

Applying for Tier 4 (General) Student immigration permission

Advice and Counselling Service

About the Advice and Counselling Service

The Advice and Counselling Service offers a free and confidential service to all Queen Mary students, including those from Barts and The London, Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry. You can view our confidentiality policy on our website: www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk/procedures/

Our welfare advisers

Our experienced welfare advisers have specialist training to offer you professional advice on a range of financial, practical and legal issues. Our aim is to advise you about possible solutions and options relating to financial, practical and legal issues, so that you can concentrate on your academic progress. Our welfare advisers will help you to understand your welfare rights and entitlements, and can advocate on your behalf if your case is complex.

Regulation of Immigration Advice

The OISC (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner) is an independent organisation that monitors immigration advice and services.



Welfare Advisers at Queen Mary are regulated under OISC guidelines to give immigration advice. We have to attend regular training to be able to do this. If you ever need to complain about the immigration advice you receive, the Advice and Counselling Service has a complaints procedure. You can find this on our website at www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk/procedures

Alternatively, you can complain directly to the OISC. Their complaints form is on the website at www.oisc.gov.uk

Disclaimer

Law, regulations and policies can change quickly so make sure that you are using the most up-to-date version of this guidance. Check our website for regular updates.

The information in this guide is given in good faith and has been carefully checked. Queen Mary, however, accepts no legal responsibility for its accuracy.

Where to find further guidance

In this guide we sometimes advise you to contact a Welfare Adviser for further guidance.

You can see a Welfare Adviser in person during one of our drop-in sessions, at a pre-booked appointment or you can submit questions via our website. For more information on our opening hours, the times of our drop in sessions and how to contact us, visit www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk/contact/

See our *A-Z directory of support services* for information on how to contact other support departments at QM, and external organisations which can also offer you support.

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Introduction

What is Tier 4 (General) Student immigration permission?

In May 2009 the UK Government initiated the biggest change to UK student immigration in over 45 years.

Tier 4 is part of the UK Government's new 'Points Based' immigration system. The UK Border Agency (UKBA) administers the immigration system.

To obtain immigration permission to come to or stay in the UK as a student, you must score a total of 40 points:

- You can get 30 points for a valid Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) from a Licensed Sponsor
- You can get 10 points for having a specified amount of money available to you

So what has changed?

If you have applied for immigration permission before the new system was introduced, you will find that the application procedure is very different. Some things are more straightforward and some things are now more complicated.

The new system is very rigid which has the advantage that, if you follow the rules carefully and provide all the correct documents, you can be quite sure that your application will be granted. The disadvantage is that if you make a mistake, the UK Border Agency officer who decides your application is required to refuse your application even if it is a very small mistake. *It is unlikely that you will be able to appeal a decision to refuse your application if you have made a mistake.*

If you follow this guide carefully, you should be able to make a successful application.

New terms

There are some new technical terms associated with the Points Based System:

What is a CAS?

To apply for immigration permission under Tier 4 of the Points Based System, you will need a special reference number called a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). This reference number is linked to a record on a secure UK Border Agency database, which contains the details which Queen Mary has provided about you and your course of studies. When you make your application, the Entry Clearance Officer or Caseworker will use this reference number to retrieve the information which Queen Mary has provided about you and your course.

If you take up an offer on an eligible course, Queen Mary will provide you with a CAS reference number. Queen Mary will also provide you with a statement of all the information we have provided to the UK

Border Agency, but this is only to help you complete your application form and you do not need to submit this statement with your application.

Who will be my Licensed Sponsor?

Under Tier 4 of the Points Based System your immigration permission must be sponsored by an education institution which is licensed by the UK Border Agency. In this context, sponsorship does not mean financial sponsorship.

Queen Mary is licensed by the UK Border Agency as a 'Highly Trusted Sponsor'. This is the highest possible rating.

If you accept an unconditional offer on an eligible course, Queen Mary will agree to be your sponsor.

Can I apply for Tier 4 (General) Student immigration permission?

Even if you have a valid CAS and the specified amount of money, there are some restrictions on when and where you can apply.

Applications made to British visa centres and sections (outside the UK)

To be able to apply for Tier 4 immigration permission at a British visa centre or section, you must satisfy the following criteria:

- You must not have previously travelled to the UK with existing Tier 4 immigration permission which has not yet expired or been curtailed. If you have travelled to the UK with Tier 4 immigration permission and this has not yet expired, you will need to either wait until your immigration permission expires, or travel to the UK to make your immigration application.
- Your course start date must be within three months of the date you make your immigration application.
- You must be at least 16 years old.

