

Tier 4 guide for students



Getting Started – Your Quick Guide

- Check your new visa for errors including the expiry date. The expiry date is usually four months after the end date of your course. If there are any errors, contact International Advice and Guidance (IAG) immediately for advice.
- If your visa states that you are allowed to work, do not work more than 20 hours each week during term time. Find out what your term/vacation dates are.
- Inform Student Administration (Foundation Building) if you get a new passport or visa. The University must keep up-to-date copies of these documents.
- If your visa application is refused or rejected, you must contact IAG immediately.
- Attend all of your classes, meetings, tutorials etc. Report any unavoidable absence as soon as possible to your academic department.
- If you are doing your Masters dissertation; writing-up your PhD thesis or making corrections following your viva then this still counts as term time. Do not plan to travel or work more than 20 hours per week during this time.
- You should remain living in the Liverpool area during your studies.
- Keep your Liverpool address, telephone number and personal email address up-to-date on Liverpool Life.
- Your student visa is only valid if you are studying 'with attendance' on a full-time course.
- Suspending or withdrawing from your course will cancel your visa and you will be required to leave the UK.
- Register with the police if required and re-register each time you change address or renew your passport and/or visa. Not registering, or re-registering, is a criminal offence.
- Leave the UK before your visa expires. Overstaying, even by just one day, is a criminal offence.
- Keep your passport and BRP safe, especially if you are abroad. If you lose them, contact IAG immediately.
- Do not claim any UK welfare benefits.
- Do not set up your own business or work as an employer in any way. Find out what type of work you are allowed to do. IAG can provide information about this.
- Read the general good practice guide published by the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA): www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Protecting-your-Tier-4-status



Introduction

The University of Liverpool has a licence with the UK Home Office to sponsor international students for visa purposes. By issuing a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to a student, the University is stating that it wishes for the student to be granted a Tier 4 visa to study here. As a visa sponsor with a Tier 4 licence, the University has specific duties and responsibilities to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

This document explains the duties the University has as your visa sponsor. It also explains what you need to do during your studies to protect your immigration status in the UK. By registering with the University, you agree to meet these responsibilities. If you do not, it may affect your stay in the UK.

The UK Home Office can contact the University at any time to ask about your student status and progress on your course. This may also include information about your attendance/absence rates on the course or your UK contact details. Any changes to your student status will be reported to the Home Office by the University.

Please remember to read the government's full guidance for Tier 4 students:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student

We recommend you read the general good practice guide from UKCISA:
www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Protecting-your-Tier-4-status
There is also a glossary of terms and abbreviations at the end of this document for you to refer to.

As a licensed sponsor, the University is required to keep accurate records for all international students, including:

- Copy of current passport pages
- Copy of visa vignette and/or Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) showing your right to study with Uni of Liverpool
- Up to date UK contact details, with full history of changes
- Records of attendance and absence (authorised and non-authorised)
- Copy of entry qualifications and references
- Copy of Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate, if required
- Evidence of any visa refusal and, if applicable, any appeal or administrative review

As a licensed sponsor, the University is required to report the following changes in Tier 4 students' circumstances to UKVI:

- Failure to enrol on time
- Voluntary withdrawal from a programme, or a termination of studies
- Deferral or suspension of studies
- Partial repeating of a year of study, with or without attendance, where the student will not be required to be in attendance for a period of more than 60 days
- Transfer of programme or research area
- Earlier than expected completion of programme
- Change of programme location (e.g. a work placement/study abroad)
- Where it is known or suspected that a student is breaking the conditions of their visa
- Where a student moves into a different immigration category (e.g. Tier 1 or Tier 2)

All students are expected to help the University by cooperating with requests for information and documentation.



Registration and re-registration

New international students

Initial registration with the University is your first formal student interaction that will be monitored for Tier 4 compliance purposes.

Initial registration requires you to

1. Complete online registration, including financial registration
2. Confirm your physical arrival on campus via Liverpool Life
3. Have your original immigration documents (passport and visa) and qualifications checked and approved.

International students will not be considered fully registered until all of these steps have been completed.

If you fail to complete registration on time (normally within two weeks of your start date), the Admissions Team will investigate why this is.

They might agree to defer your place until the next academic year. They would then report this as a 'failure to enrol' to UKVI. **This would cancel your existing CAS.**

In exceptional cases they might agree a later date of arrival for you. If agreed, the later date will be entered onto your record and reported to UKVI. **In these cases, the existing CAS will continue to apply.**

In order to register your Tier 4 visa must contain the University of Liverpool's Sponsor Licence Number (N5WWG40J6), as this shows you have the right to study with us and not a different university. You can also show proof that you have submitted your Tier 4 visa application using the CAS given to you by the University.

