


Making a Tier 4 (General) application

19 January 2012

Warning: This information sheet is based on the immigration rules, and on the policy guidance and application forms issued by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) for Tier 4 (General) applications. We update it as soon as possible after any changes. However, if you have printed this information sheet, we advise that you check on our website that it is still the most recent edition.



We have also created a [PDF file of the Tier 4\(G\) application form](#), which includes our commentary and advice on completing the form. You can use for reference as you are completing your own application form. Click on the image of the form here to view it.

When you see a yellow Question Mark (?), rest your cursor on the Question Mark, and a text box will appear with advice on completing that specific question. The text boxes only work when viewed on a screen. They will not print.

Our advice is based on:

- the UK Border Agency's answers to our specific and general questions about this application form and about other Points Based System application forms
- the immigration rules and the policy guidance
- feedback about the form from international student advisers who advise students on immigration applications
- comments and responses to queries from students on our telephone Advice Line

Who is this information sheet for?

This information sheet is for you if you want to apply for immigration permission under Tier 4 (General). In this information sheet, we sometimes need to distinguish between the two different types of Tier 4 (General) application, depending on where you are applying:

Entry clearance

This means applying in your home country, sometimes called a visa application

Leave to remain

This means applying in the UK, sometimes informally called a "visa extension"

If you are less than 16 years old, you can apply for permission to study at an independent fee-paying school, but you must apply as a Tier 4 (Child) student, not under Tier (4) General. Ask your school for information about how to apply.

If you are 16 or 17 years old, you can sometimes choose to apply either as a Tier 4 (Child) student or as a Tier 4 (General) student. This will depend on:

- the type of institution (school, college or university) where you intend to study
- the type of **Tier 4 sponsor licence** the institution holds: a Tier 4 (Child) licence or a Tier 4 (General) licence or both
- the level of the course.

Again, if you are applying as a Tier 4 (Child), speak to your institution directly.

If you want to study a short course in the UK, you may be eligible to apply to enter the UK as a 'student visitor' (or as a 'child visitor' if you are under 18 years old). For immigration purposes, a short course is any course which lasts no more than six months or an English language course which lasts no more than 11 months. See **Making a student immigration application as a student visitor** [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/immigration_student_visitor.php].

If you are applying as a Tier 4 (General) student and you have family (spouse, partner and/or children) who want to apply for immigration permission as your dependants, see **Your family's immigration** [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/your_family.php].

If you are a national of the European Economic Area (EEA), or of Switzerland, see **EEA and Swiss students** [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/eea.php].

Introduction

On 31 March 2009, the Immigration Rules for students changed and became Tier 4 of the Points Based Immigration System. Since this system was introduced, the UK government has revised the Immigration Rules relating to Tier 4 a number of times. The UK Border Agency (UKBA) is the department within the Home Office which is responsible for immigration, and staff within the UKBA process all immigration applications.

If you want to come to the UK to study, or to extend your stay for further studies, you need to apply to the UK immigration authorities under Tier 4 of the Points Based System (PBS).

Usually, you must meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules which are in force on the date that you submit your immigration application. The details in this information sheet are based on the most recent changes to the Immigration Rules which came into force on 4 July 2011.

If you want to make a successful Tier 4 (General) application, it is extremely important that:

- before you apply, you read and understand the UKBA's **Tier 4 of the Points Based System - Policy Guidance** [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/Tier4migrantguidance.pdf] - this information sheet is based on version 07/11 of the policy guidance, to be used for all Tier 4 applications on or after 4 July 2011
- you check that you meet all the requirements before you apply
- you provide evidence in the exact 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 collate the documents required to make your application
- your application does not come under the general grounds for refusal
- you check with an adviser at the institution (school, college or university) where you intend to study, for any further changes that might affect your application.

You should wait until you have obtained your immigration permission before you book any non-refundable tickets for travel..

I already have student immigration permission for the UK that is still valid. Do I really need to apply again?

In most cases, yes.

If you applied for your current immigration permission before 31 March 2009 under the pre-Tier 4 student immigration rules, and it is still valid, you can use it to continue your full-time studies in the UK. If your permission will expire before the end of your new course, check with your institution that you will be able to apply to extend your stay under Tier 4 to complete the course. You will need to check that (a) they have a Tier 4 General licence, and (b) the course is one for which they can sponsor you under Tier 4.

Otherwise, if you have a Tier 4 (General) visa that is still valid, you can use it to continue your full-time studies with the same Tier 4 sponsor if:

- they still have a Tier 4 sponsor licence; and
- the new course is one for which they are happy to continue sponsoring you under Tier 4; and
- they have not reported you to the UKBA as having finished your course, interrupted your studies, or having not enrolled. If they have reported you, it is likely that your visa has been "curtailed" and is no longer valid.

If you are applying in your home country, we strongly advise that you check these three issues specifically with the Tier 4 sponsor before you attempt to enter the UK using Tier 4 immigration permission issued for previous study. Furthermore, even if your existing immigration permission does allow you to enter the UK to continue your studies, it is often more straightforward to make a new Tier 4 entry clearance application for the new course anyway. Your situation and intentions will be clearer to UK Border Force officials, and you will not need to make an unnecessary leave to remain application to continue your course the UK, which can be expensive and time-consuming.

