

Making a student immigration application in your home country

29 July 2010

Warning: The UK Border Agency (UKBA) makes regular changes to the guidance it issues on student applications. Before you make your application, check the UKCISA [information sheets](#) [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/information_sheets.php] to make sure you have the most up-to-date version of this information sheet.

Who is this information sheet for?

This information sheet is for you if you are currently outside the UK and you want to come as a student to the UK. This information explains what you need to do about immigration in order to come and study in the UK. If you are currently in the UK, do not read this - instead, first read [Making a student immigration application in the UK](#) [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/immigration_uk.php].

If you are a national of the European Economic Area, or of Switzerland, then this information sheet has no relevance to you. The procedures described do not apply to you. Instead, you should read the information for [EEA and Swiss students](#) [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/eea.php].

If you are less than 16 years old, or 16-17 but are going to study at an independent fee-paying school rather than a further education college or university, special rules apply. Ask your school for information about immigration, instead of reading this information sheet. This information sheet does not explain those special rules.

If you have family (spouse, partner and children) who want to come with you to the UK as your dependants, you should also read [Your family's immigration](#) [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/your_family.php].

Introduction

On 31 March 2009, the immigration rules for students changed and became Tier 4 of the Points Based Immigration System. If you want to come to the UK to study, you will have to make an immigration application to the UK immigration authorities in your home country for permission to come to the UK as a 'student' under Tier 4 of the Points Based System (PBS).

Permission to come to the UK is called 'entry clearance'. You should wait until you have obtained entry clearance before you book any non-refundable travel tickets. If you have previously studied in the UK and have immigration permission as a student which has not yet expired, you cannot apply for new immigration permission in your home country.

If you want to make a successful entry clearance application, it is extremely important that:

- before you make your application, you read and understand the UKBA Tier 4 policy guidance, which is available to download from [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk] - references in this information sheet are to version 07/10 of the Tier 4 policy guidance, issued on 23/07/10
- you check that you meet all the requirements before you apply
- you provide evidence in exactly the format required by the UKBA, as explained in the policy guidance and on the application form
- you complete all sections of the form fully and accurately
- you allow plenty of time to make your application and to start gathering documents.

If you do not fully meet all the requirements, or if you provide evidence which is not exactly what the UKBA asks for, it is very likely that your application will be refused.

Immigration permission is given to students either as a Tier 4 General student or a Tier 4 Child student. You will need to decide whether you should apply as a Tier 4 General student (see the Tier 4 policy guidance paragraphs 48-59) or a Tier 4 Child student (see the Tier 4 policy guidance, paragraphs 162-168). This will depend on your age at the time you submit your immigration application, the length and the level of the course that you want to study, and the institution where you want to study.

You should read the Tier 4 policy guidance to ensure that you apply for the correct type of entry clearance. You should also check with an adviser at the institution where you want to study.

Note: If you are coming to study for a maximum of six months, you may have an alternative, which is to come as a 'student visitor' or a 'child visitor'. Student visitors and child visitors are allowed to study part-time but are not allowed to do any kind of work or work placement (even if it is part of a course, or is unpaid).

As a student visitor you must leave the UK at the end of this six month period, you are not allowed to apply for more time in the UK. If your studies are extended you will need to return home and apply for new entry clearance as a Tier 4 student. Student visitors are not allowed to apply to switch into any other immigration category while still in the UK.

If you want to find out about coming to the UK as a student visitor or as a child visitor, see the UK Border Agency leaflet **Guidance – Visitors (INF2)** [www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/infos/inf2visitors]. The rest of this information sheet is all about coming to the UK as a student under Tier 4 of the Points Based System (not as a student visitor or child visitor).

If you are 18 years old or more when you make your immigration application

You must apply as a Tier 4 General student. The UK Border Agency sometimes refers to Tier 4 General students as 'adult students', in its documents. You will not be granted immigration permission as a general student unless:

1. The college or university that you want to study at has the relevant **Tier 4 sponsor licence**

AND

2. The **course you want to do is at a high enough level**

AND

3. You satisfy strict **financial requirements**.

A Tier 4 sponsor licence is issued by the UK Border Agency to approved institutions (schools, colleges and universities) within the UK. This licence allows each institution to teach people who come to the UK to study. Every institution issued with a Tier 4 licence will be given a sponsor rating. The sponsor rating will be Highly Trusted, A (Trusted) or B (Sponsor).

