or dentistry
- received that degree from a registered Tier 4 sponsor (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-students>)
- spent your final year and at least 1 other year of studies leading to that degree in the UK

## Confirmation of acceptance for studies

Your education provider will send you a reference number called a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) once they've offered you a place on a course. You'll need to enter this on your visa application.

You must apply for your visa (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/apply>) no more than 6 months after you receive the CAS.

## If you've studied in the UK before

You can only get a CAS in certain situations if you're applying from within the UK.

### If you're continuing your studies

You can get a CAS if you're:

- resitting exams or repeating modules
- applying for the first time to a new institution to complete a course you started at an institution that lost its Tier 4 sponsorship
- applying to extend your stay to complete your studies because you've done (or want to do) a work placement or study abroad programme
- completing a PhD or other doctorate that you started studying under your last Tier 4 (General) student visa
- applying after working as a student union sabbatical officer to complete a qualification you started studying under your last Tier 4 (General) student visa
- continuing your medical, dentistry or medical science degree after completing an intercalated course

### If you're starting a new course

You can get a CAS if your course is one of the following:

- at a higher academic level than your previous course
- at the same level and related to your previous course or career aspirations - it must be degree level or above at a Higher Education Institution (HEI)
- intercalated to a medicine, dentistry or medical science course you started studying under a Tier 4 (General) student visa

### If you're applying to work in the UK

You can get a CAS if you're applying to either:

- work as a student union sabbatical officer
- stay in the UK to look for work after you've finished your PhD or doctorate - the 'Doctorate Extension Scheme' (DES)

## 3. Knowledge of English

You must prove your knowledge of the English language when you apply.

This usually means passing a secure English language test (SELT).

Where you're studying	What you're studying	Knowledge of English needed	Level

Where you're studying	What you're studying	Knowledge of English needed	Level
Higher education institution (HEI)	Degree level or above	Reading, writing, listening and speaking	Equivalent to CEFR (Common European Framework for languages) level B2
Institution that's not HEI	Degree level or above	SELT in reading, writing, listening and speaking	CEFR level B2
Any institution	Below degree	SELT in reading, writing, listening and speaking	CEFR level B1

HEIs can choose how to assess a student's knowledge of English. They must still be at:

- CEFR level B2 if you're studying at a degree level or higher
- SELT in reading, writing, listening and speaking and CEFR level B1 if you're not studying at a degree level

If you have to pass a SELT, it must be from an approved provider (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests>).

Check the full visa guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>) for detailed information.

## Exceptions

You do not need to prove your knowledge of English if you've completed a qualification equivalent to a UK degree in:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Australia
- the Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Ireland
- Jamaica
- New Zealand
- St Kitts and Nevis

- St Lucia
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago
- UK
- USA

You also do not need to prove your knowledge of English if one of the following apply:

- you're a national of Canada or any of the countries in the list above
- you have studied in the UK before as a Tier 4 (Child) student
- you're applying to come to the UK for a study abroad programme as part of a university degree course in the USA

## 4. Documents you must provide

When you apply for the visa you must provide:

- a current passport or other valid travel documentation
- proof that you can support yourself and pay for your course - this will vary depending on your circumstances
- proof of parental or other legal guardian consent if you're under 18
- proof of your relationship with your parent or guardian if you're under 18
- your tuberculosis test results (<https://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa>) if you're from a country where you have to take the test

You need a blank page in your passport for your visa.

You may also need to provide additional documents depending on your circumstances.

Read the guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>) for the full list of documents and how much money you'll need according to your situation.

## 5. Apply

You should read the full guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>) before you apply.

### Apply outside the UK

You must apply online (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/apply-visa-type/tier4>) for a Tier 4 (General) student visa.

You'll need to have your fingerprints and photograph taken at a visa application centre (<https://www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre>) (to get a biometric residence permit) as part of your application.

You'll have to collect your biometric residence permit (<https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/collect>) within 10 days of when you said you'd arrive in the UK (even if you actually arrive at a later date).

You may be able to get your visa faster or other services depending on what country you're in - check with your visa application centre.

## **North Korea**

You cannot apply online if you're living in North Korea.

To apply from North Korea you must:

- download the application form and guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-form-for-uk-visa-to-work-study-and-for-dependants-and-right-of-abode-form-vaf2>) - read the guidance if you need help filling in the form
- read the instructions (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/democratic-peoples-republic-of-korea-apply-for-a-uk-visa>) to find out where to take your completed form

## **Apply in the UK**

Check if you can apply from inside the UK to:

- extend (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/extend-your-visa>) your existing Tier 4 (General) student visa
- switch (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/switch-to-this-visa>) to this visa from another visa

## **6. Extend your visa**

You may be able to stay longer to continue your course or study a new one.

You must:

- meet the eligibility (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/eligibility>) requirements of this visa
- be in the UK
- have a sponsor

### **Who can sponsor you**

You can only apply to extend your leave to study if your current sponsor is:

- a higher education institute (HEI)
- an overseas HEI
- an embedded college offering pathway courses
- an independent school

You must include your dependants in your application if they're on your current visa, including children who have turned 18 during your stay.

Read the full Tier 4 guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>) before you apply.

## When to apply

You must apply:

- within 6 months of getting a confirmation of acceptance for studies (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/eligibility>) (CAS)
- before your current visa expires - but no more than 3 months before the course start date on your CAS

You can stay in the UK until you get your decision.

