

Making a student immigration application in the UK

29 July 2010

Who is this Information Sheet for?

This Information Sheet is for you if you are in the UK now and you want to make an immigration application to stay here with immigration permission as a student.

If you want to apply as a postgraduate doctor or dentist, or as a Student Union Sabbatical Officer, see the Home Office policy guidance for Tier 4 students for details – www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk.

If you are a national of the European Economic Area, or of Switzerland, this Information Sheet is not for you. Please see instead the section of our website for EEA and Swiss Students and their family members at www.ukcisa.org.uk/eea.php.

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](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/your_family.php) [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 are already in the UK with valid immigration permission, and want to stay in the UK as a student, you must submit an application for further leave to remain under Tier 4 before your current leave expires. Your existing permission must be either as a student or in an immigration category which allows you to switch in to Tier 4 of the Points Based System, see below [Who can apply in the UK?](#)

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

- before you make your application, you read and understand the Home Office policy guidance, which is at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk – you must ensure that you read the latest version of the Tier 4 policy guidance, references in this Information Sheet are to version 07/10, issued on 23/07/10
- you check that you can meet all the requirements before you apply
- you provide evidence in exactly the format required by the Home Office, as explained in the Tier 4 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
- you seek advice as early as possible if you think you are going to have any difficulties meeting the immigration requirements of Tier 4.

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

If your permission to be in the UK has already expired, your position is complicated. You should seek advice immediately from the international student adviser or welfare officer at your college or university before you think about making an application.

Who can apply in the UK?

Not everyone who is in the UK is allowed to apply for more time, as a student.

You can apply for more time, as a **Child student**, if you are less than 18 years, and have, or were last granted, immigration permission as one of the following:

- Student, and this permission was granted under the Immigration Rules which were in force before 31 March 2009 (not Tier 4)
- Tier 4 Child student
- Prospective student.

You may be able to apply as a Child student if you are aged 16 or 17 and you are not studying an English language course. See [Who can apply as a Child student](#) below for more information.

Tier 4 Child students who were granted two years' leave or less initially, may now be eligible to apply for further immigration permission as a Tier 4 Child student, even if they are now aged 18. This is because a change in the Immigration Rules now allows students to be granted a maximum of three years as a Tier 4 Child.

You can apply for more time, as a **General student**, if you have, or were last granted, immigration permission as one of the following:

- Student immigration permission granted under the Immigration Rules which were in force before 31 March 2009
- Tier 4 (Child) student
- Tier 4 (General) student
- Prospective student
- Student re-sitting an examination
- Student writing up a thesis
- Student nurse
- Students' Union sabbatical officer
- Tier 1 (Post-Study Work) migrant
- International Graduates Scheme, Science and Engineering Graduate Scheme or Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland Scheme participant
- Tier 2 (General), Tier 2 (Intra-Company Transfer) or Tier 2 (Minister of Religion) migrant.
- Work permit holder.

Your family members can apply to stay in the UK as your dependants if they are already in the UK with immigration permission as your dependants, for example, as student dependants, Tier 1 (Post-Study Work) dependants etc and you are applying as a General student (not as a Child student). If you want your family to stay with you, you must be studying a course which is longer than six months.

If your course is six months or shorter, your family cannot apply to stay with you as your dependants. This is because of a change to the Immigration Rules which came into force on 3 March 2010 and it affects you if you or your family members make an immigration application on or after 3 March 2010.

For more detailed information please read [Your family's immigration](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/your_family.php) [www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/your_family.php].

If you fall into one of the categories listed above, you can choose to make an immigration application either in the UK or in the country where you normally live. The advantage of applying in the UK is that you can continue studying while you wait for a decision. The advantage of applying outside the UK, especially if you were planning to go home anyway, is that it is cheaper and usually quicker. You cannot apply outside the UK if you have student immigration permission which has not yet expired.

If you do not fall into any of these categories, you will need to leave the UK and apply for **entry clearance** as a General student or as a Child student from the country where you normally live.

Warning: If you make an application in the UK when you do not qualify to do so it is highly likely that it will be refused, and your passport marked to show that you made an application that was refused. It will be much more difficult for you to apply for entry clearance for the UK and other countries in the future. If you feel that there are very unusual circumstances in your case that mean that an exception should be made for you, DO NOT make an application without seeking advice first. It is generally very difficult to persuade the Home Office to make an exception, and unless your case is truly exceptional there is a high likelihood that your application will be refused. Go and see the international student adviser or welfare officer at your college or university to talk about your situation.

If you do not already have immigration permission in one of the categories listed above, please read **Making an immigration application in your home country** [[www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/ applying_home_country.php](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/applying_home_country.php)].

Who can apply as a Child student?

You must be in the UK with immigration permission as a Student, Child student or as a Prospective student. In addition to this, you must be under 18 and the following rules apply.

If you are between the ages of five and 15, you must apply as a Child student and you must attend an independent school.

If you are 16 or 17 years old, you sometimes have a choice whether to apply for immigration permission as a Child student or as a General student. This depends on the level of the course – see **What type of course can you study?** below for more information about the different levels of courses. It will also depend on whether the college where you want to study will sponsor you as a Child student. You should talk to them about this if you are interested in applying a Child student.

Tier 4 Child students who were granted two years' leave or less initially, may now be eligible to apply for further immigration permission as a Tier 4 Child student, even if they are now aged 18. This is because a change in the Immigration Rules now allows anyone who is 16 or 17 years old, to be granted a maximum of three years as a Tier 4 Child student.

English language courses

You must apply as a General Student if you are 16 or 17 years old and you want to do an English language course. This means in most cases that your English language course must be at Level B2 or above of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

You can study an English language course at any level, which means that it can be lower than level B2 only if:

- you receive financial sponsorship from your home Government or from the UK Government, or
- your English course is a pre-sessional course leading to a course at **degree-level**.

Other courses

You must apply as a Child student if you want to do a course which is not an English language course and which is below Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) or equivalent. The only exception is if you are going to take a pre-sessional course at an independent school to prepare you for studying a course at NQF Level 3 or above.

If you want to do a course which is not an English language course, and which is at Level 3 or above of the NQF or equivalent, you can choose to apply as a Child Student or as a General student, as stated in paragraph 50 of the Tier 4 policy guidance.

If you are studying a degree course which will last more than 3 years, you should apply as a General Student. This is because you will be granted immigration permission for the full length of your course. The maximum period of immigration permission you will be granted as a Child student is now three years

plus five months (three years for the course, one month before your course starts and four months at the end of your course). If you are studying a degree course which is 3 years or less, you can apply as a General student, or as a Child student if your sponsor has a Tier 4 licence for Child students.

Note: From 3 March 2010, if you apply as a General student you will be allowed to work for up to 20 hours a week in term time, however some students will only be allowed to work up to 10 hours per week (the number of hours you are allowed to work will depend on the level of the course that you will be studying). From 3 March 2010, if you apply as a Child student, who is aged 16 or over, you will only be allowed to work for a maximum of 10 hours a week in term time. You will be allowed to work full-time during the vacation periods if you enter as a General student or a Child student who is aged 16 or over.

For further information, please read 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].

Extra requirements if you are under 18 years old

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 or as a General student, 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 (paragraphs 159-160)

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

Where can you study?

You must study at a college or university which has a Tier 4 sponsor licence. 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. Only institutions with Tier 4 sponsor licences can issue Confirmations of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). You must have a CAS in order to apply for immigration permission to be in the UK as a student.

