



QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

Studying at Queen's: Study Visa Options

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If you are a non EU/EEA/Swiss national, you will require a visa to study in the UK. This guide provides some basic information about applying for your visa overseas and the different types of visas that are available.



International Student Support
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

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The information provided in this guide is based on current UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) guidance. This guidance may change at any time if there are changes to the UK Immigration Rules. Always check relevant UKVI guidance to ensure that your visa application complies with current immigration legislation. You can also refer to the International Student Support (ISS) website and UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) website which is updated regularly for students.

TIER 4 (GENERAL) STUDENT VISA

Tier 4 (General) Student is a category under Tier 4 of the UK Immigration Points Based System (PBS). Queen's University has a Sponsor Licence to sponsor Tier 4 (General) Student visas. If you are coming to study in the UK on a main course of study for **more than six months** you must apply for a Tier 4 (General) student visa. This route can also be used in some instances for students who want to study for less than six months e.g. students coming to study on a pre-session English course or students coming for a Study Abroad programme for one semester. You must score points in different eligibility categories in order to be granted a Tier 4 (General) student visa. With a Tier 4 visa you can normally work in the UK and extend your Tier 4 visa without leaving the UK, as long as you are studying on a full-time course.

Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

When you apply for a Tier 4 visa you must have a **Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)** number. This will be issued to you by Queen's once you have met certain conditions including: you must have accepted an unconditional offer of a place to study at Queen's before CAS can be issued; if you have ever studied before in the UK, you must provide additional information about your immigration history; and applicants for postgraduate taught programmes must pay a tuition fee deposit before CAS can be issued.

Your CAS number will be included in your 'CAS Statement'. Your CAS statement will be emailed to you once you have met the conditions and are deemed eligible for a CAS. Depending on your course of study, you will receive your CAS statement from:

- **Queen's University Admissions and Access Service:** intl.student@qub.ac.uk
or
- **Queen's University Global Opportunities Team:** studyabroad@qub.ac.uk

Your CAS statement contains essential information you will need to fill in your Tier 4 visa application, including:

- The University's Sponsor Licence number;
- Your course title, course level and course start/end dates
- Details of your course fees and any deposits paid or any scholarships or stipends awarded;
- Details of your entry qualifications ('evidence used to obtain offer' section of CAS) which were used to make the decision to offer you a place.
- **Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS):**
Some courses will require you to have an ATAS certificate. Your CAS will state if this is applicable for you. The Admissions and Access Service will also inform you if you need this and provide you with the necessary information to enable you to apply for it. An ATAS certificate is free of charge and takes up to 20 working days to receive. You must have the certificate before you can apply for your visa therefore you should apply for your ATAS certificate as soon as possible. For further guidance about ATAS go to: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme>

Check your CAS statement carefully and let us know if any information is not accurate. Let us know if you have paid any further course fees since your CAS was issued. We will be able to update this information on your CAS statement before you make your visa application. If you change your mind about your course, or your circumstances change after you make your visa application or after you have arrived in the UK, you must inform International Student Support (ISS) at immigration@qub.ac.uk straight away. ISS will make any necessary reports to UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) and will also be able to provide you with further immigration advice.

Applying for Tier 4 Entry Clearance Visa Overseas

When you apply for a Tier 4 visa **overseas** you are applying for Entry Clearance. You must apply online in the country where you live. You cannot apply for your visa more than three months before the start date of your course. You must submit certain documents with your application including your original certificates/transcripts of your academic qualifications and financial evidence to prove that you have sufficient funds to meet the Tier 4 maintenance requirement. Certain nationalities will also be required to take a tuberculosis (TB) test if they are coming to the UK for more than six months. Visit the UKVI website for further information about TB tests at <https://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa>.

For further information from UKVI about how to apply for a Tier 4 visa, the documents you must provide, and to access the link to the online application form visit <https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/apply>. You should also read the Tier 4 Migrant Guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student> to ensure that your application complies with the UK Immigration Rules.

ISS will also email you guidance on your **Entry Clearance Tier 4 Student Visa Application** shortly after you receive your CAS statement. This guidance will help to ensure that you submit a correct application. Visit the **ISS website** at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/iss/VisasandImmigration/> where you can download the Entry Clearance guide along with guidance on how to fill in your Tier 4 visa application form. We also recommend that you use your CAS statement for reference when you are filling in your visa application form.

Find out current visa application fees at <https://www.gov.uk/visa-fees>. If you are going to be in the UK for more than 6 months, you will also be required to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) at the time of application. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/how-much-pay> for further information.

The standard processing time for a Tier 4 application overseas is three weeks, however this may vary depending on what country you are in. For current visa processing times in your country visit <https://www.gov.uk/visa-processing-times>. You may be invited to a face-to-face visa interview at a local Visa Application Centre (VAC) as part of the application process. If this happens, you must be sure to know lots of details about your course, including information about the modules.