Extension applications (inside the UK)

To be able to apply for Tier 4 immigration permission in the UK, you must satisfy the following criteria:

- If you are starting a new course or resuming existing studies, these must start within one month of the date that your current immigration permission is curtailed or expires.
- If you are starting a new course, you cannot apply for your immigration permission more than three months before the start date of your new course.
- If you are applying for an extension so that you can finish your current course, you can make your application any time before your course finishes.
- You must be at least 16 years old
- You must have last been granted immigration permission as one of the following:
 - Tier 4 (General) Student,
 - Tier 4 (Child) Student,
 - Tier 1 (Post-study Work) Migrant,
 - Tier 2 Migrant,
 - Participant in the International Graduates Scheme (or its predecessor, the Science and Engineering Graduates Scheme),

- Participant in the Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland Scheme,
- Postgraduate Doctor or Dentist,
- Prospective Student,
- Student,
- Student Nurse,
- Student Re-sitting an Examination,
- Student Writing-Up a Thesis,
- Student Union Sabbatical Officer,
- Work Permit Holder



Warning: If your immigration permission expires while you are in the UK, you should seek advice from a welfare adviser or an immigration specialist before you submit a new application or leave the UK. See the section “What if things go wrong?”

Obtaining a CAS

New students

Once you have firmly accepted an unconditional offer, the Admissions and Recruitment Office will e-mail you a CAS reference number. Your e-mail will also contain a statement of the information we have provided to the UK Border Agency to help you complete your application form. You should check the statement carefully to make sure that all the information we have provided is correct.

What should I do if I am a new student and I notice that something in my CAS statement is incorrect or if something has changed?

If you have been issued a CAS and you notice an error or if something changes, Queen Mary will need to amend your CAS.

If you have paid any money to Queen Mary, such as your tuition fees this information should be reflected in your CAS statement.

If something needs to be changed, you should contact the admissions team which is dealing with your application. You will find their contact details in the e-mail which contained your login details for the applicant portal.

Existing students

If you are part way through a course at Queen Mary and you need to extend your immigration permission (E.g. because you are retaking all or part of your course again or are resitting out of attendance) you will need to request a CAS.

If you have just started your course you should be able to use the CAS which the Admissions Office sent to you. A CAS is valid for six months from the date when it is issued. If anything has changed since you started your course, you will need to contact the admission team which dealt with your application, so that your CAS can be updated.

If your CAS is no longer valid, you will need to request a new one from the relevant office:

Existing undergraduate students (except medical and dental students) and all taught postgraduate students

To request a CAS you need to complete a CAS request form. You can download a copy of this form from the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat website:

http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/registry/certificates_and_transcripts.html

With your completed request form, you will need to provide a copy of the personal details page of your current passport and a copy of your most recent visa sticker or biometric ID card (both sides).

You can submit your request form and copies of your passport details page and visa sticker or biometric ID card to the Registry:

- In person from the Academic Registry (Room CB05, Queens' building, Mile End campus).
- By email: casrequest@qmul.ac.uk

If you have a problem concerning your CAS statement (E.g. You notice an error in your CAS statement or if something changes), please contact the registry by e-mail casrequest@qmul.ac.uk or by telephone +44 (0)20 7882 5005. You cannot request your CAS by telephone.

Existing postgraduate research students

You can request your CAS:

- In person from the Research Degrees Office, E15 Queens' Building, Mile End campus
- By email: researchdegrees@qmul.ac.uk

If you have a problem concerning your CAS statement (E.g. You notice an error in your CAS statement or if something changes), please contact the Research Office by email researchdegrees@qmul.ac.uk or by telephone +44 (0)20 7882 3657 (non medical or dental research) or +44 (0)20 7882 5377 (medical or dental research). You cannot request your CAS by telephone.

Existing undergraduate medical and dental students

To request a CAS you need to complete a CAS request form. Please contact the Student Office to request a copy of the form.

With your completed request form, you will need to provide a copy of the personal details page of your current passport and a copy of your most recent visa sticker or biometric ID card (both sides).

You can submit your request form and copies of your passport details page and visa sticker or biometric ID card to the Registry:

You can submit your request form and copies of your passport details page and visa sticker or biometric ID card to the:

- In person at the Student Office (Garrod Building, Whitechapel campus)
- By email: j.conner@qmul.ac.uk

If you have a problem concerning your CAS statement (E.g. You notice an error in your CAS statement or if something changes), please contact the Student Office by e-mail j.conner@qmul.ac.uk or by telephone +44 (0)20 7882 2126. You cannot request your CAS by telephone.



Warning: During busy periods, it can take QMUL up to two weeks to issue a CAS. Please request your CAS as early as possible.

Forms, application fees and where to apply

Applications made to British visa centres and sections (outside the UK)

The forms:

- Application form VAF9 - PBS Migrant
- PBS Appendix 8 General Student self assessment form

You can obtain both of these forms from the UK Border Agency website:

<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/vafs/>

The fee:

£199 in the currency local to the visa centre or section

Where to make your application

You can find your nearest British visa centre or section on the UK Border Agency website:

<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/wheretapply/>

You must apply to the centre or section where you are normally living. Depending on the centre or section you may be able to make your application by post, by e-mail or in person.

