

Tier 4 (General) student visa

1. Overview

You can apply for a Tier 4 (General) student visa to study in the UK if you're 16 or over and you:

- have been offered a place on a course
- can [speak, read, write and understand English](#)
- have enough money to support yourself and pay for your course - the amount will vary depending on your circumstances
- are from a country that's not in the [European Economic Area \(EEA\)](#) or Switzerland
- meet the other [eligibility requirements](#)

There will be no change to the [rights and status of EU nationals living in the UK, nor UK nationals living in the EU](#), while the UK remains in the EU.

When to apply

The earliest you can apply for a visa is 3 months before you start your course.

You'll usually get a decision on your visa within 3 weeks. You can check [visa processing times](#) for your country.

Fees

It costs £335 to apply for this visa from outside the UK.

You must pay £335 per person for any dependants.

You'll also have [to pay the healthcare surcharge](#) as part of your application. Check how much you'll have to pay [before you apply](#).

How long you can stay

You can arrive in the UK before your course starts:

- up to 1 week before, if your course lasts 6 months or less
- up to 1 month before, if your course lasts more than 6 months

How long you can stay depends on the kind of course you're doing and what study you've already completed.

What you can and can't do

You can:

- study
- work as a student union sabbatical officer
- apply from inside or outside the UK
- [apply to extend your stay](#)
- work in most jobs - depending on what level your course is and what kind of sponsor you have

You can't:

- get [public funds](#)
- work in certain jobs, for example professional sportsperson or sports coach
- study at an academy or a local authority-funded school (also known as a maintained school)

You may be able to bring in [family members \(dependants\)](#).

Read the [full guidance](#) to find out how long you might be able to stay and what you can and can't do.

2. Eligibility

You must have:

- an unconditional offer of a place on a course with a [licensed Tier 4 sponsor](#)
- enough money to support yourself and pay for your course - the amount will vary depending on your circumstances

Read the [guide](#) and [appendix](#) for the full list of documents and how much money you'll need.

Your course

You can do a course that's one of the following:

- full-time leading to a qualification that's at least level 6 on the [Ofqual register](#)
- an overseas course of degree level study that's equal to a UK higher education course and is being run by an overseas higher education institution
- full-time, with at least 15 hours per week of organised daytime study, leading to a qualification which is at least level 3 on the [Ofqual register](#)
- a recognised foundation programme as a postgraduate doctor or dentist

Postgraduate doctors and dentists

You can apply for this visa if you're sponsored to do a recognised foundation programme and you've:

- finished a recognised UK degree in medicine or dentistry
- received that degree from a [registered Tier 4 sponsor](#)
- spent your final year and at least 1 other year of studies leading to that degree in the UK

Confirmation of acceptance for studies

Your education provider will send you a reference number called a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) once they've offered you a place on a course. You'll need to enter this on your visa application.

You must [apply for your visa](#) no more than 6 months after you receive the CAS.

Further study in the UK

You can only get a CAS for a new course if you've studied in the UK before and you're:

- re-sitting exams or repeating modules
- applying for the first time to a new institution to complete a course you started at an institution that's lost its Tier 4 sponsorship
- applying to complete a PhD or other doctorate that you started studying under your last Tier 4 (General) student visa
- studying for a new qualification at a higher academic level
- studying for a new qualification at the same level and related to your previous course or career aspirations - it must be degree level or above at a Higher Education Institution (HEI)
- applying after working as a student union sabbatical officer to complete a qualification you started studying under your last Tier 4 (General) student visa

3. Knowledge of English

You must prove your knowledge of the English language when you apply.

This usually means passing a secure English language test (SELT).

Where you're studying	What you're studying	Knowledge of English needed	Level
Higher education institution (HEI)	Degree level or above	Reading, writing, listening and speaking	Equivalent to CEFR (Common European Framework for languages) level B2
Institution that's not HEI	Degree level or above	SELT in reading, writing, listening and speaking	CEFR level B2
Any institution	Below degree	SELT in reading, writing, listening and speaking	CEFR level B1

HEIs can choose how to assess a student's knowledge of English. They must still be at:

- CEFR level B2 if you're studying at a degree level or higher
- SELT in reading, writing, listening and speaking and CEFR level B1 if you're not studying at a degree level

Your test needs to be from an [approved provider](#).

Check the [full visa guidance](#) for detailed information.

Exceptions

You don't need to prove your knowledge of English if you've completed a qualification equivalent to a UK degree in:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Australia
- the Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Ireland

- Jamaica
- New Zealand
- St Kitts and Nevis
- St Lucia
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago
- UK
- USA

You also don't need to prove your knowledge of English if one of the following apply:

- you're a national of Canada or any of the countries in the list above
- you have studied in the UK before as a Tier 4 (Child) student
- you're applying to come to the UK for a study abroad programme as part of a university degree course in the USA

4. Documents you must provide

When you apply for the visa you must provide:

- a current passport or other valid travel documentation
- proof that you can support yourself and pay for your course - this will vary depending on your circumstances
- proof of parental or other legal guardian consent if you're under 18
- proof of your relationship with your parent or guardian
- your [tuberculosis test results](#) if you're from a country where you have to take the test

You need a page in your passport that's blank on both sides for your visa.

You may also need to provide additional documents depending on your circumstances.

Your documents will usually be sent back within 14 days.

Read the [guidance](#) and [appendix](#) for the full list of documents and how much money you'll need according to your situation.