

## Tier 4 Entry Clearance Requirements

### European Economic Area (EEA) Nationals and Swiss Nationals

If you are a national of the European Economic Area or of Switzerland you do not require a visa or immigration permission to enter and remain in the UK while you are studying. Your passport or identity card will not be stamped when you enter the UK as there is no formal time limit on your stay. If you and any dependants are coming to the UK for less than six months, you must hold valid health insurance or a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). You can obtain the European Health Insurance Card from your home country before your departure. Students coming for longer than six months will be able to access British state health care under the National Health Service (NHS). For further immigration guidance check out the following Home Office links relating to European Economic Area Nationals:

- [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk)
- [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/eucitizens/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/eucitizens/).

### For Nationals of non European Economic Area (NON EEA) countries

#### Student Entry Clearance Requirements under Tier 4

Immigration regulations require most Non EEA students to apply for entry clearance permission to enter the UK before departure. The new immigration route for students is called Tier 4. It is part of the new immigration Points Based System. Tier 4 entry clearance is confirmed when you have been provided with a visa sticker in your passport that says that the type of visa is a 'Student'.

The visa sticker will state if you are required to register with the Police once you arrive in the UK, and whether there are any other conditions that apply to your visa.

You should be given a visa for the length of your course plus some additional time following the completion date of your course. Students on courses of 12 months or more will be given an additional 4 months; students on courses of more than 6 months, but less than 12 months will be given an additional 2 months; students on pre-session courses of less than 6 months will be given an additional month; students on non-pre-session courses of less than 6 months will be given an additional 7 days. Students who are in receipt of official financial sponsorship will be granted visas in line with their financial sponsor's requirements.

#### How to Make an Application for Tier 4 General Entry Clearance

To make an application for Tier 4 General entry clearance, you will need to apply in time so that you can gain entry for the start of your course and any welcome inductions. For your application to be processed you will need to provide the necessary evidence which confirms that you are able to meet the entry clearance immigration requirements for students.

If you are coming to the UK to study for a period that is **less than six months** you may be able to apply for a visa as a **student visitor**. You should note, however, that **if you are a student visitor** you will be granted a visa for a maximum of 6 months. This cannot be extended and you cannot switch in to any other immigration categories in the UK. For further information on making an application as a student visitor refer to the guidance towards the end of this section.

#### The Requirements for Tier 4 General Student Entry Clearance: How to Make Your Application?

The Tier 4 route of the Points Based System is still under development and will be phased in gradually during 2008/2009. The requirements for Tier 4 may change at short notice, so you should refer to the latest guidance on entry requirements for Tier 4 General from the UKvisas

website: [www.ukvisas.gov.uk/](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/) and **Tier 4 policy guidance** from the UKBA website: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/)

In order to make your application for Tier 4 entry clearance, you should:

- 1) Check if you need an ATAS clearance certificate for the course, ATAS clearance is required for some postgraduate taught and many science and technology related research subjects. You need to check well in advance of making your entry clearance application, as there are often long delays in issuing ATAS certificates. Please see [www.fco.gov.uk/atas/](http://www.fco.gov.uk/atas/);
- 2) Download UKvisas leaflet INF29 from the UKvisas website and read it carefully;
- 3) Download the Tier 4 policy guidance and read it carefully;
- 4) Complete form VAF9;
- 5) Complete PBS Appendix 8 for Tier 4
- 6) If you wish to bring an applicable family member or partner with you as a dependant, please remember that they will need to complete a PBS dependant form (VAF10) and pay a separate fee. Please read the PBS guidance on the additional maintenance requirements for dependants.

Depending on where you live, you may be asked to make your application by post, online or by interview.

There may be special requirements in some countries, such as the need to take a tuberculosis test. All applicants will be required to have their fingerprints taken as part of the application process.

The current fee for each applicant is the equivalent of £145. The fee may change so always check the UKvisas website for the latest guidance.

### **When You Should Make Your Application?**

You need to make sure that your application can be processed in time for you to attend the start of your course and any course inductions and welcome talks. You can usually make your application to come to the UK up to three months before your course start date.

You should check any guidance from the visa section of your nearest British Diplomatic Post (for example Embassy, Consulate or High Commission) to find out the best time to make your application, so that you can arrive in time. Remember that the busiest times for processing visa applications is usually from July onwards, so making an application during this time may result in delays!

### **Where you should make an Application?**

You should make your application through the visa processing centre for your nearest British Diplomatic post (for example Embassy, High Commission Consulate in your Home country). The following link provides details of your nearest visa centre and also has guidance on the application process:

- [www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/wheretosapply/](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/wheretosapply/).

As the evidence can sometimes vary depending on which country you are applying from, you might want to check out the following:

- the length of time that it will take to process your application

- specific guidance on documents that they require to process your application
- how you can make your application (online; by post; by courier; in person by interview)
- guidance on any health screening checks, and biometric evidence such as fingerprinting as part of your application assessment.

### **Main Requirements for Tier 4 General entry clearance**

In order to be eligible for Tier 4 General entry clearance, applicants have to achieve a score of **40** points under the Points Based System.

In order to achieve your points you must have:

- A **visa letter** from a Tier 4 licensed UK institution (30 points) and;
- Evidence that you have your first year's fees and that you have the required level of maintenance funding (10 points)

You will receive your **visa letter** from the University once you have accepted your unconditional offer of a place here.

You must also be able to prove that you have your first year's tuition fees and sufficient money to pay your living costs (maintenance). You must have available in your bank account £600 for each month you wish to study at Newcastle up to a maximum of 9 months. For example, if your course is 12 months or more, you will need to show £5,400 for maintenance plus your first year's fees. Please note that months are counted in whole months and rounded up.