Where can I study as a Tier 4 (General) student?

As a Tier 4 (General) student, you can study at any school, college or university which has been granted a Tier 4 (General) sponsor licence by the UKBA. Only institutions with a Tier 4 sponsor licence can issue you with a **confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS)**, which you must obtain in order to apply for immigration permission as a Tier 4 (General) student.

Each institution granted a Tier 4 sponsor licence will be given one of the following sponsor ratings: Highly Trusted; A (Trusted); or B (Sponsor). The courses that an institution can offer to international students will depend upon their Tier 4 sponsor rating. Highly Trusted sponsors (HTS) can offer the widest range of courses.

You can check which institutions have a Tier 4 (General or Child) sponsor licence, and how they are rated, on the **Register of Tier 4 Sponsors (approved education providers)** [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/employersandsponsors/pointsbasedsystem/registerofs]

NOTE: Since 21 April 2011, Tier 4 sponsors with a B-rated licence cannot sponsor new students. They can sponsor existing students who need to apply for leave to remain in order for them to complete their course. From April 2012, all Tier 4 sponsors must obtain HTS status in order to sponsor new Tier 4 students after this date.

What can I study as a Tier 4 (General) student?

You can study a wide range of courses in the UK, but you must check that the course you want to study is at a high enough level.

Some different levels of study were previously allowed, if the CAS was issued before 21 April 2011. However, any CAS issued before this date is now invalid for a new application because a CAS is only valid for 6 months. If you need advice about a pending Tier 4 application based on a CAS issued before 21 April 2011, contact your Tier 4 sponsor direct for advice..

The levels of courses studied in the UK are defined by the following organisations:

- English language courses: **Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR)** [www.linguanet-europa.org/plus/en/home.jsp] For your own information, you can assess your level of English using this website.
- Other courses in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: **The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) or the Qualifications and Credits Framework (QCF)** [www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualification-and-assessment-framework/89-articles/250-explaining-the-national-qualifications-framework]
- Other courses in Scotland: **The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)** [www.scqf.org.uk/The%20Framework/]

+ Degrees and degree-level courses

+ Study which is part of a degree-level course you are studying in another country

+ Other courses below degree-level

+ Pre-sessional courses

+ English language courses

+ Courses with a work placement

+ Re-sits and repeats

+ Student union sabbatical officers

+ Postgraduate doctors and dentists in training

+ Supplementary studies

Where do I apply?

+ Applying in your home country (entry clearance)

+ Applying in the UK (leave to remain)

When should I apply?

+ Applying in your home country (entry clearance)

+ Applying in the UK (leave to remain)

What biometric data do I have to give?

As part of the Tier 4 (General) application, you are required to provide your biometrics (your facial photograph and fingerprints).

+ Applying in your home country (entry clearance)

+ Applying in the UK (leave to remain)

Do I have to go for an interview as part of my application?

+ Applying in your home country (entry clearance)

+ Applying in the UK (leave to remain)

Do I need to have a medical check?

- + Applying in your home country (entry clearance)
- + Applying in the UK (leave to remain)

Which application form should I use?

- + Applying in your home country (entry clearance)
- + Applying in the UK (leave to remain)

The confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS)

You must have a CAS before making an application as a Tier 4 (General) student. A CAS is an electronic document generated by your Tier 4 sponsor after you have accepted an offer to study there.

Your institution will send you the the unique reference number that corresponds to your CAS. You must write this reference number in the appropriate field on the application form. The UKBA official processing your application will check this electronic document to confirm that you have an unconditional offer from the institution for the course that you intend to study.

Your institution should also send you the information that they have used to generate your CAS. This is often referred to as a 'CAS statement' and it is normally sent to you by email. The CAS statement itself is not required for your Tier 4 application, but it gives you all of the information about your course and sponsor, and some of the information about money, that you need to complete the entry clearance application form. If there are any discrepancies between the information used by the institution to generate the CAS and your application form, then your application may be refused.

The CAS statement should tell you:

- the 14 digit reference number for the CAS, containing a mixture of letters and numbers
- the Sponsor Licence Number (SLN) of the institution where you intend to study
- the start and end dates of the course that you intend to study
- the title of the course that you intend to study
- the tuition fees for first year of the course, or the entire course if it will last one year or less. If your CAS issued for further study on the same course, the "first year of study" means the first year of this new period of study.
- any tuition fees that you have already paid to the institution, if a separate receipt has not been issued
- any accommodation fees that you have already paid to the institution, if a separate receipt has not been issued
- any qualifications that the institution has used to make you an offer to study the course
- an assessment of your English language ability, including any formal qualifications considered
- for a leave to remain application for someone who previously studied with Tier 4 (General) immigration permission, it will confirm that the new course demonstrates academic progress from your previous study

In some cases, your institution may issue you with a single CAS to cover both a pre-sessional course and a main course of study. You may be issued with a single CAS if you meet all of the following requirements:

- You intend to study at a **higher education institution (HEI)**
- You have an unconditional offer for the pre-sessional course
- You have an unconditional offer for your main course (for example, this means you are not required to pass an exam at the end of your pre-sessional course)

- You intend to study both courses at the same institution, or at partner institutions with the same sponsor licence number (SLN)
- Your pre-sessional course will last less than three months
- Your main course will be at degree-level (NQF 6 / SCQF 9) or above
- There will be a gap of no more than one month between the end of your pre-sessional course and the start of your main course

If you are issued with a single CAS, it will give the start date as the start of your pre-sessional course and the end date as the end of your main course.