## Fees

For each person, you'll need to pay:

- £475 to extend this visa
- the healthcare surcharge - check how much you'll have to pay (<https://www.immigration-health-surcharge.service.gov.uk/checker/type>)
- £19.20 to have your biometric information (fingerprints and a photo) taken

If you want to get a decision more quickly than the standard 8 weeks, you can pay an extra:

- £477 for the priority service to get a decision within 10 working days
- £610 for the super priority service to get a decision within 1 working day

## Apply

You must apply online (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier-4-student>).

## What happens next

You'll be contacted if your application is complex and will take longer, for example because:

- your supporting documents need to be verified
- you need to attend an interview
- of your personal circumstances (for example if you have a criminal conviction)



## 7. Switch to this visa

You may be able to change (switch) to a Tier 4 (General) student visa if you're in the UK under any of the following visas or schemes:

- Tier 2 (General)
- Tier 2 (Intra-company transfer)
- Tier 2 (Minister of religion)
- Tier 4 (Child)

You should include any dependants who are on your current visa on your application to extend - including children who have turned 18 during your stay.

### When to apply

You must apply:

- within 6 months of getting a confirmation of acceptance for studies (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/eligibility>) (CAS)
- before your current visa expires - but no more than 3 months before the course start date on your CAS

You can stay in the UK until you get your decision.

### Fees

For each person, you'll need to pay:

- £475 to extend this visa
- the healthcare surcharge - check how much you'll have to pay (<https://www.immigration-health-surcharge.service.gov.uk/checker/type>)
- £19.20 to have your biometric information (fingerprints and a photo) taken

If you want to get a decision more quickly than the standard 8 weeks, you can pay an extra:

- £477 for the priority service to get a decision within 10 working days
- £610 for the super priority service to get a decision within 1 working day

### Apply

You must apply online (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier-4-student>).

### What happens next

You'll be contacted if your application is complex and will take longer, for example because:

- your supporting documents need to be verified

- you need to attend an interview
- of your personal circumstances (for example if you have a criminal conviction)

## 8. Family members

Your family members (dependants) might be able to apply to join or remain with you in the UK if they're from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) (<https://www.gov.uk/eu-eea>) or Switzerland.

A dependant is either:

- your husband, wife or civil partner
- your unmarried or same-sex partner
- your child under 18 years old - including if they were born in the UK during your stay

You can apply to bring a dependant to the UK if you're:

- sponsored by a higher education institution on a course at level 7 on the Ofqual register (<https://www.gov.uk/find-a-regulated-qualification>) or above that lasts 9 months or more
- a new government-sponsored student on a course that lasts longer than 6 months
- a Doctorate Extension Scheme student

## Savings

You must show that your dependants can be supported while they're in the UK.

Each dependant must have a certain amount of money available to them - this is in addition to the money you must have to support yourself.

The amount of money you need depends on:

- the length of your course
- where you're studying in the UK
- whether you've finished a UK course or are currently studying

You must have proof (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/documents-you-must-provide>) you have the money, and that it's been in your bank account or your dependant's bank account for at least 28 days before you or they apply.

The money does not need to be available 28 days in advance if it's from a student loan or official sponsor, but you do need to provide confirmation of when it'll be available.

Read the detailed guidance for dependants (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-dependants-of-uk-visa-applicants-tiers-1-2-4-5>) for how much money you'll need and the full list of documents you need to provide.

## Dependants applying outside the UK

Your family members must apply online (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/apply-visa-type/dependant>).

They'll need to have their fingerprints and photograph taken at a visa application centre (<https://www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre>) (to get a biometric residence permit) as part of their application.

They'll have to collect their biometric residence permit (<https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/collect>) within 10 days of when they said they'd arrive in the UK.

They may be able to get their visa faster or other services depending on what country they're in - check with the visa application centre.

## North Korea

Your family members cannot apply online if they're applying from North Korea.

Each family member will need to make their own application. They must:

- download the application form and guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-form-for-uk-visa-to-work-study-and-for-dependants-and-right-of-abode-form-vaf2>) - they can read the guidance if they need help filling in the form
- read the instructions (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/democratic-peoples-republic-of-korea-apply-for-a-uk-visa>) to find out where they need to take their completed form

## Dependants applying in the UK

You should apply for your dependants' visas at the same time as you extend (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/extend-your-visa>) or switch (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/switch-to-this-visa>) your own visa.

If you cannot do it at the same time, your dependants can apply to extend or switch their visas at a later date.

They cannot apply in the UK as dependants if they already have a Standard Visitor visa.

## Fees

Each person will need to pay:

- £475 for the visa
- the healthcare surcharge - check how much they'll have to pay (<https://www.immigration-health-surcharge.service.gov.uk/checker/type>)
- £19.20 to have their biometric information (fingerprints and a photo) taken

If they want to get a decision more quickly than the standard 8 weeks, they can pay:

- £477 for the priority service to get a decision within 10 working days
- £610 for the super priority service to get a decision within 1 working day

## **Apply**

Your family members must apply online if they're your:

- partner (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/pbs-dependant-partner>)
- child (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/pbs-dependant-child>)

## **Children born in the UK**

If you have children while you're in the UK, you can apply online (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/pbs-dependant-child>).

You must do this if you want to travel in and out of the UK with your child.