You can check which institutions have a sponsor licence, and how they are rated, by looking at the Register of Tier 4 Sponsors (approved education providers) which is available online to view or download at [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/employersandsponsors/pointsbasedsystem/registerofsponsorededucation].

The course you want to do is at a high enough level if:

1. The institution has a standard Tier 4 sponsor licence rated either A (Trusted) or B (Sponsor) **AND** the course leads to a qualification which is:
 - approved at level 4 or above on the National qualifications Framework (NQF) or Qualifications and Credits Framework (QCF) in England, Wales or Northern Ireland

- accredited at level 7 or above in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) by the Scottish Qualifications Authority
- a short term Study Abroad programme in the UK as part of a qualification which you are studying at a higher education institution abroad (the qualification you are studying for abroad must be at the same level as a UK degree as confirmed by UK NARIC)
- an English language course at level B2 or above of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
- an English language course, at any level, if you are sponsored by your home Government or by the UK Government
- an English language course, at any level, where it is a pre-sessional course in preparation for a degree course.

OR

2. The institution has a Tier 4 Highly Trusted sponsor licence **AND** the course leads to a qualification which is:

- approved at level 3 or above on the National qualifications Framework (NQF) or Qualifications and Credits Framework (QCF) in England, Wales or Northern Ireland
- accredited at level 6 or above in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) by the Scottish Qualifications Authority
- a short term Study Abroad programme in the UK as part of a qualification which you are studying at a higher education institution abroad (the qualification you are studying for abroad must be at the same level as a UK degree as confirmed by UK NARIC)
- an English language course at level B2 or above of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
- an English language course, at any level, if you are sponsored by your home Government or by the UK Government
- an English language course, at any level, where it is a pre-sessional course in preparation for a degree course.

Note: Institutions which are Highly Trusted sponsors can also offer courses at NQF level 3 or above which include a work placement. Work placements must be an assessed part of the course and must not exceed 50% of the length of the course (unless UK law requires the work placement to be longer in order to obtain the qualification). Sponsors with a standard Tier 4 licence rated A or B can only offer courses at degree level (NQF level 6 or above) which include work placements, or where the course meets the UKBA definition of **a foundation degree** (see below).

A foundation degree is defined in the Immigration Rules as a programme of study which leads to a qualification awarded by an English higher education institution with degree awarding powers which is at a minimum of NQF level 5, or awarded on a directly equivalent basis in the devolved administrations.

Assessment of your English language ability

Your level of English language will be assessed by the institution that you want to study at, when they consider your academic ability to study a particular course. Your institution must follow specific guidelines from the UKBA when deciding how to assess your English language ability. You may be required to take one of the English language tests which has been approved by UKBA. This will depend on the course that you are intending to study in the UK.

Your institution will include details of your English language ability, and details of how they have assessed this in your CAS. When you submit your application for Tier 4 immigration permission, you must ensure that you enclose the original certificates of all qualifications listed in your CAS. This must also include the qualification that your institution has used to assess your English language ability, if there is one stated in your CAS.

The list of approved **English language tests** is available on the UKBA's web pages [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/approvedenglishtestst4.pdf].

Limit on studying courses below degree level if you are over 18

This limit applies to entry clearance applications outside the UK, as well as to extension applications within the UK. If you are already 18 years old or over, you cannot study in the UK on a course which leads to a qualification below degree level for more than three years in total, as a Tier 4 General student. This three year limit can be spent studying several courses as a Tier 4 General student but does not include time spent studying courses below degree level with any other immigration permission which allows study.

If you are 16 or 17 years old when you make your immigration application

You should ask your college or university if they have a Tier 4 Child sponsor licence as well as a Tier 4 General sponsor licence. If they have both types of licence, and if your course is at a high enough level, you will be able to choose whether to apply as a child student or as a general student. As long as you are under 18 when you make your immigration application, it does not matter if you will become 18 during your course - you can still apply as a child student.

The course you want to do is at a high enough level to give you this choice if it matches one of the levels described above. If your course is below these levels, you do not have a choice, and must apply as a child student (but first check that your college or university has a Tier 4 Child sponsor licence; and note that the course they are offering you must be taught in accordance with the National Curriculum or the National Qualifications Framework, or be of an equivalent academic status).