You may obtain a CAS from several different institutions. However, you should only apply for entry clearance using the CAS sent to you by the institution where you intend to study. When your immigration permission has been granted, and you enter the UK, you must study at this institution (see below What conditions will be attached to my immigration permission?).

A **higher education institution (HEI)** is defined by the UKBA as an institution with degree awarding powers; or an institution in receipt of funding as a higher education institute from the Department of Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland, the Higher Education Funding Council of England, the Higher Education Funding Council of Wales, or the Scottish Funding Council; or Richmond, the American International University in London which is recognised in The Education Order 2006.

Applications by "low risk" students

Since 4 July 2011, nationals of some countries do not need to provide evidence of their qualifications or their money when they apply for Tier 4 (General). The UKBA calls this the "differentiation agreements" for "low risk students".

You are a "low risk" student if you are applying for Tier 4 (General) to study at a Highly Trusted Sponsor, and:

- you are a national of Argentina, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Trinidad and Tobago, or USA, and you are applying for entry clearance in your country of nationality, or for leave to remain in the UK; or
- you hold a Hong Kong SAR passport or a British National (Overseas) passport and you are applying for entry clearance in Hong Kong, or for leave to remain in the UK; or
- you hold a Taiwan (ROC) passport with a residence card number, and you are applying for entry clearance in Taiwan, or for leave to remain in the UK.

In the next section we have provided specific information for "low risk" students where appropriate. If there is no specific information for "low risk" students, you must provide the standard evidence.

It is very important that as a "low risk" student you still obtain the evidence of your qualifications and your money, even though you do not need to send them. The application includes a signed declaration that you have the evidence, and the UKBA can ask for it.

What evidence should I include with my application?

You should include all of the documents listed in the application forms and guidance, including those described below. You will also need to enclose a valid passport with your application, so ensure that your passport is not about to expire.

There is a fee for the application. An entry clearance application currently costs £255, payable in local currency, and a leave to remain application currently costs £386, payable by any of the methods listed on the application form.

Your qualifications

You must have original copies of all qualifications that your institution has listed in the section 'Evidence used to obtain offer' of your CAS. If this information is not listed in the CAS statement, ask your institution for details.

"Low risk" students should keep the originals safe in case the UKBA asks to see them. All other applicants must submit the original certificates or transcripts of results..

If you submit any certificates or transcripts which are not in English (or Welsh), you must also include a translation of each. Read the section on **Translations** (below) for more details.

Assessment of your English language ability

Your English language ability will be assessed by the institution that you want to study as part of the academic admissions process. Tier 4 sponsors must follow specific guidelines from the UKBA when assessing your English language ability before they can issue you with a CAS.

In most cases the institution must state in the CAS how they have assessed your English language ability and the level of ability that you have obtained in reading, writing, speaking and listening. You may need to take one of the UKBA's approved secure English language tests (SELTs) as evidence of your English language ability. You may wish to download UKBA's list of **SELTs** [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/new-approved-english-tests.pdf].

You should not need to take an additional English language test if:

- you are the national of a **majority English-speaking country** (see below); or
- you have completed an academic qualification at degree level or above, which was taught in a **majority English-speaking country** (including the UK and Ireland but excluding Canada); or
- you have successfully completed a course as a Tier 4 (Child) student, or as a student under the rules that were in force before Tier 4 and you were granted this permission whilst under the age of 18.

However, if you do not fall into one of the categories above you may need provide evidence that you have a minimum level of English language ability. The level of English language ability that you need to demonstrate, and the evidence you must provide, will depend on:

- the date that your CAS is issued
- the course that you wish to study
- the type of institution that has issued your CAS.

If you wish to study a course at degree-level (NQF level 6 / SCQF level 9) or above:

- your English language ability must be at level B2 or above
AND
- your institution can choose how to assess this, if they are a HEI (see above). The UKBA's policy guidance states that in this situation, you do not have to submit any evidence of your English language ability with your immigration application
- your institution must assess this using a SELT, if they are not a HEI (see above). You must submit the relevant certificate as evidence with your immigration application, if you do not, your application will be refused.

If you wish to study a course below degree-level (below NQF level 6 / SCQF level 9), a pre-sessional course or an English language course:

- your English language ability must be at level B1 or above
AND
- your institution must assess this using a SELT - it does not matter what type of institution you wish to study at.

On 3 June 2011 the UKBA published the document [English language requirement - clarification June 2011](#) [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/news/english-clarification.pdf]. This confirms that if your HEI has issued you with a single CAS including both your pre-sessional course and your main course (degree-level or above), then for immigration purposes, your English language ability must be assessed at a minimum level of B1. As a transitional measure, for this year only, the UKBA has confirmed that you will not be required to have taken a SELT for immigration purposes, however your institution may require this for academic purposes. Your institution will be required to confirm that you have reached a minimum level of B2 before starting your main course of study.

