Applying for your Tier 4 visa for studies at Lancaster from outside the UK

Contact Details
Lancaster University Visa and Immigration Team
visa-advice@lancaster.ac.uk or cas-enquiries@lancaster.ac.uk
01524 594214

Please find below some brief notes to help you with your Tier 4 visa application, produced by Lancaster University Visa & Immigration Team in accordance with the UKVI policy guidance. You should also refer to the current UKVI guidance before you submit your visa application.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student

Applying from outside the UK: https://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/home/welcome

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1. Accept your unconditional offer and receive your CAS by email

Before you can apply for permission to enter the UK under Tier 4 (General), you will need to accept an unconditional offer for studies at Lancaster. If your course of studies requires an ATAS certificate, you will also need to supply this to us before we can issue a CAS.

Your CAS is sent to you via email when you accept your unconditional offer of studies and confirms that you have been accepted on a course of studies at Lancaster.

A valid CAS means you can score 30 points towards your visa application alongside 10 points for evidence of maintenance funds (see section 5).
However, please note a valid CAS does not guarantee that your Tier 4 visa application will be successful – this is dependent upon you submitting the correct evidence (including the correct financial documents).

You will not be issued with a CAS until you have met the conditions for your unconditional offer of studies and the Admissions Officer has entered all the required information into your student record. We recommend that you have supplied all of the following to the Admissions Team;

- Academic and English Language Qualification
- Documents required for your offer (previous transcripts/degree certificates)
- Details of any previous studies undertaken in the UK
- ATAS Certificate if applicable
- Proof of study deposit payment (if required) can be contacted via email on

For Undergraduate Admissions: ugadmissions@lancaster.ac.uk
For Postgraduate Admissions: pgadmissions@lancaster.ac.uk

You must make sure that the financial information on your CAS is correct. If you have requested your CAS to be updated to show a further tuition fee or accommodation payment then you may wish to wait to submit your Tier 4 application until you have received confirmation from the LU Visa & Immigration Team that your CAS has been updated.

If anything is incorrect or further updates are required to your CAS, please email:

cas-enquiries@lancaster.ac.uk

2. Points required for Visa application

You must meet the full requirements of the Immigration Rules and have 40 points in total as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POINTS REQUIRED: 40</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You must have a valid Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) from a fully licenced Tier 4 sponsor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You must have enough money to cover course fees and monthly living costs (also known as maintenance funds)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Documents required

The documents required for your Tier 4 visa application can include (but are not limited to) the following;

- Documents used to obtain your offer (including transcripts, degree certificates etc.). These will be listed on your CAS (see section 4)
- English Language certificate
- Evidence of previous studies in the UK
- Maintenance funds/evidence of finances or official scholarships (See section 5)
- ATAS Certificate if required for your course of studies (See section 6)
- Tuberculosis certificate (See section 7)
- Valid passport
- 2 Passport/visa Photographs
Please note that all documents supplied must be original and in English or provide an official translation with the original documents.

4. Documents used to obtain your offer

Lancaster University will state on your CAS the documents used to obtain your offer e.g. your previous degree qualification. It will appear on your CAS as per the following example:

Other Evidence

Evidence used to obtain offer: Transcript and certificate of Bachelor’s degree from Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, Vietnam

If any qualifications are listed, you must submit the original certificates with your application. You only need to submit evidence of any qualifications listed on your CAS. Do not add extra qualifications that are not listed.

You must submit the actual certificate of your qualification and original official transcripts if stated on the CAS.

Should your certificates and transcripts be in your home language and not English you must also submit a translation into English.

English Language: If you are from a majority English speaking country, according to the Home Office list, you will not have to show evidence of your English language:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Australia
- the Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Canada
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Ireland
- Jamaica
- New Zealand
- St Kitts and Nevis
- St Lucia
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago
- UK
- USA

If your previous course was assessed in English, we will state on the CAS that we have assessed you based on our own criteria and you won’t have to submit further documentation.

