

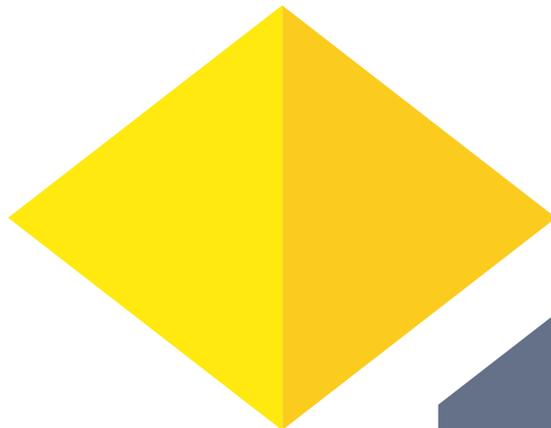


UKVI Compliance Unit

# Tier 4 (General) Student Visa Application Guide

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A guide for students applying to enter or remain in the UK to study with the University of Wolverhampton.



## Introduction

Welcome to the University of Wolverhampton. This guide has been created to give you information and advice on making a Tier 4 (General) Visa application; either from inside the UK or from overseas. You will need to read this guide if you are planning to study at the University of Wolverhampton and do not have a right to permanent residence within the European Economic Area (EEA).

### DISCLAIMER

The information provided in this publication is meant as a guide only. While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, the University cannot guarantee the completeness or accuracy of the information. The University shall not be responsible for errors, omissions or inaccuracies and accepts no liability for any loss resulting directly or indirectly from using this information or the information published on the linked web sites. For full official guidance from the UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) section of the Home Office, please visit: [gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa](https://gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa)

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## Section 1: Do I need a visa?

### What is a visa?

A visa is usually an endorsement on a passport or a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) indicating that the holder is allowed to enter, leave, or stay for a period of time in a country and confirms what you are allowed to do in that country (for example, study or work). Applications for a visa made outside the UK are assessed by the British diplomatic post in your country of nationality (or where you are officially living). A visa to enter the UK (also known as entry clearance) is usually issued in the form of a sticker or 'vignette' which is placed in your passport and is valid for 30 days to enable you to travel to the UK, and you will need to collect a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) from a local Post Office when you enter the UK. The BRP will be your visa and should be valid for the duration of your course and will show the conditions attached to your stay.

### Do I need a visa to study in the UK?

The requirement for a visa depends on your nationality:

#### EU/EEA/Swiss Passport holders

You will not need a visa and are not subject to UK immigration control. You should enter the UK through the EU/EEA/Switzerland channel at passport control on arrival. This includes students with dual nationality, who can use their EU/EEA/Swiss passport to enter the UK.

#### Others

Students who do not hold an EU/EEA/Swiss passport who are arriving in the UK intending to study will usually need to apply for a visa before you travel. The type of visa you can apply for depends on the type and length of your course. Visa applications can take several weeks to process so it is important you allow plenty of time for your visa to be issued before you make your travel arrangements. You should never book your flights before you receive your visa in case of delays.

### What type of visa do I need?

#### My course is longer than 6 months:

If you are coming to study a course that will last longer than six months, you will need to apply for a Tier 4 (General) student visa.

#### My course is six months or less:

You would normally be expected to apply for a Short-term study visa (previously known as Student Visitor visas). This visa is usually used by students wishing to improve their language skills.

#### Can I study using an existing visa?

It is possible to study if you have another visa type (e.g a dependant visa), but this will need to be assessed by our Admissions team before you can enrol.

## Section 2: Application requirements:

### Basic application requirements

To make a successful visa application, you will need to meet the full requirements of the Immigration Rules, and also achieve 40 points for the following:

Points	What for?	Evidence you will be required to show
30	Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number	This is a fourteen digit alphanumeric number which is emailed to you once you've met all conditions in your offer letter and when the University is satisfied you will be able to make a successful visa application. The CAS number refers to an electronic record that contains information the University has confirmed to the UKVI about you and the course you will be studying. You will receive a CAS statement that confirms the CAS number and other information you need for the visa application. It is your responsibility to check this information is all correct before you apply for your visa. You must write the CAS number in the appropriate section on the visa application form. You do not need to provide any further evidence of the CAS number.
	Proof of qualifications	The academic qualification(s) the University has used to assess your suitability for the course. The evidence is listed on the CAS statement you receive from the University. You must include the <b>original</b> certificate or transcript as listed on your CAS statement. If your original documents are not in English or Welsh, you must provide a fully certified translation by a professional translator or translation company as well as the original document.
	English Language	Your CAS statement will state how the University assessed your English language ability is at the required standard to study in the UK. You must submit <b>original</b> certificates confirming any English qualifications listed on your CAS statement. If your original documents are not in English or Welsh, you must provide a fully certified translation by a professional translator or translation company as well as the original document. You may not need to submit a qualification if you meet any of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are from a majority English speaking country</li> <li>• You have completed a degree from a majority English speaking country</li> </ul> If you meet either criteria this will be stated on your CAS statement.
	Progression	If you have studied in the UK before, your CAS may confirm how your new course represents 'Academic Progression' from your previous one. You do not need to submit any evidence for this.
	Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)	Students on certain science and technology courses (usually at postgraduate research level) need approval from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office before you can apply for your visa. If this applies to you, we will ask you to apply for your ATAS certificate before we issue you with a CAS.
10	Financial requirements	You will need to show that you are able to pay your full tuition fees for the first academic year of your studies. In addition to this you will need to show you have enough money to cover living costs. Please read full guidance on this before making your visa application.

