

University of Liverpool

Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur

Information for Applicants/Agreement

**Information for applicants**

**Please read carefully**The University of Liverpool has been approved as an endorsing institution under the UKBA Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) route. The University may endorse up to 20 graduates to move into the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) category, which is for graduates who wish to develop credible business ideas and entrepreneurial skills in order to establish a business in the UK. Those who are endorsed by the University will be able to apply for a visa for 12 months during which time they have the opportunity to develop their new business ideas. Those who meet the eligibility criteria below are invited to apply for Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) endorsement by following the procedures listed below.

**Eligibility criteria**   
• Non-EEA national graduates   
• You can apply if you have been or are going to be awarded a University of Liverpool degree (Bachelors, Masters or PhD)   
• You can apply if you have already graduated or will graduate before March 2017 and have been awarded your degree   
• You cannot apply if you have previously been awarded a Post Study Work Visa  
• You must demonstrate that you have a genuine and credible business idea

Please note If you are successful you will need to show £945 in your bank account for 90 consecutive days prior to your visa application   
   
Those endorsed under the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) route  
 • Are eligible to work unlimited hours in any job (apart from doctor/dentist in training or professional sports person/coach)   
• • Must apply for the new visa from the UK Visas and Immigration (with support from the University of Liverpool International Student Services team)   
  
Please note that Enterprise staff are unable to advise on Visa application process so all Visa related queries will be dealt with by University of Liverpool International Support Team.  
 **Graduate Entrepreneur responsibilities:**  
  
 • You must have a genuine, credible business idea   
• You must spend the majority of your working time developing your business idea  
 • You must stay in regular contact with your endorsing institution, the University, through an agreed series of face-to-face meetings. If the University is, at any time, not satisfied with the progress being made on the business idea, or your compliance with the visa regulations, they may choose to withdraw endorsement with immediate effect.

Full details of the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) scheme can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/tier-1-graduate-entrepreneur-visa>

We strongly recommend all those interested in applying for Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa read this information in full before applying.

**THE PROCESS**

**What to do next if applying from the UK**

**Step 1** - The first stage in the process is to establish that you are eligible to participate in the scheme and that you hold the correct visa to apply for a Tier 1 GE application inside the UK.   
You must make an appointment with the UOL International Support Team who will verify your eligibility. They will then email confirmation to the Enterprise Co-ordinator who will record your interest.  
  
If you are not a ULMS student you will also need to ask for confirmation from your Head of School that they are willing to support your application and are willing to fund the business support package of £1000. If the School is unable to provide the funds the applicant must confirm by email to the Enterprise Co-ordinator they are able to provide the funds personally. Funds will need to be paid to UOL and cleared **before** UOL issue the endorsement letter. You will not be able to apply for a Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur Visa without this document.

**Step 2** – Application Applicants are required to complete an application form and return by email to [d.chilton@liv.ac.uk](mailto:d.chilton@liv.ac.uk).   
Please note if you are successful you will need to show £945 in your bank account for 90 consecutive days prior to your visa application   
   
Deadline for submission of application form is 5pm 8 July 2016 \* \*Please note, only complete applications received by email and by the application deadline will be considered. The judging panel’s decision for short listing will be final and not open to question or appeal.   
  
**Step 3** – Shortlisting by UOL. All applications received by the submission deadline will be considered and either short-listed for progression to an interview, or returned with feedback explaining why they have not been short-listed.

All applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application via email by 22 July 2015   
  
**Selection Criteria**

The selection criteria will be applied to each application on all of the following:

**Business potential:**

* *The product/service is well defined*
* *The business idea must be “genuine and credible” and have the potential for commercial viability and to benefit the UK economy*
* *There is a clear and convincing plan of action to develop the business*
* *The business is innovative and of graduate level.*

**Applicant Potential:**

* *The applicant could develop this into a business*
* *The applicant demonstrated evidence of personal qualities to succeed*
* *The application was well prepared and delivered*

**Step 4** – Panel Interviews - Final selection will be based on the application form and the applicants' interview.

The interview panel will consist of a minimum of three assessors. Panel interviews will normally last between 30 and 45 minutes including presentation time and questions from the Panel.

Applicants should prepare a presentation of up to, but not exceeding, 15 minutes which outlines their business proposal and demonstrates their personal suitability to developing the business.

Outcomes will normally be communicated to the applicant within seven working days after the last interview.

The Interview Panel will apply the same criteria as in the selection criteria (above). The purpose of the Panel Interview is to clarify and confirm the strength of the business proposition and potential of the applicant.

* The Panel will then make one of the following recommendations:
* The applicant and business both have sufficient potential to accept the application
* The proposed business requires minor adjustments to be deemed viable and feasible. The panel will agree a timetable for the applicant to submit supplementary information and/or meet with members of the panel. The final decision will be made by chair's action.
* The applicant is unsuitable to develop the proposed business and the application is rejected
* The proposed business is not sufficiently viable or feasible and the application is rejected.