If you want to study an English language course you must apply as a general student, as stated in paragraph 50 of the Tier 4 policy guidance. This means that you must be studying an English language course which meets the requirements outlined above. Alternatively, if you want to study a pre-sessional English language course at an independent school, which prepares you for your main course of study at the same school, this English language course may be at any level (Tier 4 policy guidance, paragraph 270).

If you are going to study a degree course which will last more than 3 years, you will be better off applying as a general student, because you will be given immigration permission for the full length of the course plus four months after the end of your course. If instead you apply as a child student for a degree course which will last more than 3 years, you will only be given immigration permission for a maximum of three years and five months to start with, and may have to pay for an extension later, to finish the course. [The 'three years and five months' is made up from: one month before your course starts, plus three years for your course, plus four months after the end of your course.]

If you wish to study any course below the required level, you must enter as a child visitor which enables you to study for a maximum of 6 months, after which time you will need to leave the UK.

As a Child student, you are not allowed to bring a spouse or partner to the UK as your dependant. And, you cannot apply as a Tier 4 Child student if you have your own children who you are financially responsible for, or who live with you.

You will have to provide a letter from your parents

If you are under 18 years old when you make your immigration application, you need to show that your application is supported by your parent or parents or legal guardian. This is the case, whether you apply as a child student (see Tier 4 policy guidance, paragraphs 241-243) or as a general student (see Tier 4 policy guidance, paragraphs 159-161), and for any level of course. This means that you must provide a letter from your parent, if one parent has sole legal responsibility for you, or from both parents or your legal guardian, confirming a number of matters, including:

- their relationship to you

- their consent to your application
- their agreement to your living arrangements in the UK
- their consent to your living independently, if you are 16 or 17 years old.

If one person has sole legal responsibility for you, this must also be confirmed. See the policy guidance (paragraphs 161 and 241) for full details of what is required.

The above requirement applies to you if you are 16 or 17 years old. There are precise instructions about the format this letter must take, see paragraphs 160-161 and 241 of the policy guidance. Make sure the letter complies with every one of those instructions.

The financial requirements that apply to you

The financial requirements that apply to you are those described below in the paragraph headed '**The financial requirements**'.

If you are a postgraduate doctor or dentist and want to do a Foundation Programme

There are special requirements (see Tier 4 policy guidance, paragraphs 60-63 for details) which you have to meet:

- you must have already successfully completed a recognised UK degree in medicine or dentistry from a UK publicly funded institution of further or higher education, or a UK bona fide private education institution which maintains satisfactory records of enrolment and attendance, or an institution that has a Tier 4 General sponsor licence; and
- you must have had immigration permission as a student or Tier 4 General student for the final academic year of those studies, and also for at least one other academic year of those studies; and
- if you have previously been granted immigration permission as either a postgraduate doctor or dentist, or as a Tier 4 General student undertaking a course as a postgraduate doctor or dentist, then you must not be asking for immigration permission which would allow you to be in the UK more than three years after that immigration permission first started.

The financial requirements

If you have financial sponsorship from an official financial sponsor (as defined in the policy guidance, paragraph 38, or see Note below) you will need:

A letter from them confirming that they will cover ALL your fees and living costs is all that you need, to meet the financial requirements. There are precise instructions in the policy guidance regarding the format the letter must take, paragraphs 148-149 for Tier 4 General and paragraphs 233-234 for Tier 4 Child students. Make sure the letter complies with every one of the instructions. If it does not, it will be ignored and you will not meet the financial requirements.

Note: Official financial sponsors are defined in the policy guidance, paragraphs 143 and 228, as:

- the UK Government
- your home Government
- the British Council
- any international organisation
- any international company (note that the UKBA has not defined "international company" in its policy guidance)

- an independent school
- any university.

If your official financial sponsor is not covering ALL of your course fees and living costs, you must show that you have the rest of the money required. Please read the information for people who do not have financial sponsorship from an official financial sponsor (immediately below) for details of the additional evidence that you must provide.

If you do NOT have financial sponsorship from an official financial sponsor:

You must have a minimum amount of cash in a bank or building society account (or an account with an officially regulated financial institution). The account can be in your name, or in your parents' or legal guardian's name. It can be a joint account with someone else, but only if your name is on the account too. See the Tier 4 policy guidance, paragraphs 150-156 (general students) and 235-240 (child students) for full details.