If you do not produce acceptable immigration documentation within the enrolment period, the University reserves the right to defer your registration until the next available entry point (usually the next academic year) and/or to de-register you from your programme of study. This would be reported as a 'failure to enrol' to UKVI. **This would cancel your existing CAS or Tier 4 visa (if issued). In most cases, this would require you to leave the UK.**

Continuing international students

All students are required to re-register at the beginning of each academic year during the registration period. Students on taught programmes of study are required to confirm their arrival back on campus via Liverpool Life and confirm/update their personal contact details. Students on research programmes are required to have a complete Annual Progress Report (APR) for the previous academic year before they will be permitted to re-register.

If you fail to re-register in time (within two weeks of the start of term), this will be investigated by your academic department and may result in you being deemed withdrawn from your studies. This will be reported as a 'withdrawal of sponsorship' to UKVI. **This will curtail (cancel) your visa and you will be required to leave the UK.** Any later agreement to return to your studies would require a new CAS in order to apply for a new Tier 4 visa to enter the UK.

Your Documents

Documents the University is required to keep:	When you must provide them:	Updates during your studies:
Copies of current passport pages	Seen and scanned at registration	You should visit the SAC if you get a new passport
Copies of visa vignette and/or Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)	Seen and scanned at registration	You should visit the SAC if you get a new BRP or vignette for any reason
Up to date UK contact details, with full history of changes	Collected as part of online registration	You must update your contact details on Liverpool Life every time they change
Records of attendance and absence (authorised and non-authorised)	Collected by Schools/Departments throughout the year for taught students Supervisor meetings must be recorded onto the PGR Toolbox, a minimum of one per month, for research students	You must inform your academic School/Department or supervisor if you will be absent for any reason
Copies of entry qualifications, references and English Language certificates	Scans collected before arrival; originals seen at registration	No updates required
Copy of Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate, if required	Must be seen before arrival (before a CAS can be issued). ATAS is only required for certain subject areas	You must apply for a new ATAS certificate and provide it to the SAC if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you transfer your programme of study • your area of research changes from when you first applied for ATAS • you need to apply for a new visa or a visa extension
Evidence of any visa refusal and, if applicable, any appeal or administrative review	Must be seen by IAG as soon as you receive it	You must keep in touch with IAG for further advice

University reporting duties

We are required to report to UKVI the following changes to your registration status:

- If you fail to register or re-register
- If you complete your programme earlier than expected

Withdrawal / Termination of study

- If you withdraw from your programme
- If your studies or research is terminated due to unsatisfactory academic progress
- If your studies or research is terminated due to lack of attendance and/or engagement
- If your studies or research is terminated by the Board of Discipline or Fitness to Practice Panel
- If your studies or research is terminated due to unpaid fees
- If your studies or research is terminated for any other reason

Suspensions

- If you suspend from your programme for any reason
- If you need to suspend to take a work placement that is not an integral part of your programme
- If you are suspended from your programme by the Board of Discipline or Fitness to Practice Panel
- If you are suspended from your programme by the University for any reason

Repeating studies

- If you are required to repeat studies with no attendance on campus for one full year (Externally Repeating)
- If you are required to repeat studies with no attendance on campus for one semester only (Partially Repeating)

In all circumstances listed opposite, the change will be reported as a 'withdrawal of sponsorship' to UKVI.

This means your current visa will be curtailed (cancelled) and you will need to leave the UK. To return to your studies or research in the future you will need a new CAS in order to apply for a new Tier 4 visa to enter the UK.

We will also report to UKVI the following changes to your Tier 4 registration status:

Transfers:

- Transfer in to another programme of study or research discipline if you can complete the new programme before the expiry date of your current visa and the new course is related to the old course.
- Some transfers will require you to obtain a new visa **before** you can transfer, you should speak to IAG to find out.

Location:

- Change of study location (e.g. a work placement or research off campus)

The changes above will be reported to UKVI **for information only and will not have any effect on your current Tier 4 visa.**

We will **not** report the following non-exhaustive list of events to UKVI:

- Any authorised short-term absence from study or research
- Any isolated instance or limited sequence of absence from timetabled activity