However, if your CAS says that we assessed your English language ability using a specific English language test (for example an IELTS), you will have to submit the original certificates with your Tier 4 application.

Note: Please read your CAS statement carefully to check which documents (if any) you need to include with your application.
5. Do you have evidence for the required level of funds?

As part of the Tier 4 application process, you need to provide evidence that you meet the Home Office’s financial requirements so that you can be awarded the necessary **10 points**. **Not showing enough money or using unacceptable evidence of your maintenance funds is the most common reason for Tier 4 refusals.** It is very important that you make sure that your documents meet the requirements of the Home Office.

The maintenance requirements are in the immigration rules, and they are explained and clarified in detail in the Home Office’s Tier 4 policy guidance.


**Declaration of Funds:** The online 'Print and Send' Tier 4 application form calculates the amount of funds you are required to show to the Home Office. You will then be required to confirm that you hold these funds. We advise that you check that your documents are correct before agreeing to this declaration as you will be unable to submit further documentation once your application is submitted.

**Evidence of funds:** The evidence you are allowed to use with your application to show that you hold the required maintenance funds and tuition fees can vary but more often than not applicants will use their own bank statements. Any bank statement you supply must be no older than a month and must show that you have held the required level and that your balance has not dropped below the required level over a 28 day consecutive period.

You must not submit a visa application before the money has been held in your account for 28 days. If you submit the online application before the 28 days you will receive a refusal.

You may be sponsored by an official financial sponsor. An official financial sponsor is Her Majesty’s Government, your home government, the British Council or any international organisation, international company, university or UK independent school. If you a sponsored by an official financial sponsor, you will also need to provide an official letter from them as part of your financial evidence.

**Tuition fees payment:** Your CAS will show the amount of fees you must pay for your first year of study, and how much you have paid. If there are still fees to pay, you must show in your application that you have enough money to pay them.

**Bank Statements:** For a good example of a bank account please see appendix A. Bank statements should always be originals, if they are print out from an online account they must be stamped by the bank or have a supporting letter from the bank.

You can use parent’s bank statements; these must be personal bank statements and **not company accounts**. It must also be accompanied by a letter of authorisation from your parents and a birth certificate. You cannot use anyone else’s accounts other than you parents. No other relatives will be accepted unless they are your legal guardian and you can prove this with a court appointed document.

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Please note: If you are showing money in a bank account for a 28 day period you must show the required maintenance funds and the tuition fee amount unless you have already paid your tuition. In which case it will just be the maintenance you must show.
How much money do Tier 4 (General) students studying in the UK need to show from 12 November 2015?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of course</th>
<th>Where the student will be studying</th>
<th>Maintenance (funds) needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nine months or less</td>
<td>In London</td>
<td>Course fees and £1,265 to cover living costs for each calendar month of the course up to nine months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outside London</td>
<td>Course fees and £1,015 to cover living costs for each calendar month of the course up to nine months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than nine months</td>
<td>In London</td>
<td>First year of fees or, for continuing students, fees for next period of study and £11,385 to cover living costs for nine months in the UK (9 months multiplied by £1265)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outside London</td>
<td>First year of fees or, for continuing students, fees for next period of study and £9,135 to cover living costs for nine months in the UK (9 months multiplied by £1015)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Information correct at 16.10.2015. UKVI information and rules are liable to change at short notice and you are advised to check these details before submitting your visa application.

6. Do you have your ATAS certificate (where appropriate)?

The requirement for a student to get an ATAS certificate is determined by a code which represents your subject area called a Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) code. The JACS code indicates the type of subject that will be studied. If the course that you are studying is one which requires an ATAS certificate you will receive this information with your unconditional offer.