Majority English-speaking countries are defined by the UKBA as: Antigua and Barbuda; Australia; The Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Canada; Dominica; Grenada; Guyana; Jamaica; New Zealand; St Kitts and Nevis; St Lucia; St Vincent and the Grenadines; Trinidad and Tobago; United States of America. UKBA will assess your nationality using your passport.

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

If your course leads to a qualification at Master's or doctorate level, 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 Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), which gives you security clearance to study certain subject areas. These subject areas relate to where the knowledge gained may have application in the development of weapons of mass destruction (for example, certain science subjects, mathematics, engineering, technology or medicine).

Your institution must confirm in your CAS whether you require an ATAS clearance certificate, or not. If you do, you must apply to the FCO for your ATAS clearance certificate before you submit your immigration application.

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/].

If you are applying for ATAS clearance in respect of a taught Masters with JACS code H8 (Chemical Process and Energy Engineering), there is a temporary problem with the online application, reported in January 2012. In a letter to Higher Education Institutions dated January 2012, the ATAS Team at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office wrote:

"We are aware that applicants are currently unable to select "H8" from the dropdown list of taught courses on our online application form and are currently working to rectify this problem.

"In the meantime, we would advise students to select the "Masters by Research" option at the registration stage of their application and select H8 from this dropdown list. Once applicants have progressed to the "Proposed Study" page of the application, they will be presented with a full list of exit qualifications to choose from, including taught masters qualifications."

Letter from your parents if you are under 18 years old

If you submit an application as a Tier 4 (General) student when you are 16 or 17 years old, you must also show that your application is supported by a letter from your parent, parents, or legal guardian. Their letter must confirm all the following:

- their relationship to you
- that they consent to your application as a Tier 4 (General) student
- that they consent to your living arrangements in the UK
- if you are applying for entry clearance, that they consent to your independent travel to the UK

If one parent or legal guardian has legal custody or sole responsibility of you, the letter must confirm this and be signed by that parent or legal guardian. If not, then both parents or legal guardians must give their consent and the letter must be signed by each parent or legal guardian.

Translations

If your application includes any documents which are not in English (or Welsh), you must also include an original translation of each document. Each translation must contain:

- confirmation from the translator / translation company that it is an accurate translation of the original document
- the date of the translation
- the full name and signature of the translator, or of an authorised official of the translation company
- the contact details of the translator or translation company

Consent of current or previous official financial sponsor, if they are a government or an international scholarship agency

If you have an official financial sponsor for your proposed studies, and the sponsor is a government or an international scholarship agency, their sponsor letter (which you will need for evidence of your money, see below) should specifically state that they consent to your Tier 4 (General) application.

If you were had financial sponsorship from a government or international scholarship agency for previous studies, and the sponsorship ended less than 12 months ago, you must also obtain and include a letter of consent from the former sponsor.

Photographs

An entry clearance application requires one passport sized colour photograph of yourself, and a leave to remain application requires two. Any photographs must comply with the UKBA's [photo guidance](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/flr/photoguidance0409.pdf) [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/flr/photoguidance0409.pdf].

Police Registration Certificate

If you are applying in the UK, and your current or most recent immigration permission required you to register with the police, you must include the Police Registration Certificate with your application. Make sure it is up to date and shows your current address and current immigration status. For more information, see [Protecting your Tier 4 immigration status](#)

If you are applying in your home country for entry clearance, and you still have a Police Registration Certificate issued in respect of a previous stay in the UK, you do not need to include it with your application.

Your finances

You will need to show that you have enough money to pay for your course fees and your maintenance (accommodation costs and other living expenses) while you are in the UK.

How much money do I need?

The actual amount of money that you need to have for your course fees and your maintenance will depend on:

- how long your courses lasts AND
- where you will be studying in the UK

Course fees

You must have enough money to pay for the course fees for the first year of your course, or the entire course if it is one year or less. Your CAS will include the fees that you will be required to pay for the first year of your course, or the entire course if it is one year or less. The UKBA will use the details in your CAS to confirm how much money you need for your course fees.

If you do not need to pay any course fees to your Tier 4 sponsor, it will be confirmed in the CAS that no fees are due. For example, if you are applying to come to the UK as part of a 'study abroad' programme, and you have paid all of your course fees to your home institution, this will be confirmed in your CAS.

Maintenance

Your accommodation and living costs are called 'maintenance'. You must have a fixed amount of money to cover your maintenance.

If you will be studying in **inner London** (see below for the list of areas this covers) you will need £800 for each month of your course, up to a maximum of nine months. This means that if you will be studying in inner London for a course that lasts one month only, the minimum amount that you will need is £800. If you will be studying in inner London for a course lasting nine months or more, the maximum amount that you will need is £7,200.

If you will be studying in outer London or elsewhere in the UK, you will need £600 for each month of your course, up to a maximum of nine months. This means that if you will be studying in outer London or elsewhere in the UK for a course that lasts one month only, the minimum amount that you will need is £600. If you will be studying in outer London or elsewhere in the UK for a course lasting nine months or more, the maximum amount that you will need is £5,400.