From 6 April 2010, every institution issued with a Tier 4 licence will be given a sponsor rating. This will be Highly Trusted, A (Trusted) or B (Sponsor). Institutions which are Highly Trusted Sponsors are allowed to offer a wider range of courses under Tier 4. See the section on [What type of course can you study](#) for more details.

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

You must study at the college or university which has issued you the CAS which you are using to apply for more time in the UK. If you want to study somewhere else, after you have been given Tier 4 immigration permission to study at the institution which issued the CAS, you must obtain fresh immigration permission for the new course before you can start your studies at the new institution. See below for details of how to change college or university.

What type of course can you study?

You can study a wide range of courses at different levels. There is no minimum length of course you can study.

The levels of course are defined by reference to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), or equivalent. English language courses only are defined by reference to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

You can find more information about the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the different levels of courses at www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/index.aspx.

You can find more information about the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, which is equivalent to the NQF, at www.scqf.org.uk/AbouttheFramework/Overview-of-Framework.aspx.

You can find more information about the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and assess your level of English at www.linguanet-europa.org/plus/welcome.htm.

The college or university where you want to study should be able to tell you the level of all of its courses. You should always check with institutions that your course is at the right level for applying for immigration permission as a Tier 4 student. They are not allowed to offer you a place on a course if the course does not meet all the criteria described in this Information Sheet.

Degrees and degree-level courses

You can study a full-time course which leads to a recognised UK degree or other qualification at undergraduate or postgraduate level, (NQF level 6 or above). All institutions listed on the Tier 4 Register of Sponsors are allowed to offer courses at NQF level 6 / NCQF level 9 or above.

The list of colleges and universities which award recognised UK degrees is at www.dcsf.gov.uk/recognisedukdegrees/.

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

If you are studying for a **degree-level** course at a higher education institution outside the UK, and your course is equivalent to a UK degree, you can apply as a General Student to do some study in the UK as part of that course. All institutions listed on the Tier 4 Register of Sponsors are allowed to offer "study abroad" programmes which are part of an overseas degree course.

If you want to check that your course is equivalent to a UK degree, contact UK NARIC at www.naric.org.uk.

Remember that if you want to apply to stay in the UK to study part of your degree at a UK institution, you must already have a qualifying immigration status. If you are in the UK with some other type of immigration status, for example, as a General Visitor, you will have to go back to the country where you usually live, or where you are doing your course if this is different, and apply for entry clearance to come to the UK as a General student.

English language courses

If you want to study an English language course, it must in most cases lead to a qualification at Level B2 or above of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

You can study an English language course at any level, which means that it can lead to a qualification lower than level B2 only if:

- you receive financial sponsorship from your government or from the UK Government, or
- your English course is a pre-sessional course leading to a course at **degree level**

Your English language course must involve at least 15 hours a week of **organised daytime study**, and it must lead to a formal assessment if you want to stay in the UK to take another English language course. You should check with the institution where you want to study that your course meets these

requirements, and that it is at the right level.

If you want to study an English language course below Level B2 and you do not meet one of the exceptions described above, or if you want to learn English at an institution which does not have a Tier 4 sponsor licence, you can consider applying instead as a Student Visitor. If you are under 18 years old, you can apply as a Child Visitor. Your course must be six months long or less, and you cannot make this immigration application in the UK. For information about applying as a Student Visitor or as a Child Visitor, see www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/ecg/visitandtransit.

All institutions listed on the Register of Tier 4 Sponsors can offer English language courses to students in line with the requirements above.

Other courses below degree level

As a General Student, you can study courses which are below UK **degree level**, but they must be at NQF level 3 (SCQF level 6) or above if the institution is a Highly Trusted Sponsor, or NQF level 4 (SCQF level 7) or above if the institution is rated as A (Trusted) or B (Sponsor). The only exceptions are:

- if you are 16 or 17 years old and you apply as a Child Student. If you have immigration permission as a Child Student, you can study courses which are below NQF Level 3 (SCQF level 6)
- if you are going to take a pre-sessional course at an independent school to prepare you for studying a course at NQF Level 3 (SCQF level 6) or above

You can study courses below degree level for a maximum of three years in total from your 18th birthday as a Tier 4 General student. If you have immigration permission as a Child Student and you are 18 or older when it expires, you must apply for further immigration permission as a General Student. Any time while you are 18 or older that you have spent studying courses below degree level with Child Student immigration permission will count towards your three years in total.

If you are applying as a General Student, your course must involve at least 15 hours a week of **organised daytime study** (this does not apply to Child Students), and it must lead to an approved qualification. You should check with the institution where you want to study that your course leads to such a qualification, and that it is at the right level.

Pre-sessional courses

Many students take pre-sessional courses. They are courses which prepare you for your main course. Unlike other courses, pre-sessional courses do not have to lead to an approved qualification.

If you are applying as a General Student, your pre-sessional course must involve at least 15 hours a week of **organised daytime study** and it must be at least NQF Level 3 (SCQF level 6) at an institution which is a Highly Trusted Sponsor, or at least NQF level 4 (SCQF level 7) if the institution has a Tier 4 sponsor licence which is rated A or B.

The only exception to this is if you are taking a pre-sessional course at an independent school to prepare you for study at NQF Level 3 or above. In this case, the pre-sessional course can be at any level.

If you are taking an English language pre-sessional course, it must involve at least 15 hours a week of **organised daytime study** and it must be at level B2 or above of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). However, in each of the following cases you can study a pre-sessional English language course which is at any level, including below level B2:

- you receive financial sponsorship from your home Government or from the UK Government, or
- your English course is a pre-sessional course leading to a course at **degree level**.

You can check the level of the course you want to study with your college or university.

If your pre-sessional course is below the minimum level or involves fewer than 15 hours of organised

daytime study, you can not apply as a General student, though you can apply as a Child student if you are 16 or 17 years old. If you want to study on a course which does not meet the rules for General students or Child students, you can consider applying as a Student Visitor if you are at least 18 years old, or as a Child Visitor if you are under 18. However, you cannot make this application in the UK and you will not be able to extend your immigration permission to 'switch' from Student Visitor or Child Visitor to General student or Child student in the UK after your pre-sessional course.

If you apply as a General student or as a Child student, you will have to make only one immigration application to cover both your pre-sessional course and your main course if:

- you have an unconditional offer for both your pre-sessional course and your main course, and
- both courses are run by the same institution or a partner institution (with the same sponsor licence number) runs the pre-sessional course – you can check this with the college or university where you will be studying your main course, and
- the gap between the end of your pre-sessional course and the start of your main course is no longer than two months, and
- your Tier 4 sponsor issues you with one confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) which covers both courses.

If you meet these requirements, and your Tier 4 sponsor issues you with one CAS for both courses, your pre-sessional course can be below level B2 if it is an English language course and if your main course which follows the pre-sessional course is at **degree level**.

You will have to make two immigration applications (one for your pre-sessional course, followed by another for your main course) if:

- you have to pass your pre-sessional course, or achieve a certain level of pass, before you can move to your main course (you have a conditional offer), or
- your pre-sessional course is run by a different education provider from your main course, even if you have an unconditional offer for your main course.

If this applies to you, your pre-sessional course can be below level B2 if it is an English language course and your main course which follows the pre-sessional course is at **degree level**.

Making two immigration applications is expensive and will take a lot of time, particularly as you will have to give your fingerprints twice. The gap between the end of the immigration permission you are granted to take your pre-sessional course and the start of the main course must not be longer than one month if you want to apply for further immigration permission within the UK.

Courses with work placements

If you are 16 or older, you are allowed to work during your studies, and this includes full-time work placements. Institutions must be rated as Highly Trusted by the UKBA to be able to offer courses which involve work placements and are below degree-level (excluding Foundation degrees as defined in the Immigration Rules). A or B rated institutions on the Tier 4 Register of Sponsors can only offer courses involving a work placement which is at degree-level or above, or is a foundation degree (as defined in the Immigration Rules).

Your period of study can include a full-time work placement, which is an assessed part of your course, if you apply as a General student and your course is at least NQF Level 3 (SCQF level 6) or equivalent, an English language course at Level B2 or above, or if you are studying in the UK as part of an overseas qualification which is at the same level as a UK degree. You can also undertake a full-time work placement which is an assessed part of your course if you have immigration permission as a Child student and you are aged 16 or older.

In all cases, you must spend at least half of your course studying in the UK, and no more than half your course working. The only exception is if the law says that you must spend more than half your course

doing work placements in order to obtain a qualification, for example, PGCE and PGDE teaching qualifications. If in doubt, check with your education provider whether there is a statutory requirement to spend more than half your course doing work placements.

Even if you are not doing a work placement, you can work part-time in term-time (for 10 hours or 20 hours a week, depending on your immigration permission, the level of your course and when you make your immigration application) and full-time in your holidays. For more information about working during your studies, see www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/working_during.php.

Supplementary studies

If you are granted immigration permission as a General Student, or as a Child Student, you can take any extra courses, for example, evening classes. These extra courses do not need to be at any particular level, and your education provider is not required to have a Tier 4 sponsor licence. However, you must continue to study the course for which you were given student immigration permission.

How much money do you need?

You must be able to show that you have enough money to support yourself and to pay your tuition fees. When you make your application, you will be awarded 10 points if you can show that you have enough money and you prove it in one of the ways described in the policy guidance.

If you are applying as a Child Student, there are five different levels of maintenance you have to show, depending on whether you are:

1. studying at a residential independent school (a boarding school)
2. studying at a school which is not a boarding school and you will be in a private foster care arrangement
3. under 12 years old, at a non-residential independent school and are in the UK with a parent
4. staying with a close relative
5. aged 16 or 17 and living independently.

If you will be in the UK under one of the arrangements in points 1, 2, 3 or 4 above, you should read the Home Office policy guidance carefully for information about the level of funds you must show and how you must demonstrate them. If you are 16 or 17 years old and you will be living independently, you must meet the same maintenance requirements as described below for General Students.

You must have enough to pay for one year's tuition fees. In addition to this, you must have a fixed amount of money to pay for your other costs, including accommodation and other expenses.

The minimum amount of money you will need is £600 (if you are studying for up to one month outside London). The maximum amount of money you will need is £7,200 (if you are studying for nine months or more in London), plus extra money for family members who want to join or stay with you in the UK. You must have the full amount of money when you make your immigration application.

If an **official financial sponsor** is supporting you, but is paying for only some of these costs, the letter from your official financial sponsor must state exactly what is being paid and you will be expected to show that you can meet the remaining costs, in the ways described below and in the policy guidance.

Study in London or outside London

The amount of money you must have depends on whether you are studying in London or elsewhere. You need more money if you are spending all, or most, of your time in London. London is defined as the following London boroughs:

- Camden
- City of London
- Hackney
- Hammersmith and Fulham

- Haringey
- Islington
- Kensington and Chelsea
- Lambeth
- Lewisham
- Newham
- Southwark
- Tower Hamlets
- Wandsworth
- Westminster.

If you do not know whether your college or university 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.

The monthly sum if you are studying in London is £800. The monthly sum if you are studying outside London is £600.

If you want your family members to stay with you, they must have a sum which represents two thirds of the amount of money you need. This applies to every family member, including young children. This means that if you are studying in London, you need £800 a month for you, plus £533 a month for each family member (up to a maximum of £4,797 for each family member). If you are studying outside London, you need £600 a month for you, plus £400 a month for each family member (up to a maximum of £3,600 for each family member). For more information about making applications for family members, see the Home Office policy guidance for Points Based System dependants.

You are already studying in the UK with student immigration permission

There are special, lower, maintenance requirements for you if, when you make your immigration application, you already have student immigration permission and you are in one of the situations described below.

1. You need to extend your immigration permission to complete a course you have already started, and
 - you have studied that course for at least six months when you apply, or
 - during your current period of immigration permission, you have completed a single course which was at least six months long.

Note: If you are not currently studying your course, your most recent immigration permission must be continuing, or must have ended no more than four months before you make this Tier 4 application. If you are in the UK and your immigration permission has ended before you apply again, always see a student adviser before you make your application.

2. You want to start a new course, and
 - the course you have just finished was six months long or more, and
 - the immigration permission you had while you were studying that course is continuing or finished under four months before you make this immigration application – if you are in the UK and your immigration permission has ended before you apply again, always see a student adviser before you make your application.

If you meet all these requirements, you have to show that you can pay up to one year's worth of course fees, if relevant, and a maximum of two months' worth of maintenance costs. This means that if you are studying wholly or mainly in London, you must have £1,600 for maintenance costs if you need an extra two months or more in the UK (£800 if you need up to one month). If you are studying wholly or mainly outside London, you must have £1,200 for maintenance costs if you need an extra two months or more in the UK (£600 if you need up to one month).

This special provision applies to you whether you make your immigration application in the UK or in the country where you normally live.

You are not already studying in the UK with student immigration permission

If you do not meet all the criteria described above for the special, lower maintenance requirements, even if you are currently studying in the UK, you must meet the usual requirements.

If you are studying wholly or mainly in London, you are required to have a lump sum which represents the fees for one year of study, plus £800 a month multiplied by the number of months your course lasts, up to a maximum of nine months. For example, if your course is eight months long, you have to show that you have £6,400 in your account, plus course fees for one year. If your course is nine months or longer, you have to show a maximum of nine months' worth of funding, plus course fees for one year. For example, if you want to study a three-year course, you must show that you have £7,200 in your account, plus course fees for one year.

If you are outside London for all or most of your studies, you must have £600 a month for up to nine months, plus your course fees for one year. For example, if your course is eight months long, you must have a lump sum of £4,800, plus your fees for the whole course. If your course is nine months or longer, you need to have £5,400, plus fees for the whole course, or your course fees for one year if the course is longer than a year.

Evidence of your funds

The evidence of your funds or loan must meet the requirements described in the Home Office Tier 4 policy guidance. You must have personal bank or building society statements, or a building society pass book, 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.

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. If you apply as a Tier 4 General student and you are relying on a loan, the loan must be in your name only. However, if you apply as a Tier 4 Child student, the loan can be in your name or in the name of your parent(s) or guardian.

If your funds are not in pounds sterling, you should convert the closing balance and write this sum on the document you are using as proof of your finances. The Home Office uses the OANDA website at www.oanda.com/convert/classic to convert currencies into pounds sterling, so you should use this exchange rate, too.

If you apply as a Tier 4 (General) student using a bank account in your parents' or guardian's bank name or names, you must also provide one of the following documents 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 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.

In addition to one of these legal documents, you must also provide an original signed and dated letter from your parent, parents or legal guardian which confirms that they are your parent, parents or legal guardian and that they consent to their funds being available to you for study in the UK. Remember that all documents which are not in English or Welsh must be translated by a professional translator and meet all the requirements for translations described in paragraph 12 of the Tier 4 policy guidance.

If you apply as a Tier 4 Child student using a bank account or loan which is in the name of your parent(s) or guardian. You do not have to prove your relationship.

Your evidence must be no more than one month old, or six months if you are relying on a letter which

confirms that you have a loan. If you are using money in a bank or building society account, the full sum of money you need must be in the account for 28 days up to date of the closing balance. This means that your account must never during that period of 28 days go below the figure you need to show (tuition fees and the fixed sum for maintenance as described above).

If you make your application by post and you have not yet received a decision, it is a good idea to try to keep that sum of money in your account until you have been granted immigration permission. This is helpful if your application is sent back because it is invalid. This usually happens because of problems with paying the fee or the photographs or if you do not answer all questions or sign the application form.

If this happens to you, you have to make a whole new application even though you might not have to pay the application fee again if you send everything back to the Home Office within 28 days. This means that you will have to show again that you have the required sum of money in your account and that it has been in your account for 28 days leading up to the closing balance, which must be no more than one month before the date of your new application. If your application is rejected as invalid, you should always try to seek advice before you apply again, especially if it happens after your immigration permission has come to an end.

Full details of the evidence you have to show are explained in the Home Office's Tier 4 policy guidance. Always read the policy guidance carefully and check your evidence is exactly right before you make your application. If it is not, your application will be refused.

If you have already paid some or all of your course fees to your Tier 4 sponsor, this should be explained in the print out from your **Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)** which your college or university must provide (see below). If it is not included in the CAS, you should submit your receipts when you make your immigration application. If you do this, the amount you have already paid will be deducted from the fixed sum. The same applies if you will be staying in accommodation which is provided or arranged by your college and you pay your college for it. If you have already paid some rent to your Tier 4 sponsor for the accommodation provided or arranged by your college, you should provide receipts and this will be taken off your fixed maintenance sum. If you do not provide receipts, in the format required by the Home Office, you will have to show that you have the full sum. Check the policy guidance for the required format.

Can you stay if you fail an exam or need to retake a module?

You are allowed to re-sit examinations or repeat modules. If you need to extend your immigration permission in order to do this, you should apply in the usual way, with a **confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS)** from your institution (see below). If your college or university thinks you will not pass or is otherwise not happy with your progress, it might refuse to support your immigration application for more time to complete your studies. If it does not issue you with a CAS, you cannot make your immigration application and you will have to find a different institution or leave the UK.

If you have already re-sat a particular examination or repeated a specific module more than once, your college or university may not be allowed to issue you with a CAS. This will depend on the sponsor rating of your institution. You should see an adviser at your institution, if you are in this situation.

If you will not be doing any study for more than 60 days from the start of the next academic period before you re-sit your exam or repeat the module, and your college or university says that you do not need to be in the UK, you will have to leave the UK even if you have enough immigration permission to take your examination or to repeat your module. You will then need to come back to the UK to re-sit the exam or to repeat the module you failed. The start of the next academic period is defined differently by each Tier 4 sponsor, so you need to check with the institution where you are studying about what this means for you.

Can you take a break from your studies?

If, for whatever reason, you want or you need to take a break from your studies, you must tell your college or university. In most cases, you will be expected to leave the UK, and re-enter when you are ready to start your studies again.

Your college or university had to agree to report students to the Home Office in certain circumstances in order to have a Tier 4 sponsor licence. Reporting was introduced in October 2009 and came into full effect on 22 February 2010. It applies to you if your college or university issued you with a CAS to make your immigration application. Some institutions choose to implement their reporting duties before it was compulsory. They should let you know about these before you start your course. Two of the situations in which your college or university will report you to the Home Office are:

1. If you fail to attend a class or lecture or submit work or reregister as required, and your college or university has not agreed that you can do this.
2. You defer, postpone or take a break from your studies for any reason.

The Home Office can bring your immigration permission to an end early if it is notified or otherwise becomes aware of one of these matters. This means that if you take a break from your studies, you should leave the UK and you might have to make a new immigration application in order to come back to the UK and resume your studies.

You have finished one course and want to start another

If you already have an unconditional offer for your new course, and you can meet the maintenance requirements, you can make your immigration application now. However, you cannot stay in the UK to make this immigration application if your current immigration permission runs out more than one month before your next course starts. If your new course starts after this one month period, you need to go back to the country where you normally live, and make an entry clearance application.

If you are applying as a General student and the new course you want to study is under six months long, and is not a pre-sessional course, the Immigration Rules state that you can apply if the gap between your current immigration permission and the start of your next course is no more than one month, but they also state that you will be granted immigration permission which starts only seven days before your next course starts. The policy guidance refers only to the one-month period, and does not mention this seven-day provision.

As the Home Office information is confusing and not clear, it is safer if you go home to apply for entry clearance if there is a gap of more than seven days between the end of your current immigration permission and the start of your next course, which is under six months long and not a pre-sessional course. If this is not possible, or is very inconvenient for you, you should send your application and not make your application in person and, if necessary, refer to paragraph 245ZX(1) of the Immigration Rules and paragraph 80 of the policy guidance, both of which mention only the one-month gap. Note that this does not apply to you if you make an application to stay as a Child Student.

See above for details of the [maintenance requirements](#), including the special, lower requirements if you are already studying in the UK with student immigration permission.

If you are staying at the same college or university (Tier 4 sponsor) to do your new course, or if you want to study at a different institution and you made your most recent immigration application before 5 October 2009, you can start your new course when you have made this immigration application. You do not have to wait until you receive a decision. If your immigration application is refused, you can either appeal, if you have the right of appeal, or you will have to leave your course and the UK.

If you are changing to a new Tier 4 sponsor and you made your most recent immigration application on or after 5 October (you applied online and paid the fee for entry clearance or you sent it or took it to a public enquiry office in the UK on or after 5 October 2009), you can begin your new course only if:

- you want to study at an institution which is a Highly Trusted Sponsor, and
- you have submitted an immigration application to the Home Office based on a CAS which you have received from this Highly Trusted Sponsor.

If you want to continue your studies at an institution which has a sponsor licence rated A or B, you must not start your new course until the Home Office has granted you immigration permission for this course.

You have started one course but now you want to do a different course

Note: This information about changing course and/or institution does not apply to you if you have immigration permission as a student which was granted under the Immigration Rules which were in force before 31 March 2009 (you do not have Tier 4 immigration permission). Students with "pre-31 March 2009" immigration permission can change course and institution without having to send an email or, in some circumstances, without informing the Home Office. If your immigration permission takes the form of a biometric identity card (and not an entry clearance or UK residence permit in your passport), you should see the Home Office information about what you should do if you want to change education provider at: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/adult-students/applying/biometrics-id-cards.

Staying at the same institution

If your new course is with the same college or university, and it is the same length as your current course, you do not have to take any action. Your college or university might tell the Home Office about this so that the Home Office can update its records.

If the new course is shorter than your current course, you must tell the Home Office and your college or university might report this, too. Contact the Home Office by sending an e-mail to the address in paragraph 288 of the Home Office policy guidance. You do not have to obtain permission from the Home Office to do this new course, nor do you have to make an immigration application. However, the Home Office might want to cut short your immigration permission. If your immigration permission is cut short, you will receive a letter from the Home Office to notify you.

If your new course is longer than your current course, you will have to make a full immigration application. The Home Office policy guidance does not give a time limit within which you have to do this, although you must do it before your current immigration permission comes to an end. Unless you plan to travel outside the UK, it is probably a good idea to make this immigration application as soon as possible. This is because the Home Office records will then be up-to-date if you leave the country and need to re-enter at any point. It also means that you pay the current immigration fee, and immigration fees do increase quite often. You can start your new course before you make your immigration application.

Moving to a different institution

If you want to study at a different college or university, you may have to obtain the Home Office's permission to do so, even if the new course is exactly the same length as the course for which you were granted immigration permission. This is because your Tier 4 immigration permission is tied to the college or university where you want to study. This information applies to you in each of the following cases:

- you have finished one course and now you want to go to a different institution to take another course
- you have started a course at one institution and you would like to go somewhere else to study before you finish this course
- the Home Office has suspended or withdrawn the Tier 4 sponsor licence of the college where you are studying and you want to, or you must, go somewhere else to study. You can find more information about what to do if this happens to you at www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/t4_sponsor_changes.php

If the institution that you now want to study at is a Highly Trusted Sponsor, you can begin your new course provided that you have submitted an immigration application to the Home Office for leave based on study at this new institution.

If the institution that you now want to study at is rated as A or B, you can

If you made your most recent immigration application before 5 October 2009, and your new course at a different college or university is the same length as the course for which you have already been granted immigration permission, you do not have to make a full immigration application before you can start the new course. Instead, you have to e-mail the Home Office at the address in paragraph 282 of the policy guidance, with the details of your new course, including the name and contact details of the new institution and information about the new course, including its start date and its end date.

If the Home Office is happy that your new college or university holds a Tier 4 sponsor licence and that it

wishes to offer you a place, and that your course meets the requirements described in this Information Sheet, it will issue a letter of permission to you. This letter will confirm that you are allowed to study at the new college or university. You can start your studies as soon as you have e-mailed the Home Office with details of the new institution and your new course. If the Home Office issues a letter of permission to you, you can continue your studies without needing to make an immigration application of any sort. If the Home Office issues you a letter, advising you that you have not been given permission to study the new course, you should not continue studying this course. If possible, you should return to the original institution that you were granted immigration to study at.

If you made your most recent immigration application before 5 October 2009, and your new course at a different college or university is longer than the course for which you already have immigration permission, you must make a full immigration application either immediately or at any point before your current immigration permission expires. Paragraph 230 of the Guidance for sponsor applications, which you can find on the UK Border Agency website in the section for businesses and sponsors and sponsoring students, makes it clear that you have this choice about when you make your immigration application. You can start your new course when you have notified the Home Office about it, either by sending an e-mail to the address in paragraph 282 of the policy guidance or by making an immigration application.

It is usually better to make an immigration application immediately. This is because the Home Office has refused permission to some students to change institution because their new course is longer and has told students that they should have made an immigration application instead. We think this is incorrect on the basis of the information in the Guidance for sponsor applications and the Tier 4 policy guidance, and have contacted the Home Office about it. In the meantime it is safer for you to make an immigration application as soon as possible for your new, longer course. This application acts as notification to the Home Office that you want to take a longer course at a different institution. You can start the new course before you receive a decision, and you should show your new college or university the letter of acknowledgement of receipt of your application, so that it knows you have notified the Home Office of your intentions.

There is no charge for making your request for a letter of permission to change institution. However, if you have to make a full immigration application, you will be charged the usual fee.

If you made your most recent immigration application on or after 5 October (you applied online and paid the fee for entry clearance or you sent it or took it to a public enquiry office in the UK on or after 5 October 2009), AND you want to move to an institution which is a Highly Trusted Sponsor, then you can start your new course provided that you have already submitted an immigration application to the Home Office based on studying at this institution. Your new institution will want to see evidence that you have submitted this application to the Home Office.

If you made your most recent immigration application on or after 5 October (you applied online and paid the fee for entry clearance or you sent it or took it to a public enquiry office in the UK on or after 5 October 2009), AND you want to move to an institution which has a sponsor licence rated A or B, then you must make a full immigration application and you must not start the course at the new institution until the Home Office has granted you immigration permission to study at this institution. If you need to start your new course quickly, you should see if you can apply using the premium service, at a **public enquiry office**. This is more expensive, but you should receive a decision on the day you apply.

If you have Tier 4 entry clearance that has not yet expired, and that will not expire before the start of your course at a different institution, you have to make your immigration application in the UK. The Home Office has told us that this is because entry clearance officers (outside the UK) do not have the power to cancel your current entry clearance, and so they cannot then grant you a new Tier 4 entry clearance. If this creates problems for you, perhaps because you would have to wait a long time before your new course starts, you should see an international student adviser at either your old or new college or university as soon as possible. It is better to get advice about your immigration situation before you make a final decision to change institutions because it can be complicated, particularly if there is a very short or a very long gap between the end of your current course and the start of the next course.

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

If you are studying a course that leads to a postgraduate qualification at Masters or Doctorate level, and your course is included on the list on the Foreign and Commonwealth (FCO) website at www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/services-we-deliver/atas/who-atas, you must apply for, and be issued with, an ATAS clearance certificate from the Counter-Proliferation Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) before you apply to extend your permission to be in the UK as a student. This means that you should apply for an ATAS clearance certificate at least six weeks before your immigration permission is due to expire.

You need to know the JACS code of your course before you can check the list. The institution where you are studying can give you the JACS code for your course and, if you need an ATAS clearance certificate, it must state this in the print out from your confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS).

If you are studying or carrying out research in the UK for a period of six months or more, and that study or research in the UK forms part of your postgraduate qualification in another country, you must apply for an ATAS clearance certificate if you are studying any of the subjects listed on the website under the heading 'Visiting research student'.

You do not need to apply for an ATAS clearance certificate if you are studying an enhanced MEng undergraduate, and you started the course as an undergraduate student, in the UK. You do not need to apply for an ATAS clearance certificate if you are making this immigration application only in order to write up your thesis and your current immigration permission was granted before 30 November 2007 (see the Home Office policy guidance paragraph 105).

You apply online for an ATAS clearance certificate through the **Foreign and Commonwealth Office** (FCO) website, where you can also find more information about the scheme. The certificate applies only to the institution and course of study you put on the application form. The FCO usually aims to process your application within three weeks of receiving it, but there are currently delays which mean that it might take longer at present.

Providing your fingerprints (biometrics)

As part of the application process, you will have to go to a Home Office building to have your fingerprints and photograph (your 'biometric features') recorded. After you have made your immigration application, you will receive a letter telling you to call to make an appointment to give your biometrics. The photograph will appear on your 'identity card for foreign nationals'. This will be produced once the Home Office has decided to give you more time in the UK, and it is the document which proves you have been given permission to stay in the UK. It is never issued on the day that your fingerprints and photograph are recorded, but is sent by courier some time later.

For more information about biometrics and identity cards, see the Home Office website: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/adult-students/applying/biometrics-id-cards.

Making the application

Always make a note at least two months (longer if you need an **ATAS clearance certificate**) in advance of when your immigration permission is due to run out, and start collecting the documents you will need, including the print out from the confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) from your institution, your evidence of finances, official translations of all documents which are not in English or Welsh, and passport photographs.

You must not apply more than three months before the start date of your course.

Confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS)

You must have a CAS from your institution. The CAS is an online reference number which your Tier 4 sponsor (college or university) will give you. Your Tier 4 sponsor should also give you a print-out or other record of the information which it entered into the online sponsor management system database in order to issue your CAS. When a Tier 4 sponsor issues a CAS, it confirms to the Home Office that you have an unconditional offer of a place on a course which meets all the requirements described in this Information Sheet, and that the institution believes you can do the course, based on your previous qualifications and any other selection criteria it applies. It must also provide details of your tuition fees and how much, if

any, of your course fees (and accommodation fees if you plan to stay in accommodation provided by or through your college or university) you have already paid.

The CAS must contain all the information required by the Home Office. You can find more information about confirmations of acceptance for studies at:

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/employersandsponsors/pointsbasedsystem/sponsor-prep-phase-4

If the print out from the CAS from your institution does not contain all the information required by the Home Office, make sure you talk to someone at your college or university about this before you use the information from it to submit your application.

Your CAS is valid for six months so you must use it to make an immigration application within six months of its issue.

When you make your immigration application, your CAS is worth 30 points, but only if it provides all the information the Home Office needs to have in order to make a decision about your application, and you include the original documents listed in the print out from your CAS.

Note: Your CAS may only be used for one immigration application. If your application is refused, the UKBA will record your CAS as USED on their computer system and any further immigration applications submitted using this CAS will also be refused. In this case, you will need to contact your institution and ask them to provide you with a new CAS.

Which form?

You need to obtain a copy of the latest version of the Home Office application form for making student immigration applications, the guidance on photographs and the policy guidance. The international student adviser or welfare officer at your college or university might be able to give you a copy of the form. Alternatively, you can:

- download the form (or forms if family members are applying at the same time) from the Home Office website, www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk

When to apply

You must make your application before your current permission to be in the UK runs out. If you do not apply before then, you lose any rights of appeal against a refusal and you become an overstayer, which is a criminal offence. It is likely to jeopardise any future immigration applications you make.

You can apply to start a new course up to three months before the course start date or, to continue a course, when you can show that you meet all of the requirements for staying in the UK as a student (when you have a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) and can meet the **maintenance requirements** and you have a qualifying **immigration status**). However, remember that you should study at the college or university which issued the CAS you use for your immigration application. Therefore, you should not apply too early if you want to move from one institution to a different one – wait until you have finished or almost finished your studies at the first institution before you make your application. Otherwise, you might end up with permission to study at the second institution before you have finished at the first one, and you should not study at your first college if your latest immigration permission is for study at the second one.

If you are moving from one course to another, the gap between the end of your current immigration permission and the start of the next course must be no more than:

- one month if your next course is a pre-sessional course or a course which is six months or longer, or
- seven days if your next course is under six months long and is not a pre-sessional course.

You should also check that your passport is not about to expire. You need to have a valid passport to enclose with the application.

Where to apply

You can:

- **send** your application by post to the Home Office
- **book an appointment** to take your application in person to a Home Office **Public Enquiry Office** in Croydon, Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool or Sheffield
- if your college or university participates in the Home Office's **student batch scheme**, you can ask your college or university to send your application by post on your behalf.

The part of the Home Office that deals with immigration is called the UK Border Agency (UKBA).

Points to bear in mind in deciding which method to choose:

Sending your application by post to the Home Office

- The charge for this service is £357, plus £80 for each dependant who applies at the same time.
- You will have to send off your passport (and passports for any dependants who are applying at the same time). The Home Office will keep it until they have finished processing your application. You cannot predict how many weeks or months this will take. Soon after you send your application you will receive a letter from the Home Office asking you to telephone to make an appointment to have your fingerprints and photograph recorded. Watch out for the letter as it gives you a deadline for telephoning to make the appointment. If the Home Office has not heard from you 15 working days after the date of the letter, it is allowed to treat you as though you have not made an application (though it should send you a warning letter first). If your permission to be in the UK has already run out, you will become an overstayer. That is why it is important to respond to the letter immediately. When you telephone you can choose whether to go to Croydon, Sheffield, Liverpool, Solihull, Cardiff, Glasgow, Belfast, London, Birmingham or Derby to have your fingerprints and photograph recorded. You might be invited to go to a post office to give your biometrics, in which case you do not need to make an appointment. Make sure you have the money set aside to pay your train or coach fares to get to the appointment, if relevant. You will probably have to travel at short notice so fares will be high. You will have to prioritise attending the appointment over everything else, however important those things are (for example, you may have to miss classes or lectures).
- It is not a good idea to use a card to pay for your application. It is much safer to pay using postal orders. Card payments often fail (because, for example, there is a mistake in entering the card details on the form, or the bank balance drops at the wrong time). If a payment fails, then you are treated as though you have not made an application. There will be a delay before you hear that your payment has failed. If your permission to be in the UK runs out before you hear that your payment has failed, you will not have the opportunity to try to pay again. Instead, you will become an overstayer. For this reason, it is not a good idea to pay by card unless you have a number of weeks before your permission to be in the UK runs out (so that you have enough time to hear if your card payment fails).
- If you pay by cheque, your application will take five working days longer to process than it would do if you paid with postal orders. This is because of the 'clearing' time that banks allow for cheques.
- Make sure that you put your completed form in the post no later than the date that your current permission to be in the UK runs out. If you have already missed this date, seek advice urgently from the international student adviser or welfare officer at your college or university.
- Always use recorded or special delivery when you post anything to the Home Office, and keep the receipt. Make sure to allow enough time to get to a Post Office to do this.
- The Home Office always uses recorded delivery or courier services when returning passports and other documents to you.
- You will have to wait until you receive your identity card from the Home Office before you book any travel abroad. It will be delivered to you by courier. The identity card is your evidence that you have been given more time in the UK. You will probably receive your passport back in the post a little

earlier, but it will not show that you have been given more time in the UK. If you are planning to return to the UK then never travel abroad without your identity card as well as your passport.

Taking your application to a public enquiry office

- The charge for this service is £628, plus £107 for each dependant who applies at the same time as you.
- You need to telephone in advance to book an appointment – telephone 0870 606 7766.
- When you telephone to book an appointment:
 - September and October are particularly busy times of year, and it may be weeks before an appointment is available.
 - If there are no appointments available until after your current permission to be in the UK runs out, you should find another way of making your application in time. This means choosing one of the following options:
 - putting your application in the post to the Home Office, using recorded or special delivery, no later than the date stamped in your passport; or
 - if your college or university participates in the Home Office's **student batch scheme**, asking your college or university to send your application by post on your behalf, no later than the date stamped in your passport; or
 - asking if any of the public enquiry offices other than your first choice office has an appointment available before the date stamped in your passport.
- If you accept an appointment for a date after your current permission to be in the UK runs out, you will not have a right to appeal if the Home Office decides to refuse your application for an extension, and you will be an overstayer while you wait for the appointment. Being an overstayer may jeopardise your ability to return to the UK on a future occasion, if the Home Office decides to refuse your application for an extension.
- At the appointment, you will have your fingerprints and photograph recorded.
- Although you will probably be able to take your passport and other documents home with you, you will not receive your extension on the day. Instead, you will have to wait until your identity card is produced and delivered to you by courier, a number of days later. The identity card is your evidence of your extension. You must not book any travel abroad until the identity card has arrived. You cannot predict how long this will take, even if the Home Office gives you an estimate (the estimate may be unreliable, and the Home Office does not always meet its published turnaround times). If you are planning to return to the UK then never travel abroad without your identity card as well as your passport.
- If you are using someone else's card to pay for the application, the card holder must come with you to sign for the payment. You might need to explain this to the door staff at the Public Enquiry Office, if they are reluctant to allow the card holder into the building with you.
- If you are using a cheque to pay part of the charge, remember that:
 - If it is not your cheque book, the person whose cheque book it is must come with you to sign the cheque.
 - You will need to bring along a cheque guarantee card for the cheque.
 - Every cheque guarantee card has a limit, beyond which cheques are not guaranteed. Look at the cheque guarantee card to see what the limit is (eg £50, £100). If the limit is less than £628 you will have to use some other payment method to pay the balance.

Note: It is no longer possible to pay for your immigration application in cash at a Public Enquiry Office>.

The student batch scheme

- Not all colleges and universities participate in this. Ask your international student adviser or welfare officer whether yours does.
- It is your responsibility to complete the form and gather the information and documents you need for the application.
- Your college or university will have a quick look through your application to try to ensure you have not forgotten anything, and will then post the application off to the Home Office on your behalf. If there are any problems with the application, the Home Office will contact your college or university rather than you.
- Do not wait until the last minute before going to see your international student adviser or welfare officer. They may not have enough time to help you if your current permission to be in the UK is about to run out.
- Your college or university needs to make sure that they put your completed form in the post no later than the date that your current permission to be in the UK runs out. If they do not do this, you will become an overstayer, and you will not have a right to appeal if the Home Office decides to refuse your application for an extension. Being an overstayer may jeopardise any future immigration applications you make.
- The charge for this service is £357, plus £80 for each dependant who applies at the same time, plus a very small administrative charge in some colleges and universities.
- Your college or university will have to send off your passport. The Home Office will keep it until they have finished processing your application. You cannot predict how many weeks or months this will take. Soon after your adviser sends the application, either you or the adviser will receive a letter from the Home Office asking you to telephone to make an appointment to have your fingerprints and photograph recorded. Watch out for the letter as it gives you a deadline for telephoning to make the appointment. If the Home Office has not heard from you 15 working days after the date of the letter, it is allowed to treat you as though you have not made an application, though it should send you or the adviser a warning letter first. If your permission to be in the UK has already run out, you will become an overstayer. That is why it is important to respond to the letter immediately. When you telephone you can choose whether to go to Croydon, Sheffield, Liverpool, Solihull, Cardiff, Glasgow, Belfast, London, Birmingham or Derby to have your fingerprints and photograph recorded. You might be invited to go to a post office to give your biometrics, in which case you do not need to make an appointment. Make sure you have the money set aside to pay your train or coach fares to get to the appointment, if relevant. You will probably have to travel at short notice so fares will be high. You will have to prioritise attending the appointment over everything else, however important those things are (for example, you may have to miss classes or lectures).
- Some colleges and universities insist that students using the student batch scheme use a particular payment method (for example, postal orders) to pay for their applications. Ask your international student adviser or welfare officer what the policy is at your college or university.
- It is not a good idea to use a card to pay for your application. It is much safer to pay using postal orders. Card payments often fail (because, for example, there is a mistake in entering the card details on the form, or the bank balance drops at the wrong time). If a payment fails, then you are treated as though you have not made an application. There will be a delay before you hear that your payment has failed. If your permission to be in the UK runs out before you hear that your payment has failed, you will not have the opportunity to try to pay again. Instead, you will become an overstayer. For this reason, it is not a good idea to pay by card unless you have a number of weeks before your permission to be in the UK runs out (so that you have enough time to hear if your card payment fails).
- You will have to wait until you receive your identity card from your adviser before you book any travel abroad. The identity card is your evidence that you have been given more time in the UK. You may receive your passport back a little earlier, but it will not show that you have been given more time in the UK. If you are planning to return to the UK then never travel abroad without your identity card as well as your passport.

Completing the application form

It is very important that you complete all sections of the form and provide the documents required in the format specified in the Home Office's policy guidance. All sections of the form are described as mandatory. If you do not fill in these sections at all, or properly, your application will be rejected as invalid and returned to you, and you will be treated as if you have not made an immigration application at all. Usually, your immigration permission will have expired before the Home Office tells you that your application has been rejected, and this means you will be an overstayer. This can lead to serious problems, and you should always seek advice if this happens to you. If you choose to apply again, you must remember that you are making a new application, even if you do not have to pay the immigration fee again, and all documents must meet the requirements of the policy guidance. For example, bank statements must be no more than one month old on the date of this new application. In most cases, you will have to obtain new documents in order to make this fresh application.

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, refer to the UKBA guidance on good character. This is available at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/eligibility/goodcharacter.

How much immigration permission will you be granted?

The length of immigration permission you will be granted depends on whether you apply as a Child student or as a General student. If you are 16 or 17 years old, see [Who can apply as a Child Student?](#) above for more information about whether you should apply as a Child student or as a General student.

If the immigration permission you are given is shorter than the periods described below, you should let the student adviser at your college or university know as soon as possible. They might be able to help you put it right if the Home Office has made an error.

Child Student

Note: this section only describes the periods that will be given to you if you are 16 or 17 years old. If you are younger, different periods apply – see the policy guidance for details.

You will be granted a maximum of three years, plus four months. If your course is shorter than three years, you will be given permission to stay for the length of the course, plus four months. If your course is longer than three years, you should apply as a General student, and your course must meet the requirements for General student immigration permission (it must be level 3 of the NQF or equivalent, or at level B2 if it is an English language course).

The maximum amount of leave granted to a Child student who is 16 or 17 was recently increased from two years to three years. If you were initially granted a maximum of two years as a Child student for a course which is continuing, you may be eligible to apply for additional leave, even if you have already turned 18 years old.

As a Child student you will be allowed to come to the UK up to one month before the start of your course.

If your studies are funded by an [official financial sponsor](#), and your financial sponsor says that you cannot stay longer in the UK than a specified period which is shorter than three years, you will be given permission to stay for that shorter period.

If you turn 18 or 19 during your period of immigration permission as a Child student, you can continue your studies until the end of that period of immigration permission. If you want to apply again when you are older than 17, you will have to apply as a General student.

General Student

If you are studying a course which is below [degree level](#) (but not lower than NQF level 3 or Level B2 if an English language course), you will be given the length of the course, up to a maximum of three years.

If you are studying a course which is at **degree level**, you will be given the length of the course, and there is no three-year maximum.

In addition to this period of time (three years or the length of the degree level course), you will be given some extra time, from seven days to four months. This is to enable you, for example, to receive your results, pack up to go home or apply to stay for a further course or for work, or make any other immigration application for which you meet the requirements.

The additional period you should receive is:

- four months, if your course is 12 months or longer
- two months, if your course is between six months and 12 months long
- one month, if your course is under six months long and it is a pre-sessional course
- seven days, if your course is under six months long and it is not a pre-sessional course.

If your studies are funded by an **official financial sponsor**, and your financial sponsor says that you cannot stay longer in the UK than a specified period which is shorter than the periods described above, you will be given permission to stay for that shorter period.

Institutions' duty to report immigration matters

Your college or university had to agree to report students to the Home Office in certain circumstances in order to have a Tier 4 sponsor licence. Reporting comes into effect fully on 22 February 2010, when it will apply to everyone who uses a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) to make their immigration application. It is not mandatory if you used a (a paper document which preceded confirmations of acceptance of studies and which you cannot now use to make a Tier 4 application) to make your immigration application before 22 February 2010, but it will apply to you if your college or university issued you with a confirmation of acceptance of studies to make your immigration application before then. Some institutions have chosen to implement their reporting duties even if it is not compulsory. They should let you know about this before you start your course. The main situations in which your college or university will report you to the Home Office are:

1. You used a or CAS from them in order to obtain immigration permission, and you do not enrol on the course.
2. You fail to attend a class or lecture or submit work for a specific number of times, and your college or university has not agreed that you can do this.
3. You defer, postpone or take a break from your studies for any reason.
4. You change to a shorter course, or your studies end early.
5. You leave your college or university before you have finished your course.

The Home Office can bring your immigration permission to an end early if it is notified of one of these matters.

This means it is very important that, as far as possible, you attend your classes and lectures and submit coursework when it is due. If you have any problems doing this, you should let a member of staff, for example, your tutor or a student adviser, know as soon as possible so that you can discuss your options with them. It is also very important to notify your college or university if you are ill and cannot attend or submit work, or if you have to miss classes or deadlines for any other reason, so that there is a record that your absence or missed deadline is authorised and so should not be reported to the Home Office. If you decide to leave your course, you must also tell your college or university and, if you are going somewhere else to study, let the first college or university know this too so that they can pass this information to the Home Office so everyone is clear that you are still studying in the UK.

Checklist

Institution	Must have Tier 4 sponsor licence.
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Course	Must be a degree level course, or at NQF Level 3 (unless you can apply as a Child Student) or English language at B2 from 3 March 2010. After turning 18, you must not spend more than 3 years on courses below degree level.
Progress	You can re-sit exams or repeat your studies in accordance the with UKBA guidance and internal policy at your institution.
Attendance	If you do not attend your classes or submit coursework, your immigration permission might be cut short.
Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)	If you are studying specific subjects at postgraduate level, you must have an ATAS clearance certificate before you apply.
Finances	You must have evidence that you have a fixed sum of money for your maintenance costs, plus one year (or less, if the course is shorter) of course fees. Think about opening a separate account for this money so you don't go below the required amount in the 28 days before you make your immigration application.
Work	You can work full-time on a work placement which takes up no more than 50% of your studies and which is an assessed part of your course. Otherwise, you can work up to 10 or 20 hours a week in term time and full time in your holidays.
Financial sponsor's consent	If you are financially sponsored by a government or international scholarship agency, or if you have been sponsored by them within 12 months of making your application, they must provide a letter saying they agree that you can stay in the UK, and you must include this letter with your immigration application.
Immigration application	Always apply before your current immigration permission expires. Always include all relevant documents and complete all sections of the form. Always read the Home Office policy guidance and provide the information and documents required in it in the specified format.
Fingerprints	When required to do so, you must make an appointment to give your fingerprints and have your photograph taken (give your biometrics.)
Police registration	If you are required to register with the police, you must do this by the deadline you are given
Think ahead	Make a note to organise all the documents you need at least two months (longer if you need an ATAS clearance certificate) before your current immigration permission runs out, for example:

- CAS reference number from your college or university
- ATAS clearance certificate
- statements or letter from your bank or building society
- letter from your official financial sponsor confirming they will fund you
- letter from the government or international scholarship agency which funds your studies consenting to your application
- receipts for your tuition fees and/or accommodation
- letter from your parents or guardian if you are under 18
- letter from your parents or guardian and legal document proving relationship if you are using their bank account
- the qualifications listed in the print out from the CAS
- official translations of all documents which are not in English or Welsh.

Definition of terms

Degree level course

A course is at degree level if it leads to:

- a UK degree at bachelor's level or above; or
- in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, a qualification at level 6 or above of the revised **National Qualifications Framework**; or
- in Scotland, a qualification at level 9 or above of the **Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework**.

If you do not know whether your course is at degree level, ask the course tutor (you should show them a copy of this Information Sheet so they can see how degree level is defined).

Entry clearance

Entry clearance means the sticker placed in your passport by a British diplomatic post abroad (not in the UK). Next to the word 'type', it tells you what it was issued for (what 'category' you fall into, for example, 'student'). It is valid if it has not expired, which means that the 'valid until' date on it has not yet arrived.

Family members

Your family members who can stay with you in the UK as student (Tier 4) dependants, if your course is over six months long, are your:

- husband or wife
- civil partner
- unmarried or same sex partner (you must have lived together for at least two years)

- children aged under 18
- children aged 18 or over but only if they are already in the UK with immigration permission as your dependants.

Your civil partner is your same-sex partner with whom you have either registered a civil partnership in the UK, or entered into a similar form of legally recognised relationship in a different country. For details of partnerships in countries outside the UK that are regarded in the same way as civil partnerships, see the website of the UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group at

www.uklgig.org.uk/civil_partnership.htm#Overseas_Recognition. In relation to immigration, and most other matters, a civil partner should be treated in the same way as a husband or wife.

Official financial sponsors

Official financial sponsors are defined in the Home Office policy guidance as:

- the UK Government
- your home government
- the British Council
- any international organisation
- an international company (the Home Office has not defined "international company" in its policy guidance, but it seems to mean a company with a trading presence (an office) in more than one country)
- any university.

If your studies are wholly funded by an official financial sponsor, you do not have to provide separate evidence of your savings. You just have to provide a letter from your financial sponsor in which they confirm that they will pay for your tuition fees and living costs. If you are partly funded by an official financial sponsor, you need a letter from them about the element of your costs they are paying for, but you also need to show, through your bank statements, loans or letter from your bank or a regulated financial institution, that you can meet the remainder of the amount set out in the policy guidance.

You need the consent of your financial sponsor to stay in the UK only if you are funded by a government or by an international scholarship agency, or you have been funded by them in the 12 months before you apply for immigration permission. If you are funded by any other type of official financial sponsor, for example, a company or university, you do not require their consent to apply to stay in the UK.

Organised daytime study

Organised study means that there must be some kind of supervision, for example, in a lecture, seminar, laboratory or on a field trip. It does not include private study time in a library or your room. Daytime study means that you are studying between the hours of 8 am and 6 pm during the week (Monday to Friday).

Public funds

Public funds is a term which is defined in paragraph 6 of the Immigration Rules:

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/introduction

and explained in a Home Office leaflet at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/residency/publicfunds.pdf. It includes specified welfare benefits and social housing. Anything not included in the list is not regarded as public funds. Bursaries, scholarships, 'home' fees and Student Support are not public funds.

Where to go for help and other useful contacts

If you need help with your application:

- talk to the international student adviser or welfare officer at your college or university, or its students'

union or guild

- ask if your local Law Centre has an immigration specialist who can help you, free of charge. For details of law centres in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, see the website of the Law Centres Federation at www.lawcentres.org.uk. For details of law centres in Scotland see www.govanlc.com/scotland.htm
- ask if your local Citizens Advice Bureau has an immigration specialist who can help you, free of charge. For details of Citizens Advice Bureaux in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, see the website www.citizensadvice.org.uk. For details of Citizens Advice Bureaux in Scotland, see the website www.cas.org.uk
- ask if your nearest Immigration Advisory Service (IAS) office can help you, free of charge or at a low cost (they have offices in various towns and cities in England, Wales and Scotland). See the IAS website at www.iasuk.org or telephone their head office on 0844 974 4000 for contact details
- if you are on a low income, and know that a local solicitor specialises in immigration, ask them if you qualify for free advice from them under the legal aid scheme. See the Community Legal Service website at www.clsdirect.org.uk or the website of the Immigration Law Practitioners Association at www.ilpa.org.uk for details of lawyers and other organisations who specialise in giving immigration advice

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