Photographs

You must submit one UK passport sized photograph taken within the last six months. Check that your photograph meets all of the UK Border Agency's requirements which you can find on their website:

<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/photoguide/>

Passport or travel document

You will need to submit your current passport or travel document. Make sure that it has not expired.

You will also need to submit any previous passport you've held unless they have been lost, stolen or returned to the issuing authority.

Other documents

You may need to submit other documents with your application, such as your previous qualifications or bank statements. All the documents you submit must be originals (not photocopies, faxes or printouts from the internet).



If a document is not in either English or Welsh, you will also need to provide an English translation of the document. Paragraph 13 of the Tier 4 policy guidance (which you can find on the UK Border Agency website <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/tier4generalapplication>) explains the requirements for translations for students who are applying outside the UK.

Biometrics

You will need to attend a British visa centre or section to record your biometric details. A scan of your finger prints and a digital photograph of your face will be taken.

Tuberculosis (TB) Screening

If you are travelling to the UK and your application will be processed by a UK Visa Application Centre or Section in one of the following countries, you will need to show that you have been tested for Tuberculosis.

- Bangladesh,
- Ghana (which also takes applications from Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and Niger),
- Kenya (which also take applications from residents of Eritrea, Somalia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania),
- Pakistan,
- Sudan, and
- Thailand (which also takes applications from Cambodia and Laos).



For more information about Tuberculosis testing, visit the UK Border Agency website:

<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/tbscreening/>

How long will my application take?

- You can find out how long it is currently taking the UK visa application centre or section you are applying to decide applications on the following UK Border Agency website: <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/processingtimes>
- The information on this website indicates what the situation was one month ago and may not represent the current processing times. For example, from July onwards Visa Application Centres become increasingly busy as students make their applications to start courses in September.

Extension applications (inside the UK)

The form:

You will need the *Tier 4 (General) application form*. You can obtain this form from the UK Border Agency website

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/tier4generalapplication>

The fee:

- £357 for a postal application (The UK Border Agency state that it usually takes 4 to 14 weeks to decide an application plus additional time for postage and to register your biometric details.)
- £628 for an in person application (You will normally receive a decision on the same day, but you will need to make an appointment in advance. You will normally receive your plastic ID card with your new immigration permission in 3-5 days.)



Warning: in the UK, one of the most common reasons why applications are returned as invalid is because of failed debit or credit card payments. In our experience this can happen even if there is enough money in your account. We strongly recommend that you use a UK Postal Order (which you can buy at a Post Office) to pay for your application.

Where to make your application

By post:

If you are applying by post, you should send your application form with supporting documents to:

UK Border Agency
Tier 4 PO Box 500
Durham
DH99 1WJ

We recommend that you send your application via Royal Mail Special Delivery as you can track your application and if it is lost or damaged, you will receive compensation. If you send your application via Royal Mail, the UK Border Agency will consider your date of application as the day you give your application to the Post Office.

If you prefer, you can send your application by a private courier company and there is a different address (the address is on the form). If you send your application using a private courier company, the UK Border Agency will consider your date of application as the day your application arrives at the UK Border Agency.

In person:

If you are applying in person you will need to attend one of the UK Border Agency's Public Enquiry Offices. There are seven offices in the UK:

- Solihull
- Croydon (this is the closest to Queen Mary and is about 70 minutes from the Mile End campus by public transport).
- Glasgow
- Liverpool
- Sheffield
- Belfast
- Cardiff

You can book an appointment online by visiting <https://ukbabooking.homeoffice.gov.uk> or by calling 0870 606 7766. Be aware that during busy periods appointments may not be available for several weeks.

Photographs

You must submit two UK passport sized photograph taken within the last month. Check that your photograph meets the all of the UK Border Agency's requirements which you can find on their website:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applications/forms/pbs/tier4generalapplication>



Warning: in the UK, one of the most common reasons why applications are returned as invalid is because an applicant's photographs do not meet the requirements.

You can obtain suitable photographs from the College's Digital and Photographic Imaging Centre (<http://www.dpic.qmul.ac.uk/>) which is located in room 3.06 in the G.E.Fogg Building.

The charge is £5 for 16 photographs. Your photographs will be available for collection at the same time on the next working day.

Passport or travel document & UK ID cards

You will need to submit your current passport or travel document. Make sure that it has not expired.

If you have renewed your passport since you were last granted immigration permission, you will also need to provide your previous passport (unless it has been lost, stolen or returned to the issuing authority).

If you have been issued with a United Kingdom identity card, you will also need to submit this with your application.

Other documents

You may need to submit other documents with your application, such as your previous qualifications or bank statements. All the documents you submit must be originals (not photocopies, faxes or printouts from the internet).

If a document is not in either English or Welsh, you will also need to provide an English translation of the document. Paragraph 12 of the Tier 4 policy guidance (which you can find on the UK Border Agency

website <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/tier4generalapplication>) explains the requirements for translations for students who are applying in the UK.