If you apply using a bank account in your parents' or guardian's bank name or names, you must also provide one of the following documents (see paragraphs 157-158 of the policy guidance) to prove that your parent or guardian is in fact your parent or guardian:

- your original birth certificate, or a notarised copy, showing the name of your parent (or parents) whose bank account you are using for this immigration application
- if you are adopted, the original certificate of adoption, or a notarised copy, showing your name and the name of your parent (or parents) whose bank account you are using
- if you have a legal guardian, an original court document, or notarised copy, which shows the name of your guardian whose bank account you are using.

If you have a definite offer of a loan from an officially regulated financial institution (for example, a bank) or from your home Government:

If you do not have financial sponsorship from an official financial sponsor, or if you do not have the right amount of cash yet, you may still be able to demonstrate your financial eligibility **if you have a definite offer of a loan from an officially regulated financial institution (for example, a bank).**

You will be able to demonstrate this if you can provide a letter from the financial institution confirming that the money will be loaned to you. There are precise instructions in the policy guidance about the format the letter must take, paragraph 156v for Tier 4 General and paragraph 240v for Tier 4 Child students. Make sure the letter complies with every one of those instructions. If it does not, it will be ignored and you will not meet the financial requirements.

If the loan is for less than the amount described under 'How much money do I need?' (below), then the letter about the loan will not be enough on its own (you can still use the letter, but will have to use one or more of the other methods to show that you have the rest of the money – for example, you can hold the rest of the money as cash in a bank or building society account, provided you comply with all the requirements described in this information sheet for people who hold their money in that way).

How much money do I need?

This depends on:

- how long your course is; and
- whether you will study in London, or outside London (here 'London' means the inner London boroughs, which are: Camden, City of London, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster):

Length of course	Where you will study	Money needed
Nine months or less	In London	Course fees plus £800 for each calendar month* of the course
Nine months or less	Outside London	Course fees plus £600 for each calendar month* of the course
More than nine months	In London	Course fees for one year only plus £7,200
More than nine months	Outside London	Course fees for one year only plus £5,400

*Part months should be 'rounded up' to the next month (for example, if your course lasts six months and 5 days, you need to have money for seven months).

Can I make any deductions if I have paid some of my course fees, or fees for accommodation arranged by my college or university?

Yes, You can deduct the following from the total amount of money you need:

- whatever you have already paid to your Tier 4 sponsor towards course fees; and
- anything you have paid to your Tier 4 sponsor towards your future accommodation fees, if your college or university has arranged accommodation for you.

See the Tier 4 policy guidance paragraphs 140-142 (general students) and 225-226 (child students) for details.

You cannot deduct anything for accommodation fees if you arrange the accommodation with a private landlord or housing company.

You will need to provide the evidence described outlined in the policy guidance, paragraphs 146-147 for general students and paragraphs 231-232 for child students, to show that you qualify to make these deductions. For example, any fees already paid to your Tier 4 sponsor can be included in the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) or you should provide an official receipt for the fees (not an online receipt).

If you do not provide the evidence listed in the policy guidance, you will not qualify to make the deductions.

Can I make a deduction if a government, the British Council, an international organisation, a company or a university will be giving me some financial sponsorship?

Yes, you can deduct the sum they promise to provide from the amount of money you need. You must have a letter from them, and there are precise instructions about the format the letter must take in the policy guidance, paragraphs 148-149 for general students and paragraphs 233-234 for child students. Make sure the letter complies with every one of those instructions. If it does not, it will be ignored and as a result you will probably not meet the financial requirements.

Can I show a reduced amount of money if I was studying recently in the UK?

Yes, in certain circumstances. The policy guidance explains that students who have an established

presence in the UK can benefit by having to show less money for living costs. The criteria that must be met for a student to have an established presence in the UK are outlined in paragraphs 126-130 for general students and paragraphs 210-215 for child students.