During your studies

What has happened:	Can I stay in the UK?	Further advice
Failure to enrol on time	No If you have not arrived in the UK yet you cannot now travel as your visa will be cancelled	You should speak with Admissions if you want to defer your place
Voluntary withdrawal from a programme, or a termination of studies for any reason	No You will no longer be studying at the University so you must leave the UK.	You should speak with IAG if you are thinking of withdrawing from your studies
Deferral or suspension of studies for any reason, voluntary or enforced	No You will not be studying at the University during this break in your studies so you must leave the UK.	You should speak with IAG. You will need a new CAS and to apply for a new Tier 4 visa in order to return to your studies at a later date.
Repeating study without attendance or "externally repeating"	No You will not be studying at the University during this break in your studies so you must leave the UK.	You should speak with IAG. You will need a new CAS and to apply for a new Tier 4 visa in order to return to your studies at a later date.
Repeating study with partial attendance, attendance only required in one semester.	No If your repeat module is in semester 1, you must attend this and leave the UK at the end of the semester as you will not be studying at the University for semester 2.	You will need a new CAS and to apply for a new Tier 4 visa to return to your studies for the following year.
	No If your repeat module is in semester 2, you must not stay in the UK during semester 1 as you will not be studying at the University during this break.	You will need a new CAS and to apply for a new Tier 4 visa to return to your studies for the start of semester 2.
Repeating study with attendance required in both semesters.	Yes If the modules you are repeating are year-long or you have modules in both semesters then your current Tier 4 visa remains valid.	You must attend all your classes for the modules you are repeating 'with attendance'. You may need to extend your Tier 4 visa later.
Transfer of programme or research area	Maybe You may have to apply for a new visa from outside of the UK before you can transfer.	You should speak with IAG if you are thinking of transferring.
Earlier than expected completion of programme	No You will no longer be studying at the University so you must leave the UK.	You should speak with IAG if you are unsure whether this applies to you.
Change of programme location (e.g. a work placement/study abroad)	Yes If the placement is part of your course then this will not affect your visa.	You must attend your placement or your classes abroad as this will be monitored by your School.
Where it is known or suspected that a student is breaching the conditions of their visa	Maybe If you breach the conditions of your visa then the University will need to consider what action to take.	You should speak with IAG if you are unsure of the conditions of your visa or if you think you have breached them.
Moving to a different immigration category (e.g. Tier 1 or Tier 2)	Yes If you have been granted a different UK visa then you must bring this to the SAC.	

Your attendance (expected interactions)

The University is required to keep records of your attendance and absence. We are also required to monitor your attendance and engagement with your studies to ensure you are engaging with and progressing on your course.

The following are interactions that may be considered for attendance and engagement monitoring, not just academic, for students on taught programmes of study:

Interaction:	Timescale:
Initial registration	September/October
Re-registration	Annually; September/October
Payment of fees	Throughout each year
Attendance at lectures, seminars, laboratory sessions, tutorials, field work etc.	Throughout each year (some programmes will have higher attendance requirements than others)
Attendance at work or clinical placements	Throughout each year (programme specific)
Submission of continuously assessed work (coursework etc.)	Throughout each year
Attendance at assessments (in class tests etc.)	Throughout each year
Attendance at examinations	Annually; normally January, May, August (where applicable).
Consideration of academic progress	Annually; February, June, September

The following are interactions that may be considered for attendance and engagement monitoring, not just academic, for students on research programmes:

Interaction:	Timescale:
Initial registration	October (can also take place at the beginning of other months of the year)
Payment of fees	Throughout each year
Attendance at meetings with supervisor (as recorded in PGR Toolbox online facility)	Monthly (at least 12 meetings per year are required, one per month)
Attendance at seminars, laboratory sessions or workshops, including attendance at skills workshops and poster day events	Throughout each year (research programme specific)
Annual Progress Review	Annually; May-October



Applying for a new visa

If you need a new visa in order to start a new programme at the University, you will be issued with a CAS as part of the admissions process.

If you need a new visa in order to complete your current programme, you must request a CAS from Student Administration (studentcentre@liverpool.ac.uk) three months before your existing visa expires.

If you need a new visa in order to resume your current programme (e.g. following a period of suspension or repeating without attendance), you must request a CAS from Student Administration (studentcentre@liverpool.ac.uk) three months before you are expected to return to your studies.

As soon as you receive your new visa you should bring it, along with your passport, to the SAC so your student record can be updated.

IAG offer a range of workshops, presentations and individual advice on how to apply for a new Tier 4 visa from inside and outside of the UK. For more information please visit: www.liverpool.ac.uk/studentssupport/international/

Visa conditions

All international students are responsible for understanding and complying with the conditions of their own visa.

International students are expected to help the University by following all reasonable requests for information and/or documentation, including regular requests to confirm or update their contact details. Students are expected to update their contact details via Liverpool Life whenever they change.

The University reserves the right to request satisfactory evidence from a student that they are complying with the conditions of their visa.

