1. Overview

The Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) route is for non-EEA graduates who have an outstanding business idea that they wish to put into practice in the UK.

As an endorsing organisation for the scheme, Newcastle University can endorse non-EEA national graduates to take part in the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) scheme, providing they have been awarded a degree or PhD in any subject.

For more information about eligibility for this scheme, please refer to: https://www.gov.uk/tier-1-graduate-entrepreneur-visa

It is at Newcastle University’s discretion to assess each application on its own merits and make a recommendation for or against endorsement.

2. Eligibility for Endorsement

The Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) route is for:

- Newcastle University graduates who have developed genuine and credible business ideas that have the potential to scale-up and impact the UK economy

AND

- Newcastle University graduates who can demonstrate continuous learning and evidence of their entrepreneurial effectiveness to drive their idea forward toward start-up

3. Process of Endorsement

To successfully obtain endorsement from Newcastle University you will be required to be resident in the UK throughout the endorsement process.

Before your current visa expires you must be able to demonstrate that all of the following essential criteria have been met:
3.1. You have attended an ‘Immigration routes into graduate employment for international students’ workshop hosted by Newcastle University’s Visa Team. This will explain the financial and legal requirements that you are required to have in place in order to proceed through the endorsement process. **These requirements are subject to change by the UK Home Office and you should confirm the exact details with the Visa Team**

3.2. You have completed all of the START UP Essentials workshops

3.3. You have successfully obtained verbal endorsement following an Endorsement Interview with the University’s Authorising Officer

3.4. You have been awarded a degree from Newcastle University within the last three years OR you are currently employed by Newcastle University as a postdoctoral researcher on a Tier 2 Visa

3.5. Graduates of other UK Higher Education Institutions will not normally be endorsed by Newcastle University unless applying as a minority shareholder with a Newcastle University graduate

3.6. Your idea must offer something new to the market, and not simply compete with local businesses

3.7. Your business idea does not involve property development or property management, makes good use of your skills and adds to the UK economy

3.8. Your business idea has been assessed by the START UP Business Adviser as being genuine, credible and based on supportive market research, within the timeframes outlined

3.9. You will maintain significant influence and control over the activities of the business during the T1GE period

3.10. You own the intellectual property related to your idea/ business OR have written authorisation from the owners to use it to establish a business in the UK

3.11. You are able to financially support yourself for the duration of the T1GE period whilst **spending the majority of your time developing your idea/ business**

3.12. You are intending to base yourself in the North East of England for the duration of the T1GE period to develop your idea/ business. Exceptions can be considered, at the discretion of the Authorising Officer, where a compelling case can be made to locate you/ the business elsewhere in the UK AND you agree to travel at your own expense for monitoring meetings.
4. Written Endorsement

If the University’s Authorising Officer is satisfied that all criteria has been met, you will be issued with a letter of endorsement containing a unique reference number that must be submitted with your T1GE visa application within 3 months of the letter being issued. If your application is approved you are required by Newcastle University to do the following:

4.1. Work with the University’s Visa Team to complete your visa application. For those applying from in the UK, the University will be cited as the corresponding address on your visa application, this means that the Visa Team will receive your BRP card first, to scan and record the duration of your T1GE Visa. You will need collect the BRP card from the Visa Team at King’s Gate

4.2. Where you are applying from overseas, the University cannot be cited as the corresponding address and Home Office guidance should be followed

4.3. Agree a 12 month Business Development Plan with the START UP Business Adviser against which you must demonstrate satisfactory progress throughout your T1GE period

4.4. Use Newcastle University’s START UP support as your primary source of business support throughout your T1GE leave

4.5. Attend a minimum of quarterly monitoring meetings with the START UP Business Adviser, unless they authorise alternative arrangements

4.6. Inform the START UP Business Adviser immediately if you feel you are not making the agreed progress with your idea/ business or if your entrepreneurial activity ends

5. Extensions

Under the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) scheme, the University’s Authorising Officer can grant successful applicants leave for 12 months initially, which we may extend for a further 12 months, if the applicant can meet the extension criteria:

5.1. You have demonstrated satisfactory progress in establishing a business

5.2. Your have demonstrated that your business has the potential to scale-up and create employment opportunities in the UK within three years of market entry

5.3. You have demonstrated that your business will have access to £50,000 to invest in your business by the end of the T1GE period
6. To ensure that you do not risk being in breach of your Tier 4 (General) student visa, the Home Office has issued the following guidance (April 2018) on how far you can progress a business concept before submitting your application for a Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa:

6.1. A student could come up with an idea and do small scale user testing of a prototype, for example giving a product they have developed to a group of classmates for free to see if the concept works.

6.2. We would not expect to see products being marketed in any way to the mainstream public at this stage (for example through a publicly available website).

6.3. We would not expect to see any large scale commercial trials being undertaken at this stage (unless the trials are a scientifically necessary part of a PhD research project that will later be spun out).

6.4. The student must not under any circumstances receive any financial gain from any user testing before they have applied for their Graduate Entrepreneur visa.

6.5. The student must not under any circumstances register or begin to register a business until after they have applied for a Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa.
The following table outlines the process you should undertake in order to obtain endorsement from Newcastle University

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What should you do?</th>
<th>When should you do it?</th>
<th>Intended outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1: Be aware of and understand the eligibility criteria provided by the Visa Team</strong></td>
<td>As soon as possible and before attending the START UP Essentials workshops</td>
<td>Check that you are eligible to apply for the T1GE visa: Understand the legal and financial requirements. <strong>Please note:</strong> Only the University’s Visa Team can advise on these requirements. The START UP Team can only support the endorsement element of the process.</td>
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<td>Attend an ‘Immigration routes into graduate employment for international students’ workshop, which take place every month and are advertised on the Careers Service website.</td>
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<td>Call into the Visa Team Drop-in sessions with any specific questions you may have re. eligibility. The Visa Team are based on Level 2 of King’s Gate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There are certain financial requirements of the visa application process that you should be clear about before continuing.</td>
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<td><strong>Step 2: Attend START UP Essentials</strong></td>
<td>2018-2019 dates pending</td>
<td>Further develop your understanding of what it takes to start, run and grow a successful business in the UK Develop a credible business plan to support your application for endorsement.</td>
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<td>These workshop style sessions focus on supporting you to develop your business opportunity and entrepreneurial skills and competencies</td>
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You must attend all sessions in order to be considered for endorsement and qualify to apply for an endorsement interview.

**Step 3: Attend endorsement interview, if selected.**

| 2018-2019 dates pending | Attend endorsement interview and gain **verbal** endorsement to continue to Step 4. |

| **Step 4: Work alongside the START UP Business Adviser**, Jackie Wade, to develop a 12 month Business Development Plan against which you must demonstrate satisfactory progress throughout your T1GE period | At least two months remaining on current visa |

| Having completed your degree programme and developed your Business Development Plan with the Business Adviser, gain written endorsement and continue to Step 5. |

| **Step 5: With successful endorsement, apply for Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa** with help and guidance from the Visa Team. | At least two months remaining on current visa |

| With a successful endorsement you should submit your T1GE visa application to the UK Home Office, including your endorsement letter and endorsement number. You should seek support from the Visa Team to complete and submit your application to ensure your documentation is in order. |

**Please note:** successful endorsement of you and your idea does not automatically mean you will be granted a visa as this decision is handled separately by the UK Home Office.