These paragraphs explain that if you have completed a course of study in the UK within your last period of leave and this leave finished within the last four months, or you are continuing a course which you have been studying within the last four months and have already completed at least six months of the course, and you wish to apply for a further period of immigration permission as a general student or a child student, you can show a reduced amount of money:

Length of course	Where you will study	Money needed
Nine months or less	In London	Course fees plus £1,600 (or £800 if the course is one calendar month* long, or less)
Nine months or less	Outside London	Course fees plus £1,200 (or £600 if the course is one calendar month* long, or less)
More than nine months	In London	Course fees for the next year of study plus £1,600
More than nine months	Outside London	Course fees for the next year of study plus £1,200

***Part months should be ‘rounded up’ to the next month (for example, if your course lasts six months and 5 days, you need to have money for seven months).**

It does not matter whether your immigration application is to enable you to finish a course you have already started, or to start a new course. The provision covers you in both circumstances.

The UK Border Agency have told UKCISA that you cannot benefit from this provision unless your most recent immigration permission was given to you as a student, or as a Tier 4 General student or Tier 4 Child student.

The policy guidance makes clear that this provision to show a reduced amount of money does not apply “if your: leave finished more than four months ago; or the course you finished was less than six months”.

How long must the money have been in my account?

If you make your immigration application on or after 5 October 2009, then the evidence you produce from the bank or building society or financial institution must show that during the 28 days leading up to the date the evidence is generated, your balance has never dropped below the right amount (this has now been included in the Immigration Rules). If it has dropped below the right amount even for just one day, you do not meet the financial requirements.

What evidence do I need from the bank or building society or financial institution?

The policy guidance gives very precise instructions about the evidence you must produce, in paragraph 156 for general students and paragraph 240 for child students. Follow the instructions strictly, or you will not meet the financial requirements. You can choose to produce statements, or a building society passbook, or a letter from the bank, or a letter from the financial institution (produce whichever one of those four things is appropriate for your situation).

Your evidence must be dated no more than one month before the date you make your immigration

application.

If you are producing a letter from a bank or financial institution, remember that the letter must confirm you have had the right amount for the 28 days leading up to the date on the letter. The policy guidance does not explain this very well.

Paragraph 137 and 222 of the Tier 4 policy guidance, for general students and child students respectively, tells you that if your money is not in UK currency you need to look at the [Oanda Currency Converter](http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic) website [www.oanda.com/convert/classic] to see how much your final balance is worth in UK pounds sterling, and write this yourself on the document.

Does my course have to be full-time?

If you are applying as a Tier 4 General student, your course must fit one of the following definitions:

- a full-time course of study that leads to a qualification at Level 6 (equivalent to degree level) or above of the revised National Qualifications Framework; or
- an overseas course of degree level study that is recognised as being equivalent to a UK Higher Education course and is provided by an overseas Higher Education Institution; or
- a full-time course of study involving a minimum of 15 hours per week of organised daytime study and (except in the case of a short pre-sessional course) leading to a qualification below degree level (where daytime study is 8am-6pm, Monday to Friday, not at weekends).

Will I be allowed to work while I study?

Yes, if you come to the UK as a Tier 4 General or a Tier 4 Child student aged 16 or over, you will be allowed to work during your studies with some restrictions. See the UKCISA information sheet [Working during your studies](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/working_during_studies.php) [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/working_during_studies.php] for further information on the work that you will be able to do while you are in the UK as a Tier 4 student.

Paragraphs 256-267 of the Tier 4 policy guidance also outline what work you can do during your studies.

If a government or international scholarship agency gave you financial support in the last 12 months

If a government or international scholarship agency gave you financial support in the last 12 months, you will have to obtain a letter from them giving unconditional consent to you returning to the UK. There are precise instructions about the format the letter must take, in [leaflet INF29](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/infs/inf29pbsstudent) [www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/infs/inf29pbsstudent] (in the section 'What supporting documents should I include with my application?', the paragraph headed 'Additional evidence for sponsored students').

Paragraphs 38-41 of the policy guidance explains that you only need to do this if you had immigration permission to be in the UK in one of the following immigration categories at the time: student; Tier 4; student nurse; student re-sitting an exam; student writing up a thesis; or postgraduate doctor or dentist.

When will my entry clearance start?

If you apply as a Tier 4 General student (see paragraphs 71-73):

- If it is for a course of six months or more, or for a 'pre-sessional' course of less than six months, your entry clearance will start a month before the course.
- If it is for a course of less than six months, which is not a pre-sessional course, your entry clearance will start seven days before the course.