It will also be stated on your CAS and you should obtain your ATAS clearance before submitting your Tier 4 visa application.
You can find further information about ATAS clearance here:

https://www.gov.uk/academic-technology-approval-scheme

An ATAS clearance certificate is valid for 6 months from the date of issue by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Students can apply for an ATAS certificate up to 6 months in advance of the beginning of their programme. We strongly recommend that students apply for clearance as soon as they are able as processing times takes approximately 20 working days (4 weeks), and currently the FCO have confirmed that student should expect a delay during busy periods such as the September and January cohorts.

You will need to enter the ATAS reference number on the application form and send the ATAS certificate with your documents.

7. Do you have your TB screening certificate (where appropriate)?

The introduction of pre-screening comes as recent figures showed that there were over 9,000 new cases of TB in the UK in 2011, a 5 per cent increase on 2010. The programme is targeted at migrants after research showed non-UK born people accounted for three quarters of all new TB cases diagnosed - 20 times higher than in the UK born population. The Home Office will build on existing pre-screening undertaken by international partners including the USA, Canada and Australia. The costs of screening and subsequent treatment will be met by those people applying to come into the UK. Please monitor the website below for further information and to find a list of countries that require students to provide TB certificates. There are currently over 40 countries these include Ghana, India and Uganda. A full list of countries can be found on the following link:


8. Other Considerations

The Immigration Health Surcharge

The Immigration Health Surcharge is a financial contribution to the UK’s National Health Service. As part of your Tier 4 visa application you will pay the surcharge if you are a Non-EEA national and you need permission to enter the UK to study for a time-limited period of more than six months. You will also need to pay it if you are a non-EEA national who is already in the UK and you wish to apply to extend your stay.

If you are bringing dependants with you the same charges above will apply for each one that you bring.

Do you have enough time to complete your course of study?

Since the 6th April 2012 the Home Office have implemented a new rule which restricts the amount of time which students can remain in the UK for study purposes. The restrictions for study at Undergraduate and Postgraduate study are listed below:

When studying at degree level or above you are limited to 5 years unless one of the following applies:

- You are applying for one of these courses: Architecture, Dentistry, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine/Science or Law
- You are applying to study a Masters (this takes the time limit to 6 years)
- You are applying to study a PhD (this take the time limit to 8 years)
The Home Office will not permit students to have additional leave to remain after the above time restrictions have been reached. As such, it is very important that you have declared all previous study in your application to Lancaster University Admissions including time spent studying on student visas in the UK prior to the introduction of Tier 4.

Will you be able to reach the University on time?

If we issue a CAS to you, you must be able to reach the University and register before the latest acceptance date. For Undergraduate students this is usually the end of the Welcome Week of Michaelmas Term. If you are unable to reach the University before this date the University reserves the right to refuse your registration.

*There is usually a premium service that you can apply for; this ensures your visa application is done a lot faster. If you think you will struggle to get your visa in time perhaps you could use this service. Please be advised that the premium service is usually a lot more expensive*

9. Applying for your UK Entry Clearance Visa

You can find information about applying for your Tier 4 Entry Clearance visa from outside the UK here:

https://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/home/welcome

10. Credibility Interviews

Credibility interviews are now part of the Tier 4 visa application process. Once you have submitted your visa application you will be called to an interview to answer questions from an Entry Clearance Officer about your prospective studies in the UK. The interview is conducted in English and will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

The purpose of the interview is to establish that you genuinely wish to study in the UK and your ability to understand the course of studies (including your English language ability).

It is essential that you are fully aware of all relevant details relating to your intended course of study (e.g. hours per week, core modules, relevant awards and assessment methods etc.) and that you understand your choice of studies and what the course of studies involves and why you have chosen to study at Lancaster University.

Students should be prepared to answer questions about their ability and intentions after the completion of their course whether this relates to further study (progression to a UK University for example) or ultimately to return to their home country.

It is also very important that you know the type of entry clearance (i.e. type of visa) you require to enter the UK and study and what conditions and restrictions the visa might have (i.e. working rights, type of study allowed etc.).