Following an interview, all applicants will be provided with written feedback on their own application. Details of other applications will not be released.

The judging panel's decision is final and not open to appeal.

Successful applicants will be referred to the International Support Team for support with their visa application.

**Step 5** - Endorsement: The UOL (International Support Team) will then provide successful applicants with an endorsement letter upon notification by the University of their degree award. They will be able to apply for a visa immediately upon receipt of the letter. Once Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) route has been confirmed, applicants will start receiving a structured programme of support from UOL Enterprise for 12 months.

**Graduate Entrepreneur Responsibilities**

When a visa is granted the visa holder is responsible for providing a copy of this visa for the University’s records. The visa holder will also be responsible for ensuring that they abide by the conditions of their visa and provide any such necessary evidence to this effect. Failure to adhere to visa conditions could result in a report to UKBA and the visa holder could face UKBA sanctions including having their visa curtailed (cancelled) and being required to leave the UK.  
  
**You cannot start trading or register any business until your Tier 1 Visa is granted and comes into effect.**

**Conditions of participation on the Scheme**

The University of Liverpool requires that successful applicants carry out their business in a way that is befitting of the University and not in conflict with its mission, charter, ordinances or regulations. By supporting graduate entrepreneurs, the University does not endorse any of the businesses, nor should businesses state or imply the University’s endorsement in any way.

Graduate entrepreneurs are fully responsible for their own conduct and decision-making, as well as those of the business. The University cannot be held liable for any business decisions howsoever made by the graduate entrepreneur or the business’s employees.

**Intellectual Property**

It is essential that the applicant declares any intellectual property (IP) that the business depends on, and can demonstrate that they have the necessary permissions or ownership of the intellectual property to progress the business.

Where the University may have any interest whatsoever in the intellectual property, then the applicant must have the approval and permission of the University before the applicant can be recommended for endorsement.

Applicants should discuss this with the Enterprise Co-ordinator in the first instance,

**UK Legal Requirements**

**Visa** - When a visa is granted the visa holder is responsible for ensuring that they abide by the conditions of their visa and provide any such necessary evidence to this effect. Failure to adhere to visa conditions could result in a report to UKBA and the visa holder could face UKBA sanctions including having their visa curtailed (cancelled) and having to leave the UK.

**Business and other legalities** - the business proposal must also meet with all other UK legal requirements. Where there are other dependencies (including, but not limited to the granting of licences, accreditations, or working partnerships), it must be demonstrated that there is a high degree of probability that these will be achieved.

**Progression**

The programme of business support will begin when the visa is granted.

When the programme of business support starts, the graduate entrepreneur will have access to a business mentor who will meet with them up to 4 times during the 12 month period.

The graduate entrepreneur will be required to produce a business plan with agreed milestones.

A two year plan should be set out, which would if followed, enable the graduate entrepreneur to meet the necessary business criteria for a Tier 1 Entrepreneur Visa.

The business mentor must be satisfied that the business is progressing according to the agreed milestones, and that any adjustments to the plan still support the two-year goal.

The graduate entrepreneur will be expected to demonstrate that progress is being made. Evidence will vary person-by-person, but may include one or more of the following: business financial records, testimonials from clients, correspondence with clients and suppliers, marketing materials, contracts, invoices, time sheets.

A quarterly review meeting will take place between the Enterprise Co-ordinator and the graduate entrepreneur to establish progress made. Following each quarterly review meeting, a summarised record of the meetings will be made by the Enterprise Co-ordinator, who will in turn report to the University’s designated UKBA contact, who has responsibility for UKBA compliance.

If the graduate entrepreneur wants to significantly change their Business Plan they must first speak to the Enterprise Co-ordinator who will discuss the changes with them. They must also get written agreement to the requested changes from the Enterprise Co-ordinator before they implement them. The Enterprise Co-ordinator may make conditions that they think are appropriate before giving their agreement. Please be aware that if the proposed

changes are so substantial that the business will no longer be the business for which

their application was made and the potential success of their business affected, the

University may choose to withdraw its endorsement and inform the UKVI of the same.  
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**Extending the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa**

As with the initial 12 month visa, IST will assist the Graduate Entrepreneur to prepare and submit their extended visa application by checking completed paperwork.

Prior to this, the Enterprise Co-ordinator will need to validate that the business is making appropriate progress. The expectation is that following a second 12-month period, the student should be in an appropriate position to apply to the Tier 1 Entrepreneur Visa. The University cannot guarantee success or be held liable for failure in this regard, nor is it able to assist in the application for the Tier 1 Entrepreneur Visa.