Biometrics

Before your application is processed, you will need to register your biometric details (A scan of your finger prints and digital photograph of your face).

If you post your application, the UK Border Agency will write to you to invite you to book an appointment to register your biometric details. There are a number of places where you can choose to go to register your biometrics details. In London, you can register your biometric details at the Public Enquiry Office in Croydon, the Identity and Passport Service in Elephant & Castle and at selected Post Offices. The letter inviting you to register your biometric details will explain how to book your appointment and will give you details of the places where you can go. You should normally receive this letter within 15 days from the date you submitted your application to the UK Border Agency.

If you are submitting your application in person, your biometric details will be recorded when you submit your application.

How long will my application take?

If you make your application in person at a Public Enquiry Office, you will normally receive a decision on the day. Your plastic biometric identity card will normally be posted to you within three to five working days.

For postal applications, the UK Border Agency expects to be able to process 75% of applications within 4 weeks and 90% of applications within 14 weeks. Some applications can take longer, but this is unusual. These processing times are from the date when you register your biometric details and do not include the time it takes to post your application to the UK Border Agency and for the UK Border Agency to post your documents back to you.

During the summer, and before Christmas, the UK Border Agency receives a very large number of applications and it may take longer than normal for an application to be processed. If you are applying in person, you may find that there are very few appointments available during these periods.

How much money do I need to show?

The amount of money you will need to show depends on how long your studies will be, if you have recently been studying in the UK and if you will be receiving official financial support.

Definition of 'the year'

If your course is one year or longer, then the UK Border Agency will assess your finances based on an academic year. The academic year that the UK Border Agency will use to assess your finances will depend on your situation:

- For new students it will be the first year of your course
- If you are applying part way through an academic year then it is the current academic year
- If you are applying between academic years (E.g. during summer holidays) then it is the next academic year.
- In this section we will refer to this as 'the year'.

Maintenance

Maintenance is the money you will need for your accommodation and other living expenses while you are studying in the UK.

Reduced maintenance requirement

Paragraph 127 of the Tier 4 policy guidance (which you can find on the UK Border Agency website <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/tier4generalapplication>) states:

A student (including Post-graduate Doctors and Sabbatical Officers) has an established presence studying in the United Kingdom if he/she was last given permission to stay under Tier 4, as a student, or as a Post-graduate Doctor or Dentist and he/she:

- *has completed a single course of at least six months during his/her last grant of leave; or*
- *is currently studying a single course, of which he/she has completed at least six months; or*
- *is currently studying and has completed a single course of at least six months during his/her current permission to stay.*

and

- *his/her last grant of leave ended no more than four months before his/her Tier 4 application was made; or*
- *he/she is currently following a course of study.*

A student cannot amalgamate two or more courses to make up the six months study.

You will need to show that you have £800 pounds for each month of your course up to a maximum of nine months (or two months if you meet the reduced maintenance requirement).

Depending on the length of your course, you will need to show:

Length of course in months	Full Maintenance Requirement	Reduced Maintenance Requirement
1	£800	£800
2	£1,600	£1,600
3	£2,400	£1,600**
4	£3,200	£1,600**
5	£4,000	£1,600**
6	£4,800	£1,600**
7	£5,600	£1,600**
8	£6,400	£1,600**
9	£7,200	£1,600**
10 or more	£7200*	£1,600**

*If your course is longer than nine months, the amount you need to show is capped at £7200

** If you qualify for the reduced maintenance requirement and your course is longer than two months, the amount you need to show is capped at £1,600.

If your course starts or finishes part way through a month, you need to include the whole of that month when you calculate how long your course is.

Things you can deduct from the amount you need to show for your maintenance

Money you have already paid to Queen Mary for your accommodation

If you will be living in Queen Mary halls of residences and you have paid some money to Queen Mary for the accommodation for 'the year' then you can deduct this from the amount you need to show for maintenance.

The amount you have paid should be shown in your CAS statement.

Evidence that you have paid money for accommodation not at Queen Mary will not be considered.

Official sponsorship

If you will be receiving money for living expenses from

- The British Government
- The government in your home country
- The British Council
- An international organisation
- An international company
- A university
- A United Kingdom independent school

Then you can deduct the amount you will receive for 'the year' from the amount you need to show for maintenance.

If you will be receiving money for your living expenses from Queen Mary, this should be detailed in your CAS statement.

If your living expenses will be paid directly to you, you will need to provide a letter from the organisation as proof. Paragraph 149 of the Tier 4 policy guidance (which you can find on the UK Border Agency website <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/tier4generalapplication>) explains the requirements for the letter.



Warning: If you are receiving or have received sponsorship in the last 12 months from a government or an international scholarship agency which covers/covered both your course fees and your living expenses, you must provide a letter from your sponsor confirming that they give their consent for your immigration application. If you do not provide this letter, your application will be refused.