## When will I receive my CAS?

In order to receive a CAS you must meet both the conditions of your offer, and the conditions for receiving a CAS.

### Offer conditions

Your offer conditions may include the following:

- Academic conditions
- English Language conditions
- References
- A statement of purpose
- Payment of a deposit
- Copies of previous visas

### CAS conditions

Your CAS conditions may include the following:

- Evidence that you are able to meet the financial requirements for making a visa application
- An ATAS certificate (if applicable for your course)
- A valid tuberculosis (TB) test certificate (if you are required to complete the TB test as part of the application)

The offer conditions you will need to meet are detailed in your offer letter. You may be advised about the CAS conditions by the Admissions unit or the Visa and Immigration support team.

## Applying for a visa outside the UK (Entry clearance)

You must apply for your entry clearance in good time, but no more than three months before the start date of your course. You will need to apply online for your Tier 4 visa at [gov.uk/apply-uk-visa](https://www.gov.uk/apply-uk-visa)

The only exception to this is students from North Korea, who need to complete a paper application form.

You will need to have your fingerprints and photograph (biometric information) taken at a visa application centre as part of your application. Please find a centre here: [gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre](https://www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre). You will also complete an interview at the visa application centre. There is more information about the interview process on **page 9**.

As part of your application you will be asked to state where you wish your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) to be delivered. It will be delivered to the Post Office closest to the postcode you state as your location for study, so please use the University of Wolverhampton postcode (**WV1 1LY**) and you will be directed to the Post Office when you come to enrol.

## Applying for a visa outside the UK (Leave to remain)

If you are applying for a visa extension inside the UK you must apply before your current immigration permission ends. If you do not apply before your current visa ends, you are committing a criminal offence and you are classed as an overstayer. The University of Wolverhampton will not issue CAS to students who have overstayed in the UK.

Before you make your visa application, you are required to speak to our Visa and Immigration advice team who will check you meet the requirements and guide you through the process. To make an appointment with our immigration support team you can email [visa-enquiries@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:visa-enquiries@wlv.ac.uk)

### Can I apply to switch from another visa category inside the UK?

You can apply under the Tier 4 (General) Student category from inside the UK if you currently have, or you were last given, permission to stay in any of the following categories:

- Tier 4 (General) Student where your existing Tier 4 leave is for a full time course sponsored by
  - An HEI
  - An overseas HEI
  - An embedded college offering pathway courses, or
  - An independent school;
- Tier 4 (Child) student;
- Tier 2 Migrant

If you are currently in the UK in any other immigration category including Student Visitor and any Dependant category, you will need to return to your country of residence to make your application from there. It is also important to check the expiry date of your current visa to make sure you are able to apply for your next visa inside the UK. If there is a gap between your current visa ending and your next course starting, it may not be possible to apply inside the UK. The Visa and Immigration support team will discuss this with you.

## Financial requirements

Before we issue your CAS, you may need to show evidence that you have enough funds available to pay any outstanding tuition fees for the first year of your course, plus a fixed amount of money for living expenses, also known as maintenance, to our immigration support team. You will need to provide this evidence to UKVI when you make your visa application as well. This money must be maintained in an acceptable bank account for 28 days before you can apply for your visa.

### How much will I be required to show?

Your CAS will state how much your tuition fee is for the first year of your studies and how much you have paid to date. If you pay more fees at a later date it is important to update us so we can check your record is updated correctly. You will need to have funds available to cover the outstanding balance of your tuition fees. In addition to this, you will also need to show that you have enough money to cover your maintenance.

For maintenance, you will be required to show you have £1015 available for nine months (£9135). £1015 is how much the UKVI believes a student will need to cover living expenses and accommodation each month. If you have dependants applying with you, you will also need to show £6120 (£680 per month for nine months)

### How do I prove these funds are available?

There are four main ways to evidence the funds are available; your personal bank account, a bank account belonging to your parent/guardian, an official sponsorship letter or a student loan.