If you will be studying for part of a month, this should be 'rounded up' to the next month when you are working out how much money you will need for your maintenance. For example, if your course will last five and a half months, you will need enough money for six months.

Inner London is defined as the following London boroughs: Camden; City of London; Hackney; Hammersmith and Fullam; Haringey; Islington; Kensington and Chelsea; Lambeth; Lewisham; Newark; Southwark; Tower Hamlets; Wandsworth; Westminster. If you do not know whether your institution is in one of these boroughs, you can enter the postcode of the main study address at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk. This will tell you which borough has that postcode.

If your institution is not in one of the boroughs listed above, then you will be studying in outer London or elsewhere in the UK.

Can I have a lower amount of money?

Yes, in certain circumstances. If you have previously studied in the UK, you may be allowed to have a lower amount of money. It does not matter if you are applying for immigration permission to complete a course that you have already started, or to begin a new course.

You will be allowed to have a lower amount of money if your CAS is issued by a Highly Trusted Sponsor, and you currently have valid immigration permission as:

- a Tier 4 (General) student
- a Tier 4 (Child) student
- a student under the immigration rules in place before 31 March 2009
- a Postgraduate doctor or dentist

AND

- you have finished a single course that lasted six months or more during this immigration permission, or
- you will continue to study on a single course and you have already completed at least six months of that course.

Students who benefit from this provision are said to have an 'established presence' in the UK. If you have an established presence, you will need to have enough money to pay the course fees for the first year of your course (or the entire course if it will be less than one year) plus maintenance to cover two months. This means that the maximum amount you will need to have for maintenance is:

- £1,600 if you will be studying in inner London
- £1,200 if you will be studying elsewhere in the UK.

If you do not meet all the criteria for an established presence you must show that you have the full amount of money required, as described above. However, the UKBA confirmed to UKCISA on 6 December 2011 that students who need to make a new Tier 4 application because their previous sponsor has closed will also have established presence if they have studied for six months or more, even if they have not finished the course. See [our guide for students whose college has closed](#).

The immigration rule about established presence (Appendix C, paragraph 14) and the relevant paragraph in the Tier 4 policy guidance (paragraph 155) confirm that you can only have established presence if your relevant immigration permission is still valid. However, the application form for a Tier 4 (General) entry clearance application in your home country (Points Based System Appendix 8 [July 2011]) states at question 6.5 that you have established presence only if "your last grant of leave ended less than four months ago". We have queried with UKBA whether someone whose previous immigration permission has already expired can rely on this definition, even though the definition on the application form is not reflected in either the rules or the policy guidance.

What if I have already paid some of my course fees, or fees for accommodation to my institution?

You can deduct the following from the total amount of money that you need as part of your immigration application:

- money that you have already paid to your Tier 4 sponsor towards your course fees, and
- money that you have already paid to your Tier 4 sponsor towards your future accommodation fees, if you will be living in university or college accommodation

You cannot deduct any advance payment for any other type of housing, nor can you adjust the amounts if you will have no housing costs.

Your CAS may include details of any money paid to your institution. If not, you will need to provide an official receipt issued by your institution. It must be an original paper receipt confirming what amount of money you have paid towards your course fees and/or your accommodation fees.

If you are a "low risk" student, you should obtain the receipt, but you do not need to include it with your initial application.

If you have not paid enough money to your Tier 4 sponsor to cover ALL of your course fees and the total amount that you need to show for your maintenance, then you must have the rest of the money required.

What financial documents should I include?

If you are a "low risk" student, you should obtain the evidence of your money in the format explained below, but you do not need to include it with your initial application. All other applicants must include the evidence with their application.

Evidence of your money must meet specific requirements. If they do not, your immigration application may be refused.

As evidence of your money, you must use:

- personal bank or building society statements, or
- a building society passbook, or
- a letter from your bank confirming your funds, or
- a letter from a regulated financial institution confirming your money or loan, or
- a letter from your national government confirming a loan

Bank accounts and bank statements

A bank account can be in your name, or in your parents' or legal guardian's name, and it can be a joint account you hold with someone else. You can use more than one account if necessary, and you can use a combination of your account(s) and your parent's or legal guardian's account(s). If you are relying on a loan, the loan must be in your name only.

You can use an overseas bank account. However, if your funds are not in pounds sterling, you should convert the closing balance and write this sum on the document that you are using as evidence of your finances. The UKBA uses [the OANDA website](http://www.oanda.com) [www.oanda.com] to convert currencies into pounds sterling, so you should use this exchange rate too.

The UKBA has published lists of financial institutions in India, Pakistan and the Philippines that do not verify financial statements to their satisfaction. If you apply for Tier 4 (General) on or after 24 November 2011 with financial documents issued by these institutions, the UK Border Agency will refuse your application. If you apply before 24 November 2011 using their documents, your application runs a higher risk than usual of refusal because the UKBA is likely to have problems verifying your documents. The UKBA's website has [lists of the unacceptable and acceptable financial institutions in India, Pakistan and the Philippines](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/studying/financial-institutions/) [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/studying/financial-institutions/].