Nine months into the initial 12-month visa, a panel interview will be convened to judge the revised plan. The panel will measure this against the selection criteria. Additionally, they will review the graduate entrepreneur’s progress to date. The panel will recommend that a visa extension is supported, if in their view:

* The business plan meets the criteria in the selection criteria.
* The graduate entrepreneur’s track record indicates that the business plan could be executed successfully.
* The graduate entrepreneurs can demonstrate that they would be likely to meet the eligibility criteria for transfer to the Tier 1 Entrepreneur visa at the end of a further 12 months.

A visa extension application will require a separate letter of endorsement from the University.

**Early completion of the scheme**

**Mutual agreement**

If the graduate entrepreneur informs the Enterprise Co-ordinator that they no longer wish to continue with their business idea and want to close the business and exit the scheme early, they should notify the Enterprise Co-ordinator in writing. The IST will then meet with the graduate entrepreneurs to outline their immigration situation.

Following this, the Enterprise Co-ordinator will notify the University’s designated UKBA contact, who will make a report to UKBA.

**Unsatisfactory progress**

If at any point the Enterprise Co-ordinator or business mentor identifies that satisfactory progress is not being made and that this might breach the conditions of the visa, or; activities of the graduate entrepreneur might damage the University's reputation or jeopardise its Highly Trusted Status, they will:

* *Notify IST (and the Enterprise Co-ordinator if noted by business mentor)*
* *Request that the* graduate entrepreneur *addresses the issues and report back on progress within ten working days (University working days unless otherwise indicated) from the date of the request.*
* If satisfactory progress cannot be demonstrated, or there remains a risk to the University, the Enterprise Co-ordinator will convene a panel at the earliest opportunity.
* The panel will comprise
  + *The Enterprise Co-ordinator*
  + *The business mentor*
  + *A member of academic staff of the University will be invited to chair the group*

The Panel will interview the graduate entrepreneur and make a decision to either:

* Continue the graduate entrepreneur’s endorsement and resume the programme.
* End the graduate entrepreneur’s endorsement.
* Continue the graduate entrepreneur’s endorsement under a period of further review, with additional checks to be made.

**Other cause**

Any action by the graduate entrepreneur which, were they staff or students of the University, would result in disciplinary proceedings will be reported immediately to the Enterprise Co-ordinator who will decide the course of action to be taken, including but not limited to immediate suspension/revocation of the graduate entrepreneurs endorsement.

The University reserves the right to terminate this Agreement and its endorsement of

the graduate entrepreneurs Visa application if the graduate entrepreneur does not:-  
 comply with the obligations under this Agreement within a reasonable time period of being so requested by the University;   
fails to attend agreed meetings with the Enterprise Co-ordinator/Business Mentor without good reason;   
materially breaches a condition of this Agreement;   
in the University’s reasonable opinion, has provided misleading or inaccurate or incomplete information to the University, or you have acted in a misleading or negligent manner.

The graduate entrepreneur acknowledges that if the University terminates this Agreement and withdraws its endorsement of their Visa the University must inform the UKVI of its decision which may result in the UKVI cancelling their Visa.

**Programme of business support**

Being endorsed for a Tier 1 graduate entrepreneur visa application indicates that the University has identified that the graduate entrepreneur and his/her business have the potential to succeed.

The graduate entrepreneur will be offered the option to have office space in the Liverpool Science Park or equivalent facility to the same monetary value for a 6 month period only. In addition to the mandatory quarterly review meetings with the Enterprise Co-ordinator they will be offered up to 4 coaching sessions with a business mentor. The graduate entrepreneur will be encouraged to attend any enterprise related training that the University of Liverpool may run that will further develop them and their business however endorsement for a visa does not imply they will be automatically accepted onto to the training.

The graduate entrepreneur will be able to keep their University email and have access to the University’s libraries.

Please note that if the graduate entrepreneur is endorsed for a second year that the business support package will consist of a quarterly review meeting with the Enterprise Co-ordinator only.

The University are not obliged to provide support beyond the monitoring requirements laid down by UKVI. The offer of office space and sessions with a business mentor is additional support provided only in the first 12 months.

The University reserves the right to amend these terms and conditions at any time to

reflect changes to the UKVI Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur Visa Scheme and/or changes to University of Liverpool policy and procedures.

**Primary and Key points of contact:**

1. **Enterprise Co-ordinator - Denise Chilton**

Email: d.chilton@liv.ac.uk

1. **International Support Team (IST)**

Web Address: <https://studentservices/international>

Email: [ist@liv.ac.uk](mailto:ist@liv.ac.uk)

In person (by appointment): The International Support Team office is based in the Student Services Centre (SSC). This is building reference 502 on the [campus map](http://www.liv.ac.uk/maps/liverpool-university-campus-map.pdf).

**By signing below you confirm that you have read, understood and agree to the conditions of this agreement and authorize the University to share your personal information with UKVI and the Home Office or any other bodies relevant to Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur Visa**

**Print Name**

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**Signature: …………………………………………………………………………………**

**Date: ………………………………………………………………………………………..**