Format of evidence	What is required?
Personal bank statements	Bank statements must be originals from an approved financial institution, and must show that enough funds have been held for at least 28 days. The closing balance should be clearly stated. The end of the 28 day period cannot be more than one month before the date of your visa application. These bank statements must be your personal account – they cannot be a business or corporate bank account.
Parent/Guardian bank statements	Statements must be in the same format as above. In addition, you will need to provide an original birth certificate showing your name and the name(s) of your parent(s) providing the funds. If you are relying on court documents confirming legal guardianship, please seek further advice from the Visa and Immigration Support Team to ensure your documents are acceptable. You will also need to provide an original signed and dated letter from your parent(s)/guardian confirming their relationship to you and that they have given consent to their funds being available to you for your studies. <b>You cannot use funds held by any other relative.</b>
Sponsorship letter	<p>If you receive sponsorship from an official financial sponsor, you must provide an original letter on official paper which details the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your name</li> <li>• The name and address of your sponsor</li> <li>• Date</li> <li>• The length of your sponsorship</li> <li>• The amount of money the sponsor will be providing, or confirmation that they will cover all of your fees and living costs</li> </ul> <p>An official financial sponsor can only be one of the following; the UK government, your home government, the British Council, any international organisation, any international company (i.e. a company with a 'trading presence' in more than one country), any university, an Independent School. Family members or friends cannot sponsor you.</p>
Student loan	You will need to provide a letter confirming the details of your loan. The loan must be in your name and must be provided by your national government, the state or regional government or a government sponsored student loan company, or it must be part of an academic or educational loans scheme. Usually personal loans from a bank are NOT acceptable.

The UKVI expect your financial evidence to meet specific requirements that are listed in the Tier 4 Policy Guidance. We will be happy to check your documents before you apply for your visa to make sure they meet the requirements. If you are planning to use some other form of evidence such as fixed deposit certificates we will need to check it is acceptable before you apply for your visa.

The UKVI use the OANDA website to convert currency, so if your bank statement is not in GBP, please convert it here: [oanda.com/convert/classic](https://oanda.com/convert/classic). The UKVI will use the exchange rate on the day that you submit your visa application, so if you only just have the right amount of funds in your account it is worth checking this on the day of submission in case currency fluctuations mean you do not have the right amount.

## Immigration health surcharge (IHS)

The IHS is effectively a health insurance fee which allows you to access the National Health Service whilst you are studying. The IHS must be paid for the **full length of your visa** (this will be longer than the length of your course) before you make your visa application. If you have dependants they will also need to pay the surcharge as part of their visa application.

### How much will I be required to pay?

The cost is £300 per year of visa, or £150 for any additional periods less than 6 months. Please see the table below for examples:

Length of course	Length of Visa	Total charge
Three years	Three years, four months	£1050 (3 x £300 + 1 x £150)
1 year	1 year, 4 months	£450 (1 x £300 + 1 x £150)
9 months	11 months	£300

### How do I pay?

Payment for the IHS will be taken during the visa application process. If you don't pay the correct amount you will be contacted by UKVI and must make a further payment within seven days or your visa application will be refused.

## Supporting documents

Which documents am I required to submit with my visa application?

Document	What should be submitted?	Who needs to submit this?
Visa application fee	Payment must be made using a debit/credit card at the end of the form when submitting your visa application online.	Everyone
IHS number	You must make payment whilst completing your visa application form.	Everyone
Passport	You must submit your original passport which should be current and valid. Please check the passport number on your CAS statement matches your current passport – and let us know if it doesn't match before submitting your application so we can update our records.	Everyone
Photograph(s)	Please make sure this meets the Home Office guidance. You must write your full name on the back of the photograph. (You need 2 identical photographs if you apply in the UK)	Everyone
CAS Number	The CAS number is available on your CAS statement. Please make sure you read the information on the CAS statement carefully. You must tell us about any errors <b>before</b> you apply for your visa. Write the CAS number on the application form. You do not need to submit your CAS statement.	Everyone

Document	What should be submitted?	Who needs to submit this?
Entry qualifications	These are clearly stated on your CAS statement. Please submit original certificates/transcripts and certified translations where originals are not in English.	Everyone
English Language qualifications	If the University has stated a particular English qualification on the CAS statement, you must submit this and any certified translations if the originals are not in English.	Everyone
Evidence of finance	Please see information on <b>page 7</b> to confirm which documents you will need to submit.	Everyone
Tuberculosis (TB) test results	The test must be done at one of the approved UKVI clinics and should confirm that you have been cleared to travel.	Only students from one of these countries: <a href="http://gov.uk/tb-test-visa">gov.uk/tb-test-visa</a>
ATAS Certificate	You will need ATAS clearance if you are studying certain courses (usually postgraduate research). The process for applying can take 20 working days, so please apply for your ATAS certificate early.	Applicants who will be studying certain courses. If you have applied for one of these courses we will require an ATAS certificate before the CAS is issued.