Course fees

You must be able to show that you have the money to pay for your course fees for 'the year'. Your CAS statement will show how much your course fees are for 'the year'.

Things you can deduct from the amount you need to show for your course fees

Money you have already paid to Queen Mary for your course fees

If you have already paid money to Queen Mary for your course fees, this should be included in your CAS statement.

Note: If the amount you need to pay for fees has been reduced (E.g. because you have a Science and Engineering Scholarships or a discount for prompt payment), this will be shown as money which you have paid to the College. The reason this is shown in this way is because the UK Border Agency systems are not able to account for fee reductions.

Official sponsorship

If you will be receiving money for your course fees from:

- The British Government,

- The government in your home country
- The British Council
- An international organisation
- An international company
- A university

Then you can deduct the amount you will receive for 'the year' from the amount you need to show for your course fees. Depending on how your sponsorship is arranged, your sponsorship may be detailed in your CAS statement or you may need a letter from the organisation providing your sponsorship. Paragraph 149 of the Tier 4 policy guidance (which you can find on the UK Border Agency website <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/tier4generalapplication>) explains the requirements for the letter.

Study abroad students

If you are a study abroad student and your home institution is paying your course fees, your CAS will state that the course fee payable by you is £0.00, in which case, you will not need to show that you have any money for your course fees. If your home institution will also be paying for your accommodation at Queen Mary, this will also be detailed in your CAS

I still need to show some money for my course fees and/or maintenance

If you have not been able to deduct any or all of your course fees and/or maintenance (see above), then you will need to show that you have enough money to cover the remaining amount of money.

Whose money can I show?

You can only show money held

- In your name

or in the name of:

- Your parent(s) (you will need to include your birth certificate with your application)
- Your adopted parent(s) (you will need to provide your adoption certificate with your application)
- Your legal guardian (you will need to provide a court document that confirms the appointment of your legal guardian)

If you are using money held by your parent(s) or legal guardian, you will also need to provide a letter from them confirming that they will allow you to use this money. Full details of the requirements for this evidence can be found in paragraphs 157 and 158 of the Tier 4 policy guidance (which you can find on the UK Border Agency website <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/tier4generalapplication>).

How long must I have had this money?

You will need to show that the required amount of money has been held continuously for 28 days. The closing balance (the last day of the 28 day period) must be within one month of the date you submit your application.

If you submit evidence which covers more than 28 days, the Caseworker or Entry Clearance Officer will only consider money held for the 28 days up to your closing balance. They will ignore any balances before the 28 day period.

If you submit evidence from more than one account, the Caseworker or Entry Clearance Officer will look at the combined total of all your accounts during the 28 day period before your closing balance. If the closing balances for your accounts fall on different dates, the case worker will choose the date of one of your closing balances and consider the combined total of all your accounts during the 28 day period up to that date. They will try to choose whichever closing balance date would allow you to show that you have maintained the required amount of money for 28 days.

Which documents can I use as evidence?

You can use any of the following documents as evidence of the money available to you, your parents, adopted parents or legal guardian:

- A bank or building society statement
- A building society pass book
- A letter from your bank confirming money held
- A letter from a regulated financial institution confirming money held
- A letter from a regulated financial institution confirming the arrangement of a loan

The UK Border Agency has very strict requirements regarding the documents which they will accept as evidence of the money available to you.

To make sure that your documents will be accepted, please check the requirements in paragraphs 150 to 156 of the of the Tier 4 policy guidance (which you can find on the UK Border Agency website <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/tier4generalapplication>).

If you are using a bank statement or statements, make sure that it has the following features:

Your bank's name and logo

The date of the statement

Your name or your parent's name and account number

Balances covering at least 28 days and show for the last 28 days that you have held the required amount of money

The date of your closing balance must be within the last month.

Date	Type	Value	Balance
01/06	Opening Balance		£2,000.00
05/06	Cash	-£200.00	£1,800.00
09/06	DD Phone	-£48.20	£1,751.80
13/06	Mum & Dad	£500.00	£2,251.80
26/06	A Shop	-£120.00	
	Cinema	-£12.00	£2119.80
29/06	Travel Ticket	-£57.00	
	Telephone	-£42.00	£2020.80
30/06	Closing Balance		£2020.80



Warning: one of the most common reasons why Tier 4 (General) applications are refused is because an applicant's financial evidence does not meet the requirements of the policy guidance. Carefully check your documents against the policy guidance to make sure this does not happen to you.

What else should I submit with my application?

Depending on what your CAS statement states, you may need to submit other documents with your application

Evidence of your previous qualifications

If your CAS statement states that we have assessed your ability to undertake a course based on your previous qualifications, you must provide these with your application. You must submit your original certificate or transcript. If your certificates or transcripts are not in English, you will also need to provide an English translation of the document. Paragraphs 12 and 13 of the Tier 4 policy guidance (which you can find on the UK Border Agency website

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/tier4generalapplication>) explains the requirements for translations.