A course is described as 'pre-sessional' if it prepares you for your main course of study in the UK (paragraph 268 of the policy guidance).

If you apply as a Tier 4 Child student (see paragraphs 169-170):

- Your entry clearance will start no more than one month before the course.

When will my entry clearance end?

If you apply as a Tier 4 General student, your entry clearance will end:

- Four months after the end of the course, if your course lasts 12 months or more.
- Two months after the end of the course, if your course lasts six months or more, but less than 12 months.
- One month after the end of your course, if your course is a pre-sessional course of less than six months.
- Seven days after the end of your course, if your course is less than six months long, and is not a pre-sessional course.
- One month after the end of your course, if you apply to be a postgraduate doctor or dentist on a Foundation Programme.

See the Tier 4 policy guidance, paragraphs 74-77.

If you apply as a Tier 4 Child student, your entry clearance will end on whichever of the following three dates is the earliest:

- Four months after the end of the study programme; OR
- Four months after the end of the period you request; OR
- Four months after the end of three years.

Three years and five months is therefore the absolute maximum you can be given, if you apply as a Tier 4 Child student aged 16-17. See the policy guidance, paragraphs 171-172.

If you have financial sponsorship from a government, the British Council, an international organisation, a company or a university which wholly covers your fees and living costs, and your financial sponsor limits the time you can study in the UK, you will be given permission to remain for that period plus the usual post-course period allowed as stated in paragraph 79 of the policy guidance for general students and paragraph 174 for child students.

If your course is a pre-sessional course which will prepare you for a main course at the same college or university (or its partner college or university), your college or university might give you a single Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) which includes both courses. If they do this, your entry clearance will end after the main course, rather than after the pre-sessional course. This will save you the money and inconvenience involved in having to apply for an extension in the UK. They will only do this if your admission to the main course is already guaranteed (and is not conditional, for example, on you attending or passing the pre-sessional course, or another exam).

Translations

Paragraphs 12-14 of the policy guidance states that if any of the documents you provide with your application is not in English (or Welsh), you must provide a professional translation. Please see the guidance for specific details regarding translations. If you do not follow these guidelines exactly, your translated documents will not be accepted.

How to apply

1. If your course leads to a Master's or doctorate, or a postgraduate qualification abroad, ask the university whether you need an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance certificate for the course. This is a certificate issued by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), which gives you security clearance to study certain subject areas, where the knowledge gained may have application in the development of weapons of mass destruction (for example, certain subjects in the fields of science, mathematics, engineering, technology or medicine).

You can check the list of subject areas that require an ATAS clearance certificate at **Do I need an ATAS certificate?** [www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/services-we-deliver/atas/who-atas/]. You will have to ask your university for the 'JACS code' for your course in order to check the list. If your course requires an ATAS clearance certificate, you will have to apply for, and be issued with, an ATAS clearance certificate before you make your immigration application.

It will take weeks to obtain an ATAS clearance certificate, so start the process early (the process is explained on the FCO website at **Academic Technology Approval Scheme** [www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/services-we-deliver/atas/]). You can apply for an ATAS clearance certificate as soon as you have a conditional offer of a place on a course. If you have more than one offer, you can make separate applications for ATAS clearance certificates relating to each offer, at the same time. You apply for ATAS clearance certificates online. There is no fee to pay. The ATAS clearance certificate applies only to the institution and course of study you put on the application form.

If you are studying for a postgraduate qualification at a higher education institution abroad, you will not need to apply for an ATAS clearance certificate if your study or research in the UK will last six months or less. If you are studying for a postgraduate qualification at a higher education institution abroad and your study or research in the UK will last more than six months, then when looking at the subject areas on the website, look at the list headed 'Visiting research student'.

You do not need to apply for an ATAS clearance certificate if your course is an enhanced MEng undergraduate degree and you will be starting it as an undergraduate student in the UK.

2. Download the UK Border Agency **leaflet INF29** for students [www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/infos/inf29pbsstudent]. It contains links to a number of documents that you also need to print off:
 - Tier 4 guidance, also referred to as the 'policy guidance' (Tier 4 is the part of the immigration system that deals with students).
 - Application form VAF9 – PBS Migrant.
 - PBS Migrant guidance notes.
 - EITHER:
 - PBS Appendix 8 General student, if you are applying as a Tier 4 General student; OR
 - PBS Appendix 9 Child student, if you are applying as a Tier 4 Child student.