Here are a few examples of the type of questions that you may be asked:

- Why do you want to study in UK?
- What are the benefits of studying in the UK compared to your home country or USA/Canada/Australia etc.?
- Why did you choose Lancaster University? (Further questions may be asked on this question)
- How did you find about it?
- Which other colleges/universities have you considered?
- Where is Lancaster University?
- Do you know what a league table is and where Lancaster University is placed?
- Why did you choose this course and how does it relate to your previous study?
- How do you explain the gaps in your study/professional history?
- What is the relevance of the course to your future career path?
- What qualification will you receive?
- How long does the course last?
- Do you know what level your course is at? (BSc, BA, PhD etc.)
- Did you consider any other course?
- Does this course offer any professional recognition?
- Are you planning to stay in the UK on completion to study for a higher award?
11. Biometric Residence Permits (BRP card)

If your entry clearance application is successful, you will be given a vignette (visa in your passport) valid for 30 days. This will allow you to enter the UK.

Upon arrival in the UK you will be required to collect your BRP card from Lancaster University, this BRP card is your full visa and looks like the following example:

![Biometric Residence Permit example](image)

The default location on your application form for the Tier 4 visa is Lancaster Post Office. We ask you to change this location to Lancaster University when applying by entering the Alternative Location Code 2HE469. You need to collect the BRP card within 10 days of your arrival in the UK, this will be done when registering with Lancaster. In order to collect the card you will need your passport and BRP collection letter.

If you find a mistake on your BRP it must be corrected promptly. You must contact the Home Office immediately with details of the error and provide supporting documentation as required. Instructions on how to do this will be provided to you when you collect your BRP.

Common errors can be:

- Name spelt wrong
- Wrong sponsor licence number
- Incorrect visa length
- Wrong working conditions

Further details are available here:

**Correcting errors on your BRP**

You must report any errors to BRPError@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk within 10 working days of receiving your BRP. You must include the following in your email:

- your passport number
- your biometric residence permit reference number
- your case reference number
- a contact telephone number
- exactly what information is wrong
Correcting errors on your visa (Entry Clearance Correction)
If your visa is in your passport and contains an error (incorrect amount of leave granted or spelling of name etc) please come to see the Visa and Immigration team who will advise you.

Correcting your BRP If you applied from inside the UK
If your applied from inside the UK for your new visa (BRP) for studies at Lancaster and you were given an incorrect expiry date, you will need to apply for an Administrative Review. You will need to pay an initial fee of £80.00 which will be refunded, providing the UKVI agree that an error had been made. The details can be found here:

If your new BRP hasn’t arrived
If your BRP hasn't arrived within 10 working days of the date on your visa application decision letter, please email the Home Office at BRPDelivery@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

12. Bringing your Family

Some Tier 4 students are permitted to have visas for their partner and children to come and stay with them while they study as a Tier 4 Dependant. In order to do so you must fall under one of the following categories;

• Be government-sponsored and starting a course which is over six months long

OR

• Be self-funded and starting a postgraduate course which lasts 12 months or more.

If you do not meet either of these categories, and you are applying for your first Tier 4 visa, you cannot apply to have your family member with you as a Tier 4 Dependant. If you are not permitted to have Tier 4 dependants, or you have other family who you wish to come and visit you (such as parents or siblings) you can arrange for visits of up to 6 months using the Standard Visitor Visa. This is also the only way to bring family with you if you are coming to the UK on a Student Visitor Visa.

If you wish to apply for a Tier 4 dependant visa for your child, the child must be less than 18 years old, and that both parents should be in the same country as the child. The Home Office will not permit you to bring your child away from his/her other parent, unless you have sole responsibility for the child.

Any partners or children (also known as dependants) that you want to bring to the UK with you must also provide financial evidence. The Points Based System dependants’ guidance provides more information on this and can be found at:

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Should you have any queries regarding the above information then please contact the Visa and Immigration team at Lancaster University on the details found at the top of this document.