If the University finds or suspects a student is failing to comply with the conditions of their visa, or failing to hold the correct visa for studying at the University, or where a student is otherwise deemed to be putting the University's Tier 4 sponsor licence at risk, **the University reserves the right to administratively suspend or withdraw the student from their programme of study, in order to protect its Tier 4 sponsor licence. There is no right of appeal against this action.**

Visa refusals and rejections

If your visa application is refused or rejected, you must inform the University immediately and seek advice from IAG.

You must provide the University with a copy of your visa refusal or rejection letter, and a copy of any appeal or administrative review you may have submitted.

If you have submitted an in-time appeal or an in-time request for an administrative review and can provide satisfactory evidence of this to IAG, then you can carry on studying until you get a decision from UKVI.

If you have not submitted an in-time appeal or an in-time request for an administrative review but you want to, you must present all relevant documentation to IAG so they can assess the likely success of an appeal or administrative review.

If IAG assess that an appeal or administrative review might be successful then they will help you apply for this and you can carry on studying until you get a decision from UKVI.

If IAG assess that an appeal or administrative review is likely to fail, you will be advised to voluntarily suspend from your studies. We will report this change to UKVI and **you will need to leave the UK. In order to return to your studies you will need a new CAS in order to apply for a new Tier 4 visa to enter the UK.**

Outcomes of an appeal or administrative review

If your appeal or administrative review is successful, you will need to bring proof of your successful appeal outcome and your original passport and BRP to the SAC.

If your appeal or administrative review is rejected, you must inform Student Administration immediately and seek further advice from IAG. You will be advised to voluntarily suspend or withdraw from your studies and this will be reported to UKVI. **This will mean that you will need to leave the UK. In order to return to your studies you will need a new CAS in order to apply for a new Tier 4 visa to enter the UK.**

If your appeal or administrative review is rejected and you do not voluntarily suspend or withdraw, **the University reserves the right to administratively suspend or withdraw you from your studies in order to protect its Tier 4 sponsor licence. This will be reported to UKVI and, as a result, you will need to leave the UK. In order to return to your studies you will need a new CAS in order to apply for a new Tier 4 visa to enter the UK.**



Support for international students

International Advice and Guidance (IAG), based in Liverpool, provides professional and expert advice to international students on a range of immigration and welfare matters. Staff are qualified to advise international students who require an extension to their current visa, as well as to international students who wish to come to the UK with their families. International students should contact IAG if they require any advice regarding their ability to stay in the UK to study at the University.

International Advice and Guidance

Student Services Centre, University of Liverpool, Alsop Building,
Brownlow Hill, Liverpool L3 5TX
Tel: +44 (0)151 794 5863
Email: iagteam@liverpool.ac.uk

In Person: IAG information desk is open Monday to Friday, 13:30pm to 15:30pm

The Student Experience Team (SET), based in London, provides the same support for international students based at the University's London campus, with support from colleagues in IAG.

The Student Experience Team (SET)

London campus
Tel: +44 (0)20 7682 4646
Email: stuexldn@liverpool.ac.uk

In Person: The SET helpdesk is open Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm



English Language Centre (ELC)

The ELC runs a number of pre-session and in-session English Language programmes for current and prospective students.

The prescribed enrolment period for students starting an ELC programme will normally be between 8 to 15 calendar days following the programme start date, as indicated in their offer documentation. Failure to register would be

dealt with in the same way as outlined on page 6 of this guide. The ELC will monitor attendance and engagement and may deem a student withdrawn if their attendance and/or progress is unsatisfactory.

The ELC Welfare Officer provides advice and support for international students based at the ELC, with support from colleagues in IAG.

Study abroad

Tier 4 students going on a period of study abroad as an essential part of their programme are allowed to keep their existing Tier 4 visa for the duration of their time studying abroad. Students must meet all the immigration requirements of the country they are going to study in.

The University must continue to monitor attendance and engagement on the course, so if the required monitoring duties cannot be fulfilled at the study abroad location, **the University reserves the right to withdraw its sponsorship of the student (so cancelling their UK Tier 4 visa)**. In these cases, return to the UK would require the student to be issued with a new CAS in order to apply for a new Tier 4 visa.



Work placements

Tier 4 students undertaking work placements as an essential part of their programme, whether based inside or outside the UK, are allowed to keep their existing Tier 4 visa for the duration of their work placement(s).

The University must continue to monitor attendance and engagement during the work placement. Where poor attendance is reported, the academic department will investigate this and, where applicable, action will be taken.