These funds must have been available in **your** bank account (or in a joint bank account which also bears your name) for a full 28 days preceding your application. The bank account must be an instant access cash account. Any funds not shown in pounds sterling must be converted in to pounds sterling with the conversion noted at the bottom of the bank statement. You must use the currency converter [www.oanda.com/convert/classic](http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic)

Alternatively, you can use evidence of a **loan** in your name or a letter from an **official financial** sponsor. Please see the **Tier 4 policy guidance** for a definition of an official financial sponsor.

For full details of Tier 4 General requirements, please see <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/adult-students/>

### **Entry Clearance for Student Visitors**

If you are planning to come to the UK to study for less than six months, then you may want to consider applying for entry clearance as a 'student visitor'. Although entry clearance may be an option for non visa nationals, if you are planning to come to the UK as a student visitor you should apply for **entry clearance as a student visitor** in your home country, to avoid any immigration problems occurring when you enter the UK.

The immigration conditions relating to a student visitor are very restricted. Student visitors are not allowed to remain in the UK once they have completed their course and cannot work part-time whilst studying in the UK. If you are planning to continue studying for longer than six months then you should apply for entry clearance as a Tier 4 General student and not a student visitor

For further Home Office guidance refer to the UKvisas website: [www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk) or follow the following link [www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/infs/studentvisitorfaq](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/infs/studentvisitorfaq).

## Once you have your Visa: Travelling to the UK to Study

If you have a valid Tier 4 General entry clearance or student visitor's visa, then the Immigration Officer will not normally refuse you entry unless your circumstances have changed. However, you should note that as a Tier 4 migrant you may only enter the UK 7 days before the start of your course if your course is less than 6 months or one month before the start of your course if your course is more than 6 months long or is a pre-sessional course. If you attempt to enter the UK before these limits, you may be refused entry.

It is always a good idea to carry any relevant documents in your hand luggage which confirms that you are able to meet the immigration requirements for students. For example, you should carry:

- your passport
- your visa letter from Newcastle University
- any details of any accommodation that you have arranged
- details of any sponsorship or financial evidence which confirms that you have funding in place for your fees and living costs
- any evidence relating to health screening requirements that you have to provide.

## Conditions of Tier 4 visas

There are very strict conditions attached to your Tier 4 visa. These are strictly enforced by UK Border Agency.

If you use a Newcastle University visa letter to obtain a Tier 4 visa, then your visa requires you to study at Newcastle University. If you wish to change institutions, you will need to request permission from UKBA before you do so.

In the near future, it is likely that it will be necessary to apply for a new visa if you wish to change institutions at any point. Please ensure that you consult the UKBA website before making any changes to your registration status.

You must also ensure that:

- You remain on a full-time course for the duration of your Tier 4 visa;
- You register on your course of study promptly on arrival;
- You maintain full attendance on your course and that if you are absent for whatever reason you advise a relevant member of staff at the earliest available opportunity;
- You do not work more than 20 hours per week during term-time;
- You register with the Police immediately, if required to do so and that you maintain your registration details as required.

In the near future, the University will have a responsibility to report to UKBA any Tier 4 student who breaches his/her student visa conditions.

You should also note that if you finish your course early or you withdraw from your course, this may result in your visa being curtailed.

## Police Registration Requirements

Many international students **MUST** register with the Overseas Visitors section of the Police soon after they arrive in the UK. If you are required to register with the Police, this requirement will be printed on your visa sticker.

If you are required to register with the Police you will be able to get help and support in making the arrangements once you arrive.

This information will be available at the welcome sessions for international students and from the Visa Team at Newcastle University.

### Further Links and Useful Information

Warning! The above information is not a substitute for reading the Tier 4 policy guidance or **INF 29** on the Ukvisas website. Please familiarise yourself with both before making a Tier 4 General application, as refused applicants can no longer appeal against a decision. Both the Tier 4 policy guidance and **INF 29** are subject to change at short notice.

- **For official immigration guidance** and the latest news, Tier 4 General policy guidance and making your entry clearance application, check the Tier 4 links which are provided on UK Border Agency website: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk)
- **The website for the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA )** provides news, frequently asked questions, immigration help sheets and guidance on the application process: [www.ukcisa.org.uk](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk)  
[www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/immigration.php](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/immigration.php)
- **The British Council** have also produced some useful immigration guidance including a guide explaining how you can make an application for student entry clearance called '*First Steps: Preparing for Entry Clearance*'. This can be accessed from the following website: [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)  
[www.educationuk.org/downloads/first\\_steps\\_students.pdf](http://www.educationuk.org/downloads/first_steps_students.pdf).  
For guidance on the various immigration related rights that you have as an international student refer to the following link:  
[www.educationuk.org/pls/hot\\_bc/page\\_pls\\_user\\_advice?x=910432060702&y=0&a=0&d=work\\_in\\_uk#1](http://www.educationuk.org/pls/hot_bc/page_pls_user_advice?x=910432060702&y=0&a=0&d=work_in_uk#1).
- **For problems at passport control** you can contact the Immigration Advisory Service (IAS)  
tel: 020 7967 1200 (daytime, Monday to Friday)  
tel: 020 7378 9191 (night-time, leave a message on the emergency answer phone)
- **For immigration guidance for students at Newcastle University**, you can also refer to information on the university website at [www.ncl.ac.uk/student-progress/visas/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/student-progress/visas/).