If you do not have access to the internet, ask the British Embassy or High Commission in your country for printed copies of the documents.

3. Find your country on the list at **Where to apply** [www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/wheretapply]. It tells you how to start the process of applying in your country – for example, whether you need to make an appointment or complete an online form, or have a tuberculosis test first (tuberculosis tests are only required in a few countries). If you cannot see any information about how long it takes applications in your country to be processed, use the contact details that they give to contact them and ask. Read through the INF29 leaflet, for other instructions about the application process.
4. Take time to read through the whole of the policy guidance, and all the other documents you have printed off, very carefully. They contain a lot of very detailed instructions about the documents you must provide (such as the certificates that have been included in the confirmation of acceptance for studies by your institution, evidence of why they offered you a place, and your financial evidence).

There is no flexibility about the documents – if your documents do not exactly match the

requirements set out in the policy guidance, your application will be refused and you will have wasted your application fee and a lot of time. You will not be warned if you have forgotten to include documents, or your documents are inadequate. Your CAS must not be more than six months old.

5. Complete application form VAF9 and either:

- application form PBS Appendix 8 (if you are applying as a Tier 4 General student); or
- application form PBS Appendix 9 (if you are applying as a Tier 4 Child student).

The forms ask how many 'points' you are claiming. You need to claim:

- 30 points for 'attributes' and for your 'confirmation of acceptance for studies' (these are the same thing, but are described in these two different ways on the two different forms); and
- 10 points for 'maintenance'; and
- zero points for 'English'.

A confirmation of acceptance for studies or CAS is a reference number which will be issued to you by your college or institution after you have accepted the offer to study there. Your college or institution should also send you the information that they have used to generate this reference number, including their Sponsor Licence Number, start and end dates of the course, course title, any tuition or accommodation fees already paid to the college or institution (if a separate receipt has not been issued) and the certificates that they have used to assess your ability to study the course.

You will need to know all of these details before you can accurately complete your immigration application. This is often referred to as a 'CAS statement' and may be sent to you in electronic or hard copy format.

Use the process described for your country to submit your two application forms, and the supporting documents. Make sure you enclose all the documents listed in the forms and guidance as well as the ones mentioned in this information sheet. The INF29 leaflet tells you to submit a photocopy of each document **in addition to** the original document itself. You will have to pay a fee for the application, currently the equivalent of £199 in your local currency.

Warning: Do not allow an agent to send off your application unless you have checked through the completed forms and all the documents that are enclosed with it. Errors made by an agent (or attempts to deceive) can result in you being barred from entering the UK for up to 10 years.

It is important that you keep photocopies of the completed forms and all the supporting documents.

At some point, you will be asked to attend an office to give your fingerprints and have your photograph taken.

Criminal convictions

The application form requires you to state any criminal convictions, including traffic offences, that you have obtained in any country. For further details regarding the types of convictions you must declare, you should refer to the UKBA guidance on [good character](#) [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/eligibility/goodcharacter].

If you have been offered a place on a course based on your International Baccalaureate award, and do not have your award certificate yet

If you have received your IB results on 5 July 2010 but have not yet received your original award certificate (which will not be issued until the end of August 2010), there is a special provision for you to submit your immigration application without this document. You should print out confirmation of your results from the UCAS or IB Office online checking service and include this with your immigration application. Your Tier 4 sponsor must also confirm that they have checked your IB award online in your CAS.

Students may apply using this concession from 5 July 2010 until 29 October 2010.

If you have already received your International Baccalaureate award, and it is the basis of your offer from your Tier 4 sponsor, you must include this certificate with your immigration application.

If you are going to study 'A' levels, or a course that is equivalent to 'A' levels such as a Higher Diploma, and do not have your GCSE results yet

There was a special provision in 2009 for you to submit your application with a visa letter from your college that says that your offer of a place is conditional on your GCSE results (the provision is explained in [leaflet INF29](#), in the paragraph headed 'Do I still need a visa if I have a visa letter?' [www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/infs/inf29pbsstudent]). This means that someone can start to consider your application, but they will not issue your entry clearance until you have received your GCSE results and provided them with a fresh visa letter showing that your place on the 'A' level course (or equivalent course) is unconditional, now that you have your GCSE results.