Tier 4 students whose work placement does not form an essential part of their programme would need to suspend their studies for the duration of the placement(s). This would be reported to UKVI as a 'withdrawal of sponsorship' and would cancel the student's current visa. **The student would need a new CAS in order to apply for a new Tier 4 visa to return to their studies.**

Working during your studies

If your visa conditions state you are allowed to work full time during vacation time and on completion of your course then you need to find out when these times are. They are different depending on the level of programme you are on.

Undergraduate: Vacation includes the winter, spring and summer University breaks

Postgraduate taught: Vacation includes the winter and spring University breaks. You are still classed as full time during the summer until the end date of your course.

Postgraduate Research: There are no vacation times. Any vacation periods should be approved by your supervisor. You are still

classed as full time up until you have had your viva and submitted your final thesis, including any corrections you were required to make.

There are also restrictions on what type of work you can do, you should find out what these are. For example, **you may not:**

- Open up a business of your own
- Work on a self-employed basis (this includes business based outside the UK or online businesses)
- Act as an employer in any way
- Work as an entertainer
- Work as a professional sports person or sports coach.
- Sign a permanent contract of employment

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

ATAS is a UK Government scheme designed to prevent those undertaking postgraduate study from acquiring knowledge that could be used in Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) activities. Applicants for certain subject areas must obtain an ATAS certificate before they make an application for a Tier 4 visa.

The list of subject areas that require ATAS clearance can be found on the University's Admissions pages: www.liverpool.ac.uk/study/.

Applicants whose subject area requires ATAS clearance must provide the correct ATAS certificate before the University will issue a CAS.

An ATAS certificate will display the University and the programme of study/research that an applicant has applied to for clearance.

Current students applying for a new Tier 4 visa for any reason (e.g. an extension or suspension) must re-apply for ATAS clearance and provide a new ATAS certificate together with their request for a new CAS.

Current students who transfer programme or change their research discipline and their subject area requires ATAS clearance **must apply for a new ATAS certificate to cover their new subject area and provide the University with the new ATAS certificate.**

Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES)

DES is a UK Home Office scheme designed to give students who have almost completed their PhD an additional 12 month Tier 4 visa which allows them to look for work and work full time in the UK.

PhD students who wish to apply for a DES visa must meet the conditions and provide the relevant documents as outlined on IAG's web pages.

All students wishing to apply for a DES visa must attend an appointment with the IAG to have all their supporting documentation checked and approved before a CAS will be issued.

Successful DES applicants must remain in contact with the University throughout the 12 month period under the Scheme. Holders of DES must respond to any communication from the University within ten working days. Where a response is not received within this timeframe, **the University reserves the right to withdraw its current sponsorship of the former student (so curtailing their DES visa) and they will be required to leave the UK.**

Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Description
APR	Annual Progress Report. Online portal whereby research students' progress is recorded and monitored.
ATAS	Academic Technology Approval Scheme.
BRP	Biometric Residence Permit.
CAS	Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies.
DES	Doctorate Extension Scheme.
ELC	English Language Centre.
HEI	Higher Education Institution
International student	A student or an applicant who has been categorised by the University as 'overseas' for fee payment purposes. An international student may not need a Tier 4 visa, and may hold any nationality, including British and/or other EU/EEA member states.
IAG	The International Advice and Guidance team, based in Liverpool.
Liverpool Life	Online portal which, amongst other things, allows prospective and current international students to register on a programme of study, confirm their arrival on a UK campus and maintain their personal contact details.
PGR Toolbox	Online facility where, amongst other things, students on research programmes can record their monthly meetings with their research supervisors.
SET	The Student Experience Team, based in London.
SLN	Sponsor Licence Number. A reference number that shows a Tier 4 student is allowed to study with the University. The University of Liverpool's SLN is N5WWG40J6.
SAC	The Student Administration Centre located in the Foundation Building.
Tier 4	Category of the UK Home Office's Immigration System that covers studying in the UK
Tier 4 student	A student or applicant who holds, or who has applied for, leave to remain in the UK as a Tier 4 (General) Student
UK Home Office	UK government department responsible for immigration.
UKVI	UK Visas and Immigration. A division of the UK Home Office responsible for making decisions on who has the right to enter and remain in the UK.
Visa vignette	A sticker placed in the holder's passport which allows entry into the UK
VITAL	The University's e-Learning environment



Contact Us

Student Administration Centre

Foundation Building

765 Brownlow Hill

Liverpool

L69 7ZX

Phone: 0151 7946758

Email: studentcentre@liverpool.ac.uk

Disclaimer

This document is an overview of the University's and student's responsibilities and is a guide for general information only. It does not represent a full statement of legal requirements and is not intended to be relied upon in any specific student's case.

The University will not accept any responsibility for any omission, loss or damage arising from using this document. The University is entitled to revise it at any time.