



Protecting your Tier 4 student immigration status

26 October 2011

Who is this information sheet for?

It is for anyone who has, or who is applying for, Tier 4 immigration status. Tier 4 immigration status has some conditions attached, which are printed on the entry clearance sticker or residence permit in your passport, or on your Biometric Residence Permit if you have one. There are also some requirements and obligations related to the immigration rules, and related to your studies and your Tier 4 sponsor. This information sheet explains all of these, plus some general good practice for protecting and maintaining your Tier 4 status.

Enrol at the sponsor institution that issued your CAS

It is a condition of your Tier 4 leave that you are enrolled at the Tier 4 sponsor institution that issued your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). Your institution's Tier 4 sponsor license number is printed on your entry clearance sticker or residence permit, or on your Biometrics Residence Permit (BRP) if you have one. (Unless your BRP was issued between summer 2010 and September 2011, in which case it will show your CAS number not your Tier 4 sponsor license number).

If you do not enrol as expected, your Tier 4 sponsor is required to report this to the UK Border Agency. Therefore, if you know you will need to enrol late, it is very important to check with your sponsor whether this is acceptable, and that you know your final deadline for enrolling.

If your sponsor reports to the UK Border Agency (UKBA) that you have not enrolled, and you have not applied to switch to a different Tier 4 sponsor (see below), the UKBA will probably curtail your immigration permission. This means that your student visa is cancelled, and you probably need to leave the UK. If this happens, the UKBA will write to you and give you 10 days to appeal the curtailment. If you do not appeal, we advise you arrange to leave the UK no more than 28 days after the date your immigration permission was curtailed.

There is some flexibility to switch to a different Tier 4 sponsor, but you must apply for permission from the UKBA first. How exactly you do this depends on when you applied for your current Tier 4 immigration permission. Remember that this whole information sheet is only for those with Tier 4 leave: If you have a student visa that you applied for before 31 March 2009, you therefore have pre-Tier 4 student leave, and there is no requirement for you to apply for permission to change to a different college or university.

If you applied for your current Tier 4 immigration permission before 5 October 2009, you can apply for permission to change sponsor on [form Tier 4 \(PTS\)](#). The application fee is £160. You can start the new course before you receive a decision from the UK Border Agency: you must simply show the new sponsor evidence that you have applied to switch to their sponsorship.

It is important to note that a Tier 4 (PTS) application does not extend your stay, it only switches your sponsor. If you will also need to extend your stay in order to complete the course with the new sponsor, you may prefer to make a full Tier 4 (G) application now in respect of the new course, rather than a Tier 4 (PTS) application now followed by a Tier 4 (G) application later. A Tier 4 (G) application will both switch your sponsor and extend your stay.

If you applied for your current Tier 4 immigration permission on or after 5 October 2009, you must make a full Tier 4 immigration application before you start the new course. If your new course is with a Highly Trusted Sponsor, you can start the new course before you receive a decision from the UKBA. If your new course is at a college or university that does not have Highly Trusted Sponsor status, you cannot start the new course until the UK Border Agency has given you new immigration permission to study at the new institution.

If you need to make a Tier 4 application, it is very important that you can meet all the requirements and can make the application before you move to the new institution. For information about how to make a Tier 4 application, see our Information Sheets:

[Making a student immigration application in the UK](#)

[Making a student immigration application in your home country](#)

Check whether you need to register with the police.

The condition to register with the police is given to students of certain nationalities, who come to the UK for more than six months. You can check the list of countries whose nationals need to register at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/appendix2/

If you are required to register, the condition will always be printed on the entry clearance sticker or residence permit in your passport, or on your Biometric Residence Permit if you have one.

You must register with the police within seven days of arriving in the UK, unless your college or university has made special arrangements for new students to register outside this 7-day deadline. When you register, you will receive a Police Registration Certificate. You need to update the police within 7 days if you change address, get an immigration extension, change college or university, renew your passport, get married, or if any of the other details on your Police Registration Certificate change.

If you fail to comply with a condition to register with the police or to notify them of changes, the UK Border Agency can refuse future immigration application or remove you from the UK if you do not comply with it properly. You might be barred from returning to the UK for a certain period.

If you think you have been wrongly given the police registration condition, or if you think you should have it but you do not, speak to the international student adviser at your college or university, or contact the UKCISA students advice line.

Check your work conditions

Tier 4 students either have a work restriction or a work prohibition. For further information see our Information Sheet [Working during your studies](#)

The UK immigration authorities treat work restrictions very seriously. They can refuse your immigration application, or remove you from the UK, if you work too many hours or if you do work which you are not allowed to do. You will have to declare what work you have done on future immigration applications, and if you have breached the condition, you might be barred from returning to the UK for a certain period.

Do not claim 'public funds'.

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

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

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

Ensure that your maintenance funds are available to pay your living costs

When you applied for Tier 4 permission to come to the UK, or to extend your stay in the UK, you confirmed that you had enough money to pay for your tuition fees, and enough money to pay for your living costs at £600 per month (£800 per month if studying in Inner London). You confirmed that this money was available to you for up to 9 months, or up to 2 months in some circumstances.

Tier 4 applications made on or after 4 July 2011 include a further specific declaration that this money is available to you for paying your living costs, and that it will remain available to you, unless you have spent it on living costs.

This means that using these funds for anything other than paying your living costs in the UK could mean you used deception in your Tier 4 application. Using deception in an immigration application has serious consequences.

The aim of this declaration is to ensure that students do not use money in their immigration application that is not genuinely available to them for their living costs for the specified 9 month (or 2 month) period.