## Credibility interviews

Credibility interviews were introduced in 2012 to allow UKVI to assess whether they consider you to be a genuine student or not. Interviews are conducted via video-link to a unit in the UK, and transcripts of your responses are provided to the Entry Clearance Officer to help them assess your case. As with any interview, it is important to make sure you are well prepared and have fully considered why you wish to study your course at the University of Wolverhampton. Make sure that you dress appropriately and if English is not your first language you may wish to practice your responses with a fluent speaker.

The interviewer is not there to catch you out. You will be asked various questions relating to your intention to study, and whether your course is financially viable given your current personal circumstances and future prospects.

Questions which may help you prepare for an interview include the following:

- Why do you want to study in the UK?
- Why did you choose the University of Wolverhampton?
- Which other Universities did you consider when making this decision?
- Where in the UK is Wolverhampton?
- Where will you stay whilst you are studying?
- Why did you choose this course of studies?
- Which modules are you studying? – your course guide is available here: [wlv.ac.uk/study-here/new-students/when-you-arrive/about-your-course](http://wlv.ac.uk/study-here/new-students/when-you-arrive/about-your-course)
- How is your course assessed?
- What qualification will you receive if you successfully complete your course?
- How is your course relevant to your chosen career path?
- What will you do after your studies?
- What is your current occupation?
- How are you financing your studies?
- If sponsored, what is your relationship to your sponsor?

- If sponsored, what is your relationship to your sponsor?
- How much will your living expenses be for your course?
- Will you be able to work during your studies? If so, how many hours a week will you be allowed to work?
- Are you reliant on finding a part time job to help finance your studies?

## Dependants

If you have family members who you want to bring with you to the UK while you are studying, it is important to check the guidance for dependants before you apply for their visas. Dependants are spouses (husband or wife), civil partner or unmarried partner, or children. Not all students can bring dependants to the UK. The only students who can bring dependants are:

- Government sponsored students, but the course must be **over** 6 months long
- Postgraduate students (e.g. Masters or Postgraduate Research), but the course must be **at least** 9 months long'
- Transitional measures for others (you must meet all 4 of the following criteria)
  - Your permission is current (or expired no more than three months before this immigration application) and
  - Your dependants already have Tier 4 dependant or 'student' dependant immigration permission (or it is the most recent immigration permission that they had, and it expired no more than three months before this application) and
  - You and your dependant apply at the same time and
  - You are now applying for Tier 4 leave for course **over** 6 months long

Your dependant will need to meet financial requirements, may need to do a TB test, and will need to pay the Immigration Healthcare Surcharge as part of their application. The Visa and Immigration advice team will be happy to answer any questions about dependants.

## Section 3: Decisions

### Approval

Following the visa application process, we hope that your visa will be approved. If this is the case you will have your documents returned to you. If you are inside the UK, you will be sent a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) which should cover your full course. If you are applying from outside the UK, you will be given a temporary travel vignette (sticker) in your passport, which will give you a 30 day period in which you should travel to the UK. Once you are in the UK, you will need to collect your Biometric Residence Permit from the Post Office in Wolverhampton as quickly as possible and within 10 days of arrival at the latest.

### Collecting your biometric residence permit (Applicants from outside the UK only)

If you have used the Wolverhampton postcode on your visa application form (**WV1 1LY**), your permit will be sent to the Post Office close to the University and full details of this will be included in your visa approval letter. When possible, you should aim to pick this up before enrolling at the University, but if you're not sure where to go, please come to the enrolment session and staff will be available to guide you to the Post Office. Information on how to collect your BRP on arrival will be available on our website.

### What to do if your visa application is refused

Please contact the University immediately for advice. You should include a copy of the refusal documentation so that we can advise you on your best course of action.

### What to do if your visa application is rejected

If you are in the UK, please speak to one of our Visa and Immigration advice team, who will be able to advise whether it is possible for you to make a new application. If you are not in the UK you should contact the Admissions team to discuss.

### What to do if your course has started and you haven't yet received a decision

If you are in the UK, please come to the University with evidence that you have made your visa application as you may be able to use this to enrol on your course. If you are not in the UK, please contact the Admissions team to confirm whether you are able to arrive late for your course.

## Section 4: Further guidance

### Other official guidance and websites

Official Home Office Guidance: [gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/](https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/)

UK Council for International Student Affairs

[ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Preparing-planning/Visas-and-immigration/Applying-for-a-Tier-4-General-visa/](https://ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Preparing-planning/Visas-and-immigration/Applying-for-a-Tier-4-General-visa/)

### Contact information

If you are in the UK and have any queries, please contact our Visa and Immigration advice team on [visa-enquiries@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:visa-enquiries@wlv.ac.uk). Remember to include your student number and as much information as possible to help us with your enquiry.