Warning: one of the most common reasons why Tier 4 (General) applications are refused is because an applicant hasn't provided the documents listed in their CAS statement.

The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

If you are applying for permission to undertake a research degree in certain science and technology subjects, you may have to apply for security clearance from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Your CAS statement will state if you need an ATAS certificate.

You can apply for an ATAS certificate as soon as you have an offer of a place. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office state that they aim to decide applications within 20 working days. If you are required to provide an ATAS certificate, make sure that you apply as early as possible as you will not be able to make your immigration application without it.

Parental permission for students who are 16 or 17 years old

If you are 16 or 17 years old you must provide a letter from your parent(s) or legal guardian giving their consent for you to apply for immigration permission and travel to the UK to live independently. The requirements for the letter are detailed in paragraphs 159 to 161 of the of the Tier 4 policy guidance (which you can find on the UK Border Agency website

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/tier4generalapplication>).

Application checklist

Before submitting your application, use the following checklist to make sure that you have got everything:

For applicants outside the UK

- You have evidence of a tuberculosis test (if you are required to provide this)

For applicants in the UK

- You have your UK ID card (if you have been issued with one)
- You have your police registration certificate (if your immigration permission requires you to register with the police)
- If you have not yet enrolled, you have shown your passport and qualifications to the Academic Registry (Queen's Building, room CB05)

All applicants:

- You have checked that all the information in your CAS is correct, by checking your CAS statement.
- You have evidence of your previous qualifications (if listed in your CAS) and these are in English or you have official English translations
- You have an ATAS certificate (if required by your CAS)
- You have permission from your parents (if you are 16 or 17)
- You have evidence of your finances which you have checked meets the requirements of the policy guidance
- You have checked your photograph(s) meet the photograph requirements
- You have checked that your passport or travel document is still valid
- You have the correct payment
- You have completed the form(s) correctly
- You have scanned or photocopied everything you will be submitting

Partners and Children

If you will be studying a course which is longer than six months, your partner and children under the age of 18 can come to the UK as your dependants. You will need to show that you have additional money to support your dependants.

In this context partner includes:

- Husband or wife
- Same-sex civil partner
- A partner who you have been living with for at least two years in a relationship similar to marriage or civil partnership

You can find out how to apply for immigration permission for your dependants in the UKCISA guidance sheet “Your family’s immigration” which you can find on their website:

http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/your_family.php

What to do if things go wrong

Problems with applications made outside the UK

What should I do if my application has been refused?

If your application is refused, the visa section or centre will contact you and provide you with a 'refusal notice'. You should note the date when they give you the refusal notice. If you intend to ask for your application to be reviewed you will need to submit your request within 28 days of the date they gave you the notice.

You can obtain advice from a Welfare Adviser at the Advice and Counselling Service about your refusal. For us to be able to advise you please forward us the following documents:

- Your full refusal notice
- Your CAS statement
- Your completed application forms (VAF9 and Appendix 8)
- Your financial evidence
- Any other documents you were required to submit with your application
- The details page in your passport
-

You will also need to provide us with the following details:

- The date you submitted your application
- The date you received your refusal notice
- Your contact details (e-mail is our preferred method of contact)

You can either scan your documents and e-mail them to welfare@qmul.ac.uk or fax them to us on +44 (0)20 7882 7013. If you are scanning your documents make sure your scans are high enough resolution so that we can read your documents, but not so large that they will be returned by our e-mail servers. We recommend that your scanned pages should be not more than 300KB per page.

Once we have received your documents and details one of our Welfare Advisers will review your documents and will then send you a Client Care Letter which will explain if your refusal is correct or not and what your options are now.

My course is starting shortly, but I am not able to travel to the UK in time. What should I do?

Sometimes students are unable to travel to the UK in time for the start of their course. There could be a number of reasons why this might happen. For example, you might not get your visa in time if you apply

shortly before you need to travel and there is a delay in processing an application. You might be delayed for another reason, for example bad weather or personal difficulties.

Your CAS statement will state the last possible date to enrol on your course. Queen Mary will report any students who have not enrolled by this date to the UK Border Agency as 'no shows'. Our understanding from the UK Border Agency Policy Guidance is that if you are reported as a 'no show' the following will happen:

- If your application has not yet been decided, your application will be refused as your CAS will no longer be valid.
- If your application has been granted, but you have not yet travelled to the UK, your immigration permission will be cancelled. If you try to travel to the UK, you will be refused entry at the airport.
- If your application has been granted, you are in the UK and you have six months or more of immigration permission left, the UK Border Agency will curtail (cut short) your immigration permission to 60 days. During these 60 days you can try to find a new course and make a new Tier 4 (General) Student application to start that course, or travel home.
- If your application has been granted, you are in the UK and you have less than six months of your immigration permission left, the UK Border Agency will take no action. During your remaining immigration permission, you can try to find a new course and make a new Tier 4 (General) Student application to start that course, or travel home.
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This is why it is very important that you make your application in good time. If you will not be able to enrol, we **strongly** advise you not to travel to the UK.

