

We are delighted that you have chosen to study at Queen's University Belfast. This leaflet provides some brief information about the United Kingdom Visas & Immigration (UKVI) Points Based System (PBS) immigration rules and some basic information about applying for a visa.

## 1. What is the Points-Based System (PBS)?

The PBS reflects UK immigration rules and includes the concept of Sponsorship, in which education providers must be licensed by the UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) department of the Home Office. Queen's University has a Sponsor Licence to sponsor Tier 4 (General) Student visas. All non-EU/EEA/Swiss foreign nationals whose primary purpose is to come to study in the UK for six months or more are now required to score points in different eligibility categories in order to be granted a visa to enter the UK borders. There are five tiers – student visas are Tier 4. PBS also requires Sponsors to record, and when necessary, report specific information about students who have a Tier 4 visa (see Section 7 for more information).

## 2. Student visa options

The following are brief details on the various types of student visas for which you can apply:

### Points Based System (PBS) Tier 4 (General) Student Visa:

If your course is six months or longer and is undergraduate or postgraduate you must apply for a Tier 4 (General) student visa. You can apply for a Tier 4 visa for some courses which are under six months in duration. With a Tier 4 visa you can normally work in the UK and extend or change your visa route without leaving the UK. For full student guidance on Tier 4 go to: <https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa>

### Short-Term Student Visa:

You can apply as a short-term student visa if you are 18 years old or over, you want to come to the United Kingdom to do a course for up to six months, and you do not want to work while you are here. You will not require a CAS for this type of visa application but you will need a Short-Term Student Visa letter.

Some non-visa nationals do not need a prior Entry Clearance visa to enter the UK to study for courses which are up to six months. However, we recommend that all of our international students obtain a prior Entry Clearance visa prior to coming to the UK. If you decide not to apply for an Entry Clearance visa before coming to the UK, please be aware that you **MUST** enter through a UK port of entry (see 'Port of Entry Stamp').

You will not be able to switch and apply for a Tier 4 Student visa while you are in the United Kingdom as a short-term student visa holder. If you want to apply for a Tier 4 Student visa, you must apply from the country you live in.

### Dependants:

Students who are coming to do a postgraduate course of 12 months or more in length, or Government-sponsored students, can bring their families to the UK as their dependants. If this is the case, family members must apply for a PBS Dependant visa. Details can be found at: <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Immigration-/Dependants/> Your family and friends can come to visit you in the UK for less than six months, and if they wish to do so they should apply for a visitor visa.

### Port of Entry Stamp:

We recommend that you arrive via a UK 'port of entry' such as Heathrow, Gatwick, Belfast, or Manchester. When your visa is issued to you it grants you entry clearance to arrive in the UK. When you enter a UK port of entry your visa will then be stamped by an immigration officer granting you leave to enter the UK. This stamp is very important as it activates your visa. If you come via the Republic of Ireland you will not receive this stamp and you may not be deemed as having a right to remain in the UK, and therefore, to study. If you are planning to arrive in the Republic of Ireland you must contact our International Student Support Team for further advice (See section 8).

For details go to:

<http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/When-you-arrive/Arriving-via-Republic-of-Ireland/>

## 3. Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

Some programmes require an ATAS certificate. The Admissions and Access Service will inform you if you need an ATAS certificate and provide you with the necessary information to enable you to apply for this. An ATAS certificate is free of charge and takes up to 20 working days to receive. **You must have this before you can apply for your visa:** therefore, if you need to, you should apply for your ATAS certificate as soon as possible (see Section 8).

## 4. Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

- When you apply for a Tier 4 visa you must include a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number.

- Queen's may ask for additional information on your immigration history before we issue your CAS if you have ever studied before in the UK
- Once we have checked this, Queen's will send your CAS details when **you accept an unconditional offer** of a place to study at Queen's, but we will not send it to you any earlier than six months before the start of your course. However, it is essential that you reply to your offer as soon as possible. Please note that applicants for postgraduate taught programmes must pay a tuition fee deposit before a CAS can be issued.
- The CAS number will be included in a letter called a '**CAS Statement**'. This will have important information needed for your visa application including:
  - Details of any deposits paid or reference to any scholarships or stipends awarded;
  - The University's Sponsor Licence number;
  - Details of the information the University provided on your CAS about your entry qualifications which were used to make a decision to offer you a place. You must include the original documents (certificates and/or transcripts) when you apply for your visa as evidence to verify your qualifications.

