

# Top tips for your UK Tier 4 student visa application



UK Visas  
& Immigration



**WELCOME  
TO  
GREAT**

BRITAIN & NORTHERN IRELAND



*There are some things you can do to ensure that making your application is quick and straightforward. This guide provides some top tips and advice on Tier 4 (General) student visas.*

*Further information on visa types and how to apply is available at **[www.gov.uk/visas-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration)***

## Tier 4 (General) student visa

### 1. Apply early



You can apply for your visa up to three months before your course start date.

Summer is the UK's busiest period for processing visas so apply as far in advance as you can. You can apply for your visa up to three months before your course start date. Summer is the UK's busiest period for processing visas so apply as far in advance as you can. Our service standard is 15 working days. Applicants in some locations may be able to pay for our Priority Visa service and receive a decision within five working days from when you submit your biometrics (fingerprints and photos).

### 2. Check that a Tier 4 (General) student visa is right for you



There are different types of visa for studying in the UK. These vary according to the type and length of your course and the type of institution you will be studying at.

A Tier 4 (General) student visa, for those studying at degree level and above, will be granted for the period of your study as well as some additional time after the end of the course. It's important you chose the right visa and understand what activities you can and can't do with each visa type.

If you remain in the UK after your visa expires you can be banned from returning to the UK, meaning you would not be able to gain further study. Those who remain in the UK illegally, without a valid visa, are not permitted to work, rent private property, hold a driving licence or access a wide range of publicly funded services and benefits.

### 3. Check what documents you need



All students need to demonstrate that they have a place to study at an institution on our list of Tier 4 sponsors, and that they can speak the required level of English for the course. You will also need to show that you can financially support yourself and pay for your course. Applications from some countries will also require a Tuberculosis certificate, to find out more visit **[www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/overview](http://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/overview)**

Make sure you have the documents ready, that they are originals and translated into English. Try not to rush your application and ensure that all the information you provide is correct.

### 4. Knowledge of English



You must prove your knowledge of the English language when you apply. The level of English required will depend on the type of institution you are studying at and the type of course. This may mean passing a secure English language test (SELT). If you require a SELT you must obtain this before your sponsor issues a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS).

If you are studying at a UK Higher Education Institution, most degree level or above courses will not require a SELT as your institution will assess your level of English and state your level on the CAS. If in doubt, check with your institution. To find a centre near you and book your English language test visit:

**[www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)** (for tests inside and outside the UK)

**[www.trinitycollege.com/SELT](http://www.trinitycollege.com/SELT)** (for tests inside the UK only)

## 5. Visa fee and funding



When you apply, ensure you have sufficient funds to cover the visa fee, including those for dependants. It costs £335 to apply for a Tier 4 (General) student visa from outside the UK.

Make sure the funds to support you are held in either your or your parent's or guardian's accounts for at least 28 days. We recommend you put a little more money in to take account of currency fluctuations.

For Tier 4 General the relevant funds must be held in either your or your parent's or guardian's accounts for at least 28 days. If the funds are held in your parent or guardian's account, you must evidence this relationship via a birth certificate or adoption papers. We recommend you put a little more money in to take account of currency fluctuations.

## 6. Go priority if you're in a hurry



If you are on a tight timescale you may be

able to use our priority services, which will place your application at the front of the queue. In many countries we offer a range of fee-paid services and options for additional flexibility. These include our Super Priority visa processed in 24 hours visas, our 5 day Priority visa or our Keep Your Passport service, which enables customers to retain their passport for the majority of the application processing period.

Find what services are available from your local visa application centre:

- Europe, Africa and parts of the Middle East visit <https://uk.tlscontact.com>
- All other countries visit [www.vfsglobal.co.uk](http://www.vfsglobal.co.uk)

## 7. Health surcharge



If you are coming to the UK for more than six months and a non-EEA national, you will need to pay the health surcharge. This is £150 per year for students. If you are liable for the surcharge, you and any dependants must pay at the same time as your visa application.

## 8. Biometric residence permit



If you apply from outside the UK you will need to book an appointment at a visa application centre to have your fingerprints and photo taken. This forms part of your visa application and will enable you to get your biometric residence permit once in the UK, which provides evidence of your immigration status. You'll have to collect your biometric residence permit within 10 days of your arrival date in the UK.

## 9. Booking your travel



We advise visa applicants not to confirm any travel arrangements until their visa has been granted. Our processing times vary according to the type of visa application and can also vary during busy periods.

## If you need help



You can contact UKVI and receive a reply within 24 hours in a range of languages via our International Enquiry Service. If you need to speak to someone you can call the helpline. Visit [www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-outside-uk](https://www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-outside-uk) for details. Please note that British Embassies and Consulates cannot answer visa questions.