If you are a new student and you will not be able to arrive in time for your course please contact the admissions team which issued your CAS statement to see if it is possible to defer your offer of a place until next year. The contact details for the appropriate admissions team will be listed on your CAS statement.

If you are a continuing student you may need to interrupt your studies. See our guide "*Resitting, interrupting or leaving your course - a guide for international students*"

<http://www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk/documents/leaflets/interrupting/5075.pdf> for more information.

If you are returning to the UK for re-sit examinations and you may need to submit extenuating circumstances. See our guide "*Extenuating Circumstances*"

<http://www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk/documents/leaflets/extcircs/5069.pdf> for more information.

What do I do if the Immigration Officer refuses to let me into the UK when I arrive?

If you are refused entry to the UK when you arrive, you should seek immigration advice immediately. You can contact Advice and Counselling on +44 (0)20 7882 8717 during office hours.

If you are arriving at Heathrow airport during Queen Mary's arrivals weekend, there may be Queen Mary Welfare Advisers at the airport. The International Office will have provided you with a contact number which you can use to contact our staff at the airport.

If you have problems at passport control, and are unable to contact one of our Welfare Advisers, contact the Immigration Advisory Service (IAS) for free advice:

- Tel: 0844 974 4000 (daytime, Monday to Friday)
- If it is night-time, leave a message on their emergency answer phone: 020 7967 1299
- Website: www.iasuk.org

Problems with applications made in the UK

My application has been returned to me as invalid. What should I do?

If you submit an invalid application, the UK Border Agency will return your documents to you.

Applications are frequently returned for the following reasons:

- Failed payment – e.g. your bank declines your debit/credit card
- Passport photographs which do not meet the UK Border Agency requirements – e.g. your face is less than 29mm or more than 34 mm tall
- Failure to complete a mandatory section of the form

If your current immigration permission has not yet expired

If your current immigration permission has not yet expired you can make a new application. If it has taken the UK Border Agency some time to return your application, you may need to provide updated documents. For example, you may need to provide new bank statements and photos if the ones you originally submitted are now more than one month old. You should also check to make sure that you are using the current version of the form and guidance. If your payment was successful, the UK border agency will usually keep your fee for up to 28 days while you prepare a further application, so that you do not need to provide further payment. If you are not required to pay again, you will need to send your new application to the address provided (usually on a blue sticker) rather than the address on the form.

If your immigration permission has now expired

If you applied before your immigration permission expired, but your application has been returned as invalid and your immigration permission has now expired, you will have become an overstayer. This is because, if your application is returned as invalid, it is as if you had not made an application and you will have been overstaying (staying in the UK illegally) from the date that your immigration permission expired.

You may have been given the option to send a new application to the UK Border Agency within 28 days without making a further payment, but this does not give you any immigration permission to remain in the UK. You will still be overstaying.

Overstaying for more than 28 days

If you stay in the UK for more than 28 days after your immigration permission has expired and then return home, any immigration application you make to return to the UK will automatically be refused for at least 12 months from the date you leave the UK.

If your immigration permission expired less than 29 days ago

If your immigration permission expired less than 29 days ago, you have two choices:

- Return home before you have stayed in the UK for more than 28 days from when your immigration permission expired and make an application for entry clearance to return to the UK. We know of other students who have left the UK after overstaying for 28 days or less and who have made successful applications to return to the UK. You will need to check with your academic department first that they will approve this absence from your studies.
- Make a further application to stay in the UK – This is a potentially risky option as, by the time your application is decided, you will almost certainly have stayed in the UK for longer than 28 days without permission. You cannot save time by making an application at a Public Enquiry Office if your immigration permission has already expired, as they will not accept late applications in person. As your immigration permission has already expired, you will not have the right to appeal any decision the UK Border Agency makes on your new application. If this application is refused, you will normally be required to leave the UK, and if you have overstayed for more than 28 days, you will not be able to make an application to return to the UK for at least 12 months.

If your immigration permission expired more than 28 days ago

If your immigration application expired more than 28 days ago, if you go home, any immigration application you make will automatically be refused for 12 months from the date you leave the UK.

You could make a further application from within the UK, but if this is refused you would normally be required to leave the UK. As your immigration permission has already expired, you will not have the right to appeal any decision the UK Border Agency makes on your new application. If this application is refused, you will normally be required to leave the UK, and if you have overstayed for more than 28 days, you will not be able to make an application to return to the UK for at least 12 months.

