**Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur**

What is this type of visa and what does it allow?

This visa route is for overseas UK graduates identified by an HEI (Lancaster University) as having developed a genuine and credible business idea and entrepreneurial skills to establish one or more businesses in the UK.

The visa allows you to stay in the UK for 12 months to establish and develop a business in the UK. This can be extended for up to a further 12months provided satisfactory progress is being made.

In order to apply for the visa, you must be provided with an endorsement letter from the University.

Currently, the University only has 20 endorsements available each year, and so it is advisable for interested students to contact the team as early as possible.

Who is the scheme open to?

* Lancaster University overseas graduates who completed their studies within the last 3 years.
* Doctoral researchers working at Lancaster on a Tier 2 visa.
* The University will also consider current students who are in their final year of studies, however, an endorsement will only be provided upon successful completion of your degree programme.

The team strongly advise students to get in contact as early as possible when considering this route. This is to ensure that you can be provided with the best level of help to prepare your business plans and increase the likelihood of successfully securing an endorsement.

How the Enterprise Team can help:

**Lancaster University Enterprise Centre exists to help students and graduates to make their ideas happen.**

One of our main areas of activity is business planning and this includes supporting you in writing your Business Plan.

In order to receive the initial endorsement, your Business Plan needs to describe how the value of your idea will enable you to survive as a new business owner in the UK, and how you will make it grow sustainably over the following few years.

Before you set about writing your business plan, we would advise you talk to us about how to go about testing your idea and clearly identifying your customers. We can also provide you with invaluable tools to ensure you consider and address challenges across all dimensions of your business model. Perhaps most importantly, we can connect you with other people who will be useful in some way.

No one can predict the future – the strongest ideas can fail; the most unlikely ideas can succeed. However, your Business Plan will need to be robust, demonstrating that you have considered all eventualities – positive and negative – that may arise. It will also need to be viable and feasible, demonstrating that it’s worth doing and that you can make it happen.

It’s never too early to start thinking about your idea – indeed you might not even have one yet – so get in touch to arrange a chat and we can look at how you can prepare to create your own graduate career.

How to apply for an Endorsement:

You will need to complete the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur application form, which is available by emailing tier1grad-ent@lancaster.ac.uk. You will need to submit a Business Plan with the application. A template is available within the application pack. If you have a credible Business Plan and a strong application, you will be contacted to arrange a meeting to further discuss your idea. Once the team are satisfied that you have a credible business idea, an endorsement will be offered to you. As endorsements are limited, the team encourage early applications so you do not miss out on the opportunity.

What to do after you receive an Endorsement:

The endorsement letter provided by the University is valid for 3 months from the date stated on the letter.

You must submit your visa application before the expiry of the endorsement; otherwise it will no longer be valid and cannot be used. The University cannot guarantee that another endorsement can be issued if you fail to make an application.

You should apply for the visa one month before your current visa expires. The visa team can provide further advice on when to do this as part of the application process.

Visa Application Information:

Applying inside the UK:

The visa application will cost £456 plus the healthcare surcharge fee. There are additional costs if you have any dependants. You must have a current valid visa to apply within the UK. Please contact the visa team to find out if you can switch to this visa.

You will need:

* An endorsement letter from Lancaster University
* Bank statements showing maintenance funds of £945 held for 90 consecutive days
* A current passport or other valid travel identification
* 1 passport-sized colour photograph
* Your tuberculosis test results if you’re from a country where you have to take the test

Applying outside the UK:

The visa application will cost £335 plus the healthcare surcharge fee. There are additional costs if you have any dependants.

You will need:

* An endorsement letter from Lancaster University
* Bank statements showing maintenance funds of £1890 held for 90 consecutive days
* A current passport or other valid travel identification
* 1 passport-sized colour photograph
* Your tuberculosis test results if you’re from a country where you have to take the test

Full details of the requirements are available via the Home Office website:

<https://www.gov.uk/tier-1-graduate-entrepreneur-visa>

 **Useful Information:**

Web links:

<https://www.gov.uk/tier-1-graduate-entrepreneur-visa>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applications-under-tier-1-graduate-entrepreneur>

<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/student-based-services/international/visas-and-immigration/>

<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/enterprisecentre/>

<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/enterprisecentre/students/t1visa/>

**Contact us:**

If you have any visa questions or would like to request an application pack, please contact the team on:

* tier1grad-ent@lancaster.ac.uk

If you have a business related question or would like to arrange a meeting to discuss your business idea, please contact the team on:

enterpriseteam@lancaster.ac.uk