If you wish to use a bank account in your parents' or guardian's name or names, you must also collate evidence of their relationship to you. A "low risk" student should obtain the evidence, but does not need to include it with their initial application. All other applicants should include the evidence with their application.

This evidence of your relationship with your parent(s) or legal guardian must be:

- your original birth certificate, or a notarised copy, showing the name of your parent or parents whose bank account you are using for your 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 for your immigration application
- 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 for your immigration application.

If you intend to use money in a bank or building account, the full amount of money that you need must be in the account for 28 days up to to the date of the closing balance. This means that the account must not drop below the amount that you need to show at **any time** during the 28 day period. If it does your immigration application may be refused. Furthermore, the Immigration Rules now state that your financial documents must show a closing balance dated no more than 31 days before the date that you submit your application, however the policy guidance still refers to financial documents being no more than one month old, or no more than six months if you are relying on a letter which confirms you have a loan.

What if I have an official financial sponsor?

An **official financial sponsor** is defined in the Tier 4 policy guidance as:

- the UK government
- your home government
- the British Council
- any international organisation
- an international company (the UKBA has not defined 'international company' but it seems to mean a company with a trading presence (an office) in more than one country)
- any university

If you receive funding from any of the above sources, you will need to obtain a letter from them confirming what they will pay towards your course fees and maintenance. This letter must show:

- the student's name (your name)
- the name and contact details of the official financial sponsor

- the date of the letter
- the length of the sponsorship
- the amount of money the sponsor is giving to the student, or a statement that ALL course fees and living costs will be covered.

If you are a "low risk" student, you should obtain this letter and keep it safe, but you do not need to include it with your initial application. All other applicants should include the letter with their application.

If your official financial sponsor is not covering ALL of your course fees and maintenance, you must have the rest of the money required.

What are "criminal convictions"?

The application form requires you to state any criminal convictions, including traffic offences, that you have obtained in any country, and to provide details on the form. This is because the immigration rules include provision to refuse the application of someone with certain criminal convictions, under the general grounds for refusing (see next section).

You are not required to obtain or include any specific evidence relating to the convictions.

For further details about the types of convictions that you must declare, see the [UKBA guidance on good character](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/eligibility/goodcharacter/) [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/eligibility/goodcharacter/].

If you have ever lived in Northern Ireland, you will need to confirm this on the form at question B25, and the UKBA will contact you and ask you to complete a DAT1 form. The form is an authorisation to run a criminal records check with the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

What are the "general grounds for refusing" and "breaches of immigration conditions"?

The immigration rules include provision for an application to be refused under the "general grounds for refusing". The UKBA has detailed [internal guidance on the general grounds for refusing](#), with separate guidance for applications in your home country (entry clearance) or in the UK (leave to remain). The guidance for leave to remain applications summarises that UKBA staff should be checking applications for:

"...evidence of any adverse

- *behaviour (using deception including false representation, fraud, forgery, non-disclosure of material facts or failure to cooperate)*
- *character, conduct or associations (criminal history, deportation order, travel ban, exclusion, non-conducive to public good, national security)*
- *immigration history (breaching conditions, using deception in an application)."*

Since 31 October 2011, the immigration rules include the provision to refuse an application by someone who has an outstanding unpaid invoice, issued since 1 November 2011, for National Health Service treatment incurred when they were an "overseas visitor". An "overseas visitor" is someone who is not entitled to free NHS treatment in the UK, other than emergency treatment. See [Am I entitled to NHS treatment?](#)

The UKBA's internal guidance quoted above has not yet been amended to include this new provision in the immigration rules, and neither has the Tier 4 (G) form for leave to remain applications in the UK. However, the VAF9 form for applications outside the UK was amended in October 2011 and does ask at questions 7.2. to 7.4 about previous medical treatment in the UK.

For an entry clearance application in your home country, there are additional general grounds for refusing related to some types of overstay in the UK, and to health. The application forms therefore include some

questions about general matters not specifically related to your proposed studies, including questions about breaches of conditions (see below).

+ Applying in your home country (entry clearance)

+ Applying in the UK (leave to remain)

I am applying in the UK. How do I send my application to UKBA?

When you apply for leave to remain in the UK, you have several options for how to send your application.

By post

It is important that you send your application no later than the date that your current immigration permission for the UK ends.

For sending important or valuable documents by post, you should use Special Delivery, which includes full online tracking, insurance up to £2500, and is handled separately from normal post. Items sent by a separate service called Recorded Signed For, sometimes called "recorded delivery", includes a signature on delivery, but no tracking or insurance, and is delivered with normal first and second class post. The maximum compensation for a letter sent Recorded Signed For which is not delivered is 100 First Class stamps (currently the equivalent of £46).

Keep your receipt as proof of postage, and as proof that you have applied. You may need to show this to your institution before you can enrol on your course.

The fee for a postal application is £386. It is advisable to pay this fee using a bankers' draft or postal orders. If you pay by cheque, your application will take five working days longer to process than if you use a bankers' draft or postal orders. This is because of the time needed for your cheque to be 'cleared' by the bank. It is not a good idea to use a credit or debit card to pay for your application. Card payments often fail (because, for example, there is a mistake in entering the card details on the form).