Making a new application

If you are making a new application, you should check that all the documents you are providing are still valid. Make sure that in your new application:

- Your bank statements and photos are not more than one month old
- Your bank statement shows you have held the specified amount of money in your account for at least 28 days
- You are using the current version of the application form
- You have a valid CAS.

To help you check your new application and supporting documents, you may want to attend a Tier 4 Group Advice Session, run by the Advice and Counselling Service (see below).

If your application has been incorrectly returned as invalid

If your application is returned as invalid, but the reason given is not correct or not clear, you can contact a Welfare Adviser who may be able to seek clarification from the UK Border Agency.

My application has been refused. What can I do?

If you are in the UK and your application is refused, you have the following options. It is your decision which option you choose. Please be aware that if you want to formally appeal against a refusal, you must do this before the deadline that is stated in the letter you receive from the UK Border Agency:

Option 1:

You can get legal advice by contacting an immigration solicitor. Make sure that the immigration solicitor you choose is authorised to provide immigration advice and services by the Office for the Immigration Services Commissioner. You can find an immigration solicitor by using the search facility on the Community Legal Advice website: or by calling 0845 345 4345. You can also find an immigration solicitor by using the directory on the Immigration Law Practitioners Association website: or by calling 020 7251 8383. You will normally need to pay for legal advice.

Option 2:

You can bring all of the following documents to the Advice and Counselling Service reception:

- A copy of your tier 4 (G) application form
- A copy of all the documents that you sent with your application
- A copy of the pages in your passport that contain your personal details and the stamps or stickers relating to your studies in the UK
- A copy of the refusal letter that the UK Border Agency sent you

One of our Welfare Advisers will look at these papers and we will email you or call you within five working days to advise you whether you have grounds to appeal against the decision to refuse your application. It is unlikely that you will be able to successfully appeal a decision if you:

- have not completed the application form correctly
- have not provided all of the specified documents or they do not include all of the specified information
- do not meet the specified requirements in order to score the required points e.g. you have not had the specified maintenance funds for the specified period

If you do not have valid grounds to appeal against the refusal, you will normally have to make a new application or, if your permission to stay in the UK as a student has expired, return to your home country and apply again from there. If you overstay in the UK for longer than 28 days, you will not be able to apply to return to the UK for one year.

Option 3:

You can telephone UKCISA, the UK Council for International Students, for advice about your situation. We advise you to have the documents listed above with you when you telephone, so that you can refer to them.

The UKCISA advice line is open Monday to Friday, 1-4pm: +44 (0)20 7107 9922

For more information, see their website: www.ukcisa.org.uk

Where can I get further information and assistance?

If you follow these guidance notes and you read the UK Border Agency Tier 4 of the Points Based System – Policy Guidance you should be able to make the application by yourself.

Tier 4 Group Advice Sessions (students in the UK only)

For students applying in the UK, we run advice sessions to help you check your application before you send it. If possible, try to attend a session the month before your immigration permission expires. It can take several weeks to fill in the Tier 4 (G) application form properly and to collect all the documents you need, so start preparing early.

At the advice session you can:

- check that you have completed your application form correctly,
- check that you have all the documents you need to apply,
- ask questions about your individual application, and
- finalise your application so that it is ready for you to send to the UK Border Agency.

You must complete all the steps in this leaflet and bring your completed application form and all the documents to the advice session.

Please check our website for the dates and times of the advice sessions. Booking is essential. To book your place, contact our reception in person or by phone (020 7882 8717) or via our website

www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk

If your circumstances are unusual (for example, you missed part of your course or you have taken time out of your studies), please speak to the Welfare Adviser at the end of the session and they will tell you if you need extra advice.

Information provided by UKCISA

You can also read further guidance on how to make a Tier 4 (G) application from the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) www.ukcisa.org.uk

You can also call their free advice line for answers to specific queries (open Monday to Friday, 1-4pm) on +44 (0)20 7107 9922



Mile End Campus

- ① Queens' Building
- ② Toward mile End Station
- ③ Towards Stepney Green Station
- ④ Advice and Counselling, Geography Building

Other advice guides published by the Advice and Counselling Service include:

- Banking - a guide for international and EU students
- Student Finance for home and EU students
- Managing your budget
- Council Tax
- Extra money for disability and ill health
- Extenuating circumstances
- Applying for Tier 4 (General) Student immigration permission
- Postgraduate funding
- International Students: Your finances during your course
- Resitting, interrupting or leaving your course - a guide for home and EU students
- Resitting, interrupting or leaving your course - a guide for international students'
- Childcare
- Money for lone parents
- Part-time and vacation work
- Additional sources of funding for home and EU undergraduates
- What Immigration permission do I need to study at QM?

You can download up-to-date versions of all our advice guides from our website:

www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk/leaflets

**For further information contact:
Advice and Counselling Service
Student and Campus Services
Queen Mary, University of London
Mile End Road
London
E1 4NS
Tel: +44 (0)20 7882 8717
Fax: +44 (0)20 7882 7013
www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk**