



Case study

Nationality: Tunisian
Course: MSc Engineering
Transition route: Tier 4 to Tier 2

Describe your current job role

I am a critical part lifting stress engineer, recently completed the Engineering Graduate Scheme.

How easy/difficult was the visa/transition process?

The process of moving from one category to another was not an easy one and was frustrating and time consuming. I was offered the position of graduate engineer with a global engineering company, who were happy to sponsor me, at the beginning of April 2013 and I started the process of applying for a Tier 2 visa in early July 2013.

To apply for the visa you need a letter from your university stating that you have completed your degree and you also need to have a certain level of mark; this official letter needs to be given to the employer. However, the employer was not happy with the wording of the standard letter that the university gave which stated that I will be awarded my degree in June of the following year (at the graduation ceremony). I had to struggle to get this wording changed, which took some time.

An appointment is needed with the Border Agency* to change the visa category. A premium appointment is what I decided to go for as this had the least waiting time. You have to apply for this appointment online and it is very difficult to get an appointment, also an appointment is only given 45 days after you apply (not sooner). For your appointment you need to complete a lot of paperwork and you need to check thoroughly that all sections are filled in correctly. Importantly, you also need a sponsorship certificate from your employer. I received mine half an hour before my appointment, so you can understand my anxiety!

The appointments lasted for about three hours and I received my Tier 2 visa and copy of resident permit in five days, which I then handed over to my employer. I was meant to start my job on the 10 September 2013 but started on 24 September as the process hadn't been completed in time.

My expenses in total for the visa process were £896.00, £596 for the visa and £300 for the premium appointment

Do you have any hints and tips about applying for a visa/making the transition?

It would be useful if the time taken from first applying for the visa and actually getting it could be reduced as some employers may not be prepared to wait. Universities need to get the wording right in the official document needed for the application (to be given to the employer). Employers need to ensure that the sponsorship certificate they issue is done promptly. The process of getting an appointment with the Border Agency* should be easier and quicker.

The costs for the visa are high to an individual and may not be possible for some.

* Now UK Visas and Immigration