If your payment fails, your application will be rejected and returned to you. If your current permission to be in the UK ends before this happens, you will not have the opportunity to try to pay again, and you will become an overstayer.

Soon after you send your application to the UKBA, you will receive a letter from them asking you to make an appointment to have your **biometric data** taken (see below for details).

You will need to send your passport with your application. The UKBA will keep your passport until your application has been processed. This may take many weeks. Do not arrange any travel abroad until you have received your passport and your biometrics residence permit (BRP) from the UKBA.

When your application has been successfully processed your passport and documents will be sent back to you, either by courier or Recorded Signed For. If you prefer for your passport and documents to be returned using Special Delivery, enclose a pre-paid Special Delivery envelope.

Your passport will not show that you have been given more time in the UK. Your BRP, which will be sent to you a little later, is your evidence that you have been granted immigration permission to stay in the UK. You should wait until you have received your BRP before you book to travel abroad.

Asking your institution to send your application on your behalf

Your institution may provide a service where they can check your application and send it to the UKBA on your behalf either:

- by **post** (as outlined above), or
- via the student batch scheme (see below).

Not all institutions participate in the student batch scheme or are able to offer such a service. Ask your international student adviser if your institution does.

The fee for your immigration application is £386. However, your institution may also charge a small fee to cover their administration costs.

It is still your responsibility to complete the form and gather all of the documents that you need to submit with your application. They may also ask you to provide a copies of your application and documents, for their own evidence.

Your application will be processed in the same way as if you sent it direct to the Home Office yourself by post (see above) and you will need to provide your biometrics once you have received a letter from the Home Office. However, if there are any queries with your application, the caseworker at the Home Office will contact your institution directly, rather than contacting you.

You will need to send your passport with your application. The UKBA will keep your passport until your application has been processed. This may take many weeks or longer. Do not arrange any travel to abroad until you have received your passport and your BRP from the UKBA.

When your application has been successfully processed your passport and documents will be sent back to your institution by or Recorded Signed For. Recorded Signed For. If you prefer for your passport and documents to be returned using Special Delivery, enclose a pre-paid Special Delivery envelope.

Your passport will not show that you have been given more time in the UK. Your BRP, which will be sent to you a little later, is your evidence that you have been granted immigration permission to stay in the UK. You should wait until you have received your BRP before you book to travel abroad.

Taking your application to a public enquiry office (PEO)

If you choose to submit your application in person at a PEO the immigration application fee is £702. You can pay this fee using a bankers' draft, postal orders or a credit card. If you are using someone else's credit card, your card holder must come with you to the PEO. You cannot pay in cash.

If you wish to submit your application at a PEO you must book an appointment in advance. You can do this either online at [UK Border Agency Appointment Booking](https://ukbabooking.homeoffice.gov.uk/ukba/index.start) [https://ukbabooking.homeoffice.gov.uk/ukba/index.start] or by telephone 0870 606 7766. It may be weeks before an appointment is available. You must book an appointment to go to a PEO on a date before your current UK immigration permission ends, even if this means travelling to a PEO which is not the closest one to where you live. If you cannot get an appointment in time, you should apply by post or through your institution, as outlined above.

If you accept an appointment for a date after your current UK immigration permission ends, you will not have a right of appeal if your application for leave to remain as a Tier 4 (General) student is refused. You will become an overstayer in the UK and this may affect any immigration applications that you submit for any country in the future.

At the appointment, your application and supporting documents should be checked by a caseworker. You will also have your biometric data (your facial photograph and your fingerprints) recorded.

Applying in person does not include an interview, nor is there any opportunity to discuss or explain aspects of your application. If you feel that there are aspects of your application that would benefit from further clarification or explanation, you should apply by post and provide these details in writing.

You should receive a decision on your application on the day that you attend the PEO and you will be able to take your passport and other documents away with you. However, you will not receive your biometrics residence permit (BRP) on the same day. It will be sent to you by courier some time later. This identity card is your evidence that you have been granted immigration permission to stay in the UK. You should wait until you have received your BRP before you book to travel abroad.

When your immigration permission is issued

Check that it includes all the correct information:

- your name and date of birth. A biometric residence permit (BRP) will also have your place of birth.
- that you are a Tier 4 (General) student

- the Sponsor Licence Number (SLN) of the institution that you intend to study at. Some BRPs show the CAS number instead of the SLN, but this is fine.
- that the start and end dates of the permission are correct (see the paragraph below [When will my entry clearance end?](#))
- whether you can work (see the paragraph below [What conditions will be attached to my immigration permission?](#))
- for some students, the instruction to register with the police.

+ Applying in your home country (entry clearance)

+ Applying in the UK (leave to remain)

When will my immigration permission start?

+ Applying in your home country (entry clearance)

+ Applying in the UK (leave to remain)

When will my immigration permission end?

As a Tier 4 (General) student, the date that your immigration permission ends will end depends on the length and type of course that you are studying. Your CAS will include the start and end dates of the course.