We recommend that you use the CAS Statement with your visa application as it gives your CAS number and course details.

- **You will be sent guidance on how to apply for your visa by International Student Support shortly after you receive your CAS statement.** You must read the visa application guidance provided to you very carefully and take original documents specified to your visa appointment.
- Your visa application and the CAS information **must** show your name as it is written in your passport.
- The CAS must be used within six months of it being issued to you.
- **You cannot apply for your visa more than three months before the start date of your course.**
- The start date will normally be defined as the start date of the Orientation Programme for International Students or the date your classes start. If you plan to arrive on a different date you must let us know. This is **very important** as we must inform UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) if you do not arrive on time (see Section 7).
- When your visa is issued to you it will include our University name and our Sponsor Licence number.
- You can have a CAS from a number of Universities but you can only use one to apply for your visa. This must be the CAS issued by the University which provides the programme you will study. You must therefore be sure **where** you want to study.
- If you use the CAS from Queen's and, before you travel to the UK, change your mind and want to study

at another University, you must tell us so we can inform UKVI and you must re-apply for your visa with a CAS from a different Sponsor.

- If you use the CAS from Queen's and arrive in the UK and then change your mind and want to study at another University, you must tell us so that we can tell UKVI – they will then curtail your visa. You will need to re-apply for a new visa in the UK with your new Sponsor. You may not be able to start studying at your new University until UKVI make a decision about your application, depending on the status of the institution in which you want to study. Rules about academic progression mean it is harder to change to a different course at the same level of study. Full information on this can be found in the Tier 4 Policy Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>
- You may be invited to an in-person visa interview. If this happens, you must be sure to know lots of details about your course, including information about the modules.
- If you will be in the UK for more than 6 months, it is likely that you will also be required to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge at the time of application, which is currently charged at £150 per year of study. More information will be provided with the detailed guidance on applying for your visa.

**When you receive your CAS statement you must tell us:** by emailing the Admissions and Access Service, see section 8 for details.

- (1) **If any information is not accurate; and**
- (2) **if you later pay any deposits to Queen's**

## **5. Applicants already in the UK**

If you are currently in the UK and want to stay as a Tier 4 student, you must make a Leave to Remain application using the services of International Student Support to check and send your application to UKVI. You may also be able to switch into Tier 4 from another visa category. If you are already in the UK, you must contact International Student Support as soon as possible. They will be happy to help and advise you with your application.

If you are currently studying at Queen's, and will be starting a new course at Queen's please contact us for advice about your visa as soon as possible. You must have a visa that relates to the course you are studying – you will need a new visa for a new course.

## **6. Documents you must bring to Queen's**

You need to ensure that you bring your **original documents to verify your qualifications** when you come to register as a student at Queen's. Your immigration documents (passport, visa and ATAS certificate if you have one) will be copied and checked to make sure you have the right to study in the UK before you can start your course.

You will also need original copies of the qualification that is identified on your CAS (and translation if applicable) to complete registration with the University.

## **7. Sponsor obligations**

The following outlines key Sponsor obligations which Queen's University is required to undertake as a Sponsor:

### **Recording (includes):**

- Keep a record of your passport and visa(s)/immigration documents;
- Keep an up-to-date record of your address in the UK including your email address and telephone number(s);
- Keep a copy of your ATAS certificate (if applicable)

### **Reporting (includes):**

- Inform the UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) department of the Home Office if you defer your studies before arriving in the UK;
- Inform UKVI if you do not arrive on the expected date to start your course;
- Monitor your attendance and inform UKVI if you miss expected contact points;
- Inform UKVI if you change or withdraw from your studies;
- Inform UKVI if you change to another Sponsor or change your visa status;
- Inform UKVI if you breach any of the conditions of your visa



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

**Studying at Queen's: Visas  
and the Points Based  
System**

**October 2017**

## **Important contact details**

### **International Student Support:**

[iss@qub.ac.uk](mailto:iss@qub.ac.uk)

### **Admissions and Access Service:**

[intl.student@qub.ac.uk](mailto:intl.student@qub.ac.uk)

### **UKVI – visas for studying in the UK:**

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/study-visas>

### **Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS):**

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/services-we-deliver/atas/>