We have asked UKBA for confirmation that this provision will be extended to 2010 and are awaiting a response.

When your entry clearance is issued

Check it carefully to make sure:

- your name and date of birth are correct
- it says that you are a student
- the Sponsor Licence Number is identical to the one given to you by the college or university where you intend to study
- it starts on or before the date you want to travel to the UK (this will be no more than 1 month before the start date of your course as stated in your CAS)
- it does not end sooner than you expected (see the paragraph above headed [When will my entry clearance end?](#))
- whether it tells you to register with the police on arrival in the UK, or not. If it does, then make a note to contact the International Student Adviser at your college or university to ask how you do that as soon as you arrive in the UK. Unless your college or university has a special arrangement with the police, you will be expected to register with the police within 7 days of your arrival. Note that not all students are given an entry clearance that requires them to register with the police.

If there is anything wrong with it, ask to have it changed immediately, before you travel. It is very difficult to make changes after you travel.

Make sure you talk to your college or university immediately if there will be any problem in arriving in time for the start of your course. Tier 4 sponsor duties now require institutions to keep the UK Border Agency informed of students who have been given immigration permission and then fail to arrive on time, or who do not attend properly, so it is important you keep them informed if there are any problems.

Other things that you should start to do now are:

- Start keeping an up-to-date photocopy of the whole of your passport, except for the blank pages. Get in the habit of updating it each time more stamps or stickers are added by the immigration authorities of any country. If your passport expires at any point, keep hold of it (unless your country requires you to give it back) – as you may be asked for it in connection with a future immigration application.
- Keep your passport somewhere safe – it is a valuable document.
- Keep all the letters (and any other documents, including receipts) that you receive from the UK immigration authorities about any applications you make to them. You might need some of the details

from them when you fill in an immigration application form in the future.

- Take photocopies of all the tickets that you ever buy for travel to the UK, from another country. If you have letters or documents relating to the bookings, keep those too. And keep all the ticket stubs that are given back to you by the travel operator (or even better, the whole ticket). You may need these for future immigration applications.
- The length of your permission to stay in the UK is shown on your entry clearance. Make a note in your diary now, four months ahead of this date. At that stage you should seek advice from the international student adviser at your college or university if you want to extend it. **DO NOT REMAIN IN THE UK AFTER THE DATE SHOWN IN YOUR PASSPORT**(unless you have already submitted your application for an extension).
- If a passport or identity card is stolen, report this to the police (and take a note of when you reported it, which police station you reported it to, and any reference number they gave you). Keep hold of any letters or documents the police give you.

Note: Before travelling to the UK, you may also find it useful to read UKCISA's information sheet **Arriving in the UK** [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/arriving_in_uk.php].

If your entry clearance application is refused

There is 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 an Administrative Review. You have to make your request for an Administrative Review within 28 days of the date you receive the refusal notice. The process is explained in Annex 4 of the Policy Guidance.

Administrative Review does not usually result in a change in decision, because in most cases you are not allowed to produce new or different documents in support of your application. They are simply looking to see if the decision was correct based on the evidence you submitted with your forms.

Note: You can only use a CAS once. If your immigration application is refused, you will need to ask your institution to issue you with a new one so that you can apply again.

Contacts

If you have any questions about this information sheet telephone UKCISA's advice line Monday to Friday 1300-1600 hours (UK time): Tel: (+44) (0)20 7107 9922 (or write to: UKCISA, 9-17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, UK)

UKCISA Information Sheets on other topics of relevance to international students [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/information_sheets.php].

If you have problems at passport control, and are unable to contact the International Student Adviser at your college or university, contact the Immigration Advisory Service (IAS) for free advice:

- Tel: 0844 974 4000 (daytime, Monday to Friday)
- If it is night-time, leave a message on their emergency answerphone: 020 7967 1299
- Website: www.iasuk.org

Telephone numbers

If you are calling from outside the UK, do not dial the (0) in the telephone numbers above. For example, if you want to call UKCISA from outside the UK, dial +44 20 7107 9922. If you are in the UK, do not dial +44, but do start the number with 0. For example, if you call UKCISA from within the UK, dial 020 7107 9922.

Textphone numbers are only for those who use a textphone (minicom) because of difficulties with speech

or hearing.

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