Open a UK bank account that sends you paper statements by post.

This is not an immigration requirement, but it does make future immigration applications more straightforward. If you extend your stay in the UK, you will need to collate evidence that you have enough money to pay for your living costs (and for your tuition fees, if it is a Tier 4 extension), in the correct format. The easiest way to meet these requirements is with postal statements from a UK account. Make sure your bank knows that you want statements by post. Keep all your bank statements, do not throw any away.

See also [Opening a bank account](#)

Make a note in your diary four months before your current immigration permission runs out.

Your deadline for sending an in-time application to extend your stay in the UK is the final day of your current leave. However, we advise that you start thinking about it four months before. You will need some time to check what requirements you need to meet, and what documents you will need to show. Planning four months in advance will give you enough time to get your bank account in order, so that you meet the requirements about holding a certain amount of money in your bank account for a specific period. For a Tier 4 extension, this is 28 days, but for most work-based applications, it is 90 days.

See also

[Making a student immigration application in the UK](#)

[Working in the UK after your studies](#)

Keep copies of your personal documents

Make copies now of

- the whole of your passport, except for the blank pages
- the front and back of your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), if you have one. These have been issued to those who applied in the UK for Tier 4 (General) or student immigration permission since 27 November 2008, and some other people.
- your police registration certificate, if you have one.

And remember to take fresh copies whenever any changes are made to any of these documents. If you lose any of these documents, it will help when you try to replace them.

Keep all correspondence with UK immigration authorities

- Make copies of everything you give to the UK immigration authorities when you make an immigration application (every page of the form, and every document you provide along with it)
- Keep the receipts from Royal Mail showing the date you post anything to the UK immigration authorities (you should always use special delivery or recorded delivery)

- Keep any letters you receive from the UK immigration authorities, and the envelopes that they sent them in (so you have proof of the date they sent them), or any receipts they give you
- Keep all the paperwork and documents you have that evidence each of your journeys to and from the UK (photocopies of the tickets; letters or documents relating to the bookings; the ticket stubs that are given back to you by the travel operator – or even better, the whole ticket)

You may need to refer to these on a future occasion, so keep them forever.

Maintain attendance on your course, and submit your work on time.

Your college or university must report poor attendance to the UKBA in certain circumstances. If it does not, it will lose its licence to recruit students under Tier 4. Therefore, your sponsor will monitor your attendance and participation on your course. They will explain to you what attendance and participation is required, and how this is recorded. If you miss a certain number of these expected contacts or attendances, your sponsor is required to report this to the UKBA and they are likely to withdraw your Tier 4 sponsorship.

If your sponsorship is withdrawn, the UKBA will probably "curtail" your immigration permission. This means that your student visa is cancelled, and you probably need to leave the UK. If this happens, the UKBA writes to you and gives you 10 days to appeal the curtailment. If you do not appeal, we advise you arrange to leave the UK no more than 28 days after the date your leave was curtailed.

Therefore, if you know you will miss a required attendance or deadline, for example because you are ill, contact your tutor or department straightaway to inform them. Ask whether they need to see some evidence from a doctor. If you need to take an extended period of time away from your course for illness, you may need to take a short break from your studies. Speak to your Tier 4 sponsor about this, and about whether they will treat your absence as "authorised".

If you plan to take a break from your studies for pregnancy, speak to your Tier 4 sponsor about this as early as possible. If your sponsor does not treat the break as an "authorised absence" in your sponsorship, you will need to arrange to leave the UK during the break in studies, and you will need to plan for this.

If there is any other reason you cannot attend your course, (for example, a family bereavement, or religious festival), ask your tutor or department to approve your absence.

If you think you might have problems submitting your work on time, talk to your tutor or an international student adviser as early as possible, so you can talk about your options.

If you have a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), keep it up to date

If any of the following details about you change, you need to fill in a form as soon as possible, and pay for a new card,:

- name
- nationality
- gender
- date of birth
- significant change to your facial appearance (so that it would be difficult to recognise you from the photograph in your current identity card)

If you lose the card, or it is stolen, you have to report this to the UK immigration authorities as soon as possible, and pay for a new card.

For the form, and further information about how to report these things, visit www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/while-in-uk/do-i-need-brp/responsibilities/.

The UK immigration authorities can fine you up to £1,000, or shorten your permission to be in the UK, if you do not keep your identity card up-to-date.

Remember to report a change of address to the UK immigration authorities

If you have a Biometrics Residence Permit (BRP), see above for how to report changes.

If you do not have a BRP, visit www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/studying/adult-students/changes/ where you will find the form you must complete.

You must also report your change of address to:

- your Tier 4 sponsor, who is obliged to hold current contact details for you
- the police, if you have a Police Registration Certificate. See above under [Check whether you need to register with the police](#)
- your official financial sponsor, if you have one
- your home country's Embassy or High Commission, if they require it.

and, for practical purposes, we advise you also inform your bank, your doctor's surgery, your insurance companies, your driving licence issuer (and also, if you own a vehicle in the UK, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority/Agency).

Do not get into trouble with the police, or commit driving offences.

You will have to declare any criminal convictions if you make another immigration application, and the UK immigration authorities view these very seriously.

UK Council for International Student Affairs

Website: www.ukcisa.org.uk

Telephone advice line: Mon-Fri 1300-1600 hours (UK time)

Tel (from within the UK): 020 7107 9922

Tel (from outside the UK): +44 20 7107 9922

We regret that we cannot advise personal callers at our offices. Please use the telephone advice line or write to us at: UKCISA, 9-17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, UK.

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