

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

Contact Details

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Please find below some notes to help you with your Tier 4 visa application, produced by Lancaster University Visa and 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>

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1. Before completing your application

Before you can apply for permission to enter the UK under Tier 4 (General) visa, 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. You can find information about ATAS certificates here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme>

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).**

We will issue you with a CAS when 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. Applying for your Tier 4 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>

3. Points required for Visa application

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

Points required	40
You must have a valid Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS from a fully licenced Tier 4 sponsor)	30
You must have enough money to cover course fees and monthly living costs (also known as maintenance funds)	10

4. 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. More detail is in this section below.
- 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 you must provide an official translation with the original documents.

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
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For all qualifications listed, you must submit the **original** certificates and transcripts with your application. Do not add extra qualifications that are not listed.

You will also need to provide certificates/transcripts from your previous studies in the UK, even if these were not used for your offer for studies at Lancaster.

English Language

If you are from a majority English speaking country, according to the UKVI list, you will not have to show evidence of your English language. The countries are as follows:

- 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 delivered and assessed in English, we will state on the CAS that we have assessed you based on our own criteria and you will not 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.

5. The funds needed to make a Tier 4 application

As part of the Tier 4 application process, you need to provide evidence that you meet the UKVI'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 UKVI.

The maintenance requirements are in the Immigration Rules, and they are explained and clarified in detail in the [UKVI'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 UKVI. 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 documentation you can use with your application to show that you hold the required maintenance funds and tuition fees can vary. Most often, this will be the applicant's own bank statements; however, other bank statements are acceptable. There is more on this below. 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 visa refusal. You must make sure your bank statements show the required maintenance funds and the tuition fee amount (unless you have already paid your tuition fees) as shown on your CAS.

An official financial sponsor may sponsor your studies. An official financial sponsor is:

- Her Majesty's Government (UK)
- Your home government
- The British Council or any international organization
- An international company
- A University or UK independent school.

If an official financial sponsor sponsors your studies, you will also need to provide a formal 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 already paid. If there are still fees to pay, you must show in your application that you have enough money to pay them.

Bank statements

Bank statements should be originals or a print out from an online account. If they are print out they **must** be stamped and verified by the bank or have a supporting letter from the bank.

Other acceptable bank statements

You can also use parent's bank statements as evidence of funds for your visa applications. These must be personal bank statements and **not company accounts**. A letter of authorisation from your parents must also accompany the bank statements, along with your birth certificate, as proof of the relationship. The only other acceptable bank account statements that are acceptable are those that belong to your legal guardian, and in this case you must be able to prove this with a court appointed document.

How much money do Tier 4 (General) applicants need to show?

Length of course	Where the student will be studying	Maintenance (funds) needed
Nine months or less	In London	Course fees and £1,265 to cover living costs for each calendar month of the course up to nine months (£11,385)
	Outside London	Course fees and £1,015 to cover living costs for each calendar month of the course up to nine months (£9,135)
More than nine months	In London	First year of fees or, for continuing students, fees for next period of study and £1,265 to cover living costs for each calendar month of the course (£11,385)
	Outside London	First year of fees or, for continuing students, fees for next period of study and £1,015 to cover living costs for each calendar month of the course up to nine months (£9,135)

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. ATAS certificates (where appropriate)

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

Your CAS will also show if an ATAS certificate is required. You will need to obtain your ATAS clearance before submitting your Tier 4 visa application. You can find further information about ATAS clearance here - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme>

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

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

7. Tuberculosis screening certificate (where appropriate)

You will need to have a tuberculosis (TB) test if you are coming to the UK for more than six months and are resident in any of these [listed countries](#).

You will be given a chest x-ray to test for TB. If the result of the x-ray is not clear you may also be asked to give a sputum sample (phlegm coughed up from your lungs).

If your test shows that you do not have TB, you will be given a certificate that is valid for 6 months from the date of your x-ray. Include this certificate with your UK visa application.

You can find further information here: <https://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/overview>

8. 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.

Current NHS surcharge charges

- £150 per 12 months of leave granted by the UKVI
- £75 for six months and under

If you are bringing dependants with you to the UK, the charges above will apply for each one that you bring, so for a family of four coming to the UK for a year, the NHS surcharge will be £600.

9. Study duration and time caps

The UKVI have a rule that restricts the amount of time that students can remain in the UK for study purposes – called time caps. The restrictions for 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 takes the time limit to 8 years)

The UKVI will not permit students to have to remain in the UK 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 visas

10. Arriving in the UK in time to commence your studies

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

In most countries, you can apply for a premium visa service. This ensures your visa application is processed faster than the standard visa application timescales. If you will not be able to obtain your visa in time via the standard visa application route, you should use the premium service. Please be advised that the premium service is provided by UKVI at additional cost.

11. Credibility interviews

Credibility interviews are part of the Tier 4 visa application process. After submitting your visa application, you may be called to an interview with an Entry Clearance Officer to answer questions about your prospective studies in the UK. The interview will take approximately 10-15 minutes and is conducted in English. 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, what the course of studies involves and why you have chosen to study at Lancaster University.

You should be prepared to answer questions about your ability and intentions after the completion of your course, whether this relates to further study in the UK or to return to your home country.

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?
- Do you think your course is appropriate for someone your age?
- Do you understand the responsibilities of students entering the UK under Tier 4 of the PBS?

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

12. 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:



If you find a mistake on your BRP it must be corrected promptly. You must contact the UKVI 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.

Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

Common errors on BRPs include:

- Name spelt incorrectly
- Incorrect sponsor licence number
- Incorrect visa length
- Incorrect working conditions

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, usually as part of the registration process.

In order to collect the card you will need your passport and BRP collection letter.

Correcting errors on your BRP

You must report any errors to <https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/report-problem> 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 (spelling of name etc. or visa expiring before your date of travel to the UK) you will need to contact the visa issuing post for correction. Do not attempt to travel on an incorrect entry clearance visa as you may be refused entry to arrival in the UK.

13. Bringing your family

Some Tier 4 students can apply for visas for their partner and children as Tier 4 dependants. This allows them to travel and remain in the UK while the main Tier 4 visa holder is studying. 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 fall into either of these categories, and you are applying for your first Tier 4 visa, you cannot apply to have your family members with you as Tier 4 dependant. If other family members wish to visit you while you are in the UK (such as parents or siblings) they 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 [Short Term Study visa](#).

Visas for children

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

You must also provide evidence of funds for every dependant that you want to bring to the UK with you. The Points Based System dependants' guidance provides more information -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-dependants-of-uk-visa-applicants-tiers-1-2-4-5>

14. Support services available to help you with your Tier 4 responsibilities

In order to help you with your responsibilities the University has the following services in place:

- **Email** us at visa-advice@lancaster.ac.uk
- **Check your University email account regularly:** We will email you regarding any immigration or compliance issues (such as non-attendance) etc.

Disclaimer: *Any information given is intended as a guide only and is not a substitute for appropriate legal advice. In providing this guidance, we accept no liability should your visa be refused or rejected as invalid for any reason.*