Your immigration permission will end:

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

NOTE: If you will be studying for part of a month, this will not be 'rounded up'. For example, if your course will last 11 months and three weeks, you will be granted an additional two months after the end of your course.

If your course is a pre-session course which will prepare you for degree-level study at the same institution (or at its partner institution), you may be issued with a single CAS which includes both courses. If they do this, your immigration permission will end after the main course, rather than after the pre-session course. This will save you money and the inconvenience involved in having to apply for leave to remain after the pre-session course. Your institution will only issue you with a single CAS if you meet all of the requirements, see the paragraph above [Your confirmation of acceptance for studies](#) for details.

Make a note of the date that your immigration permission ends. You must not remain in the UK after this date, unless you have already submitted a further immigration application.

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

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 limit applies to entry clearance applications submitted outside the UK, as well as to extension applications submitted within the UK.

This three year limit can be spent studying a single course or several courses as a Tier 4 (General) student. However, it does not include any time that you have already spent in the UK studying courses below degree level with immigration permission:

- as a student under the Immigration Rules that were in place before 31 March 2009
- as a Tier 4 (General) student when you were 16 or 17 years old
- as a Tier 4 (Child) student when you were 17 years old or under
- under any other category of the immigration rules.

What conditions will be attached to my immigration permission?

Your Tier 4 (General) immigration permission has some conditions. The restrictions applied to each condition will be stated on your entry clearance vignette, or on your Biometric Residence Permit.

Study at your intended institution

You must enrol and study at the institution that issued the CAS which you submitted as part of your successful Tier 4 (General) student application. If you change your mind before travelling to the UK, and you wish to study at a different institution, you must make a new entry clearance application using a CAS from the new institution.

For more information about this condition, and the rules about changing Tier 4 sponsor after arriving in the UK, see our information sheet [Protecting your Tier 4 student immigration status](#) [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/protect_t4_status.php]

Work restriction or prohibition

As a Tier 4 (General) student studying in the UK you may be granted immigration permission which allows you to work outside of your studies, part-time during term-time and full-time during the vacations. This will depend on the date you apply for immigration permission, and on whether you are studying at a higher education institution, publicly-funded further education college, or another type of institution..

For more information on the work that you will be allowed to do while you are studying in the UK, read the UKCISA information sheet [Working during your studies](#) [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/working_during_studies.php].

You may also be allowed to undertake a work placement which is part of your course. This will depend on:

- the level of course that you intend to study, and
- the sponsor rating of the Tier 4 institution that you intend to study at.

You should read the paragraph above on [Courses involving a work placement](#) for details about which courses involving work placements that you are allowed to study as a Tier 4 (General) student.

Registration with the police

If you are required to register with the police, your immigration permission will state this. For more information about this condition, see our information sheet [Protecting your Tier 4 student immigration status](#) [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/protect_t4_status.php]

"No recourse to public funds"

Your immigration conditions prohibit you from accessing 'public funds', which means certain welfare benefits and local authority housing. To find out what counts as 'public funds', see our Information Sheet [Welfare Benefits](#) [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/welfare.php].

Using the National Health Service, sending your child to a state school, being exempt from the Council Tax, and paying "home" fees for study do **not** count as accessing 'public funds'.

If you claim 'public funds', the UK immigration authorities can refuse your immigration application or remove you from the UK. You might be barred from returning to the UK for a certain period.

Tier 4 sponsor duties to report immigration matters to the UKBA

All Tier 4 sponsors have specific sponsor duties. These duties are outlined in Annex 2 of the [Tier 4 of the Points Based System - Policy Guidance](#) [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/Tier4migrantguidance.pdf] and include notifying the UKBA if

- You have successfully obtained immigration permission as a Tier 4 (General) student using a CAS, but you do not enrol on the course before the last day of the enrolment period.
- You fail to attend a class or lecture, or submit work for a specific number of times, and your institution has not agreed to your absence or non-submission of work.
- You defer, postpone or take a break from your studies for any reason.
- You change to a shorter course, or you complete your studies early.
- You withdraw from your studies before you have finished your course.

The UKBA can bring your immigration permission to an end early if they are notified of one of these issues. This means, it is very important that, as far as possible, you attend all your classes and lectures and submit coursework when it is due. If you have problems doing this, you should let a member of staff, for example, your tutor or student adviser, know as soon as possible so that you can discuss your options with them.

It is very important that you notify your institution if you are ill and cannot attend or submit work, or if you have to miss your academic commitments for any other reason. Your institution may ask you to submit further evidence to confirm the reason for your absence, for example a letter from your doctor.

If you decide to leave your course early, you must also tell your institution. If you are returning home or going to a different institution to study, you should let the first institution know so that they can pass notify the UKBA. This means that it is clear to everyone whether or not you are still studying in the UK.

If your application is refused

- + Applying in your home country (entry clearance)
- + Applying in the UK (leave to remain)

Where to go for help and other useful contacts

If you need help with your application contact the international student adviser or welfare officer at the institution where you intend to study, or its students' union or guild.

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)

You may also wish to read the [UKCISA information sheets](#) on other topics of relevance to international students [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/information_sheets.php].

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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