If your visa application is successful, you will receive a 30-day visa 'vignette' in your passport. This will enable you to travel to the UK. Once you have arrived in the UK you must collect your **Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)** from the designated collection point within ten days of your arrival. Your BRP is your full visa. If you want to collect your BRP from Queen's, make sure you enter the Queen's **Alternative Collection Location (ACL) Code ZHE572** in your visa application.

Applying for Tier 4 Leave to Remain visa in the UK

If you are currently in the UK as a Tier 4 student and you want to remain as a Tier 4 student, you may be permitted to make a Tier 4 Leave to Remain visa application in the UK. Contact ISS at immigration@qub.ac.uk for advice about extending your visa in the UK. If you are eligible to extend your visa in the UK, ISS will assist you with your visa application. If you are currently studying a course at Queen's as a Tier 4 student and you wish to start a new course of study at Queen's, contact ISS for advice about whether you can make an application in the UK. If you are currently in the UK under a different visa category and you would like to switch into the Tier 4 category contact ISS for advice about whether or not this is permitted.

Tier 4 Terms & Conditions

When you accept your unconditional offer you will agree to the Queen's University Terms and Conditions for Tier 4 students, which you can find at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/iss/Filestore>. As a Tier 4 sponsor, Queen's University is required by UKVI to carry out certain recording and reporting responsibilities in relation to Tier 4 students. These include keeping a record of your passport and visa/immigration documents; keeping an up-to-date record of your contact details in the UK, and keeping a copy of your ATAS certificate (if applicable). Queen's is also obliged to inform UKVI if you defer your studies before arriving in the UK or if you do not arrive on the expected date to start your course. Queen's will monitor your attendance in class for the duration of your course and will inform UKVI if you miss expected contact points, if you change or withdraw from your studies, if you change to another Sponsor or change your visa status, or if you breach any of the conditions of your visa.

Tier 4 Dependant Visa

Some Tier 4 students may be able to apply to bring a husband or wife, civil partner or any children under 18 with them to the UK as dependants. To be eligible, the Tier 4 student must be government-sponsored on a full-time course of study which is longer than six months OR a postgraduate student on a full-time course of study which is twelve months or longer. For further information from UKVI about applying as a Tier 4 dependant, visit <https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/family-members> or the UKCISA website at <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Dependants>. You can also email ISS at immigration@qub.ac.uk for further advice about bringing your dependants to the UK.

Tier 4 Pilot Scheme

If you are starting on a Master's programme at Queen's University in or after September 2018 and the programme is less than 13 months in duration, you will automatically be considered for a slightly longer Tier 4 visa which will allow you to stay in the UK for 6 months after your programme ends. This is a UK Home Office scheme and Queen's University is one of only 23 universities in the UK that have been selected to participate in the scheme. You can find out more information about this scheme on the ISS website at <https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/iss/>.

SHORT TERM STUDY VISA

This is a visa route option for students who are coming to the UK to study a short programme for **less than six months** (for example on a Study Abroad or Exchange programme) that does not include a work placement or work experience. Students can also use this route if they wish to study an English language course up to 11 months long. You are not permitted to work or bring family members (dependants) with you under this route and you cannot extend this visa. You will not require a CAS for this type of visa application but you will need a **Short-Term Student Visa letter**. This visa letter will usually be issued to you from the Queen's University Global Opportunities team or International Student Support team. The letter will be posted in hard copy to your home address. Students are not permitted to switch and apply for a Tier 4 Student visa whilst in the UK as a short-term student visa holder. If you want to apply for a Tier 4 Student visa, you must return home and apply from the country where you live.

Visa Nationals and Non-Visa Nationals

How and where you apply for a Short-Term Study will depend whether you are a (A) **Visa national** or a (B) **Non-visa national**.

(A) Visa national

A visa national is a national of a country that is required to apply **in advance of travelling** for a visa to come to the UK for whatever purpose they intend and for any length of time. To check if you require a visa before you travel to the UK visit <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa>.

(B) Non-visa national

A non-visa national is a national of a country (for example USA, Canada, Japan, South Korea and Australia etc.) who may apply in advance for a multiple entry visa to come to the UK **OR** may choose to apply for a Short-Term Study single entry immigration permission when they arrive at a UK Port of Entry (i.e. a UK airport). We always recommend that you obtain a visa **before** you travel to the UK to ensure you do not face any travel complications. However, if you do not have enough time to apply for a short-term study visa before you travel, it is acceptable for a non-visa national to apply for this immigration permission at a UK port of entry (i.e. a UK airport).

Applying for the Short Term Study Visa

When applying for a short-term study visa you must ensure that you submit the required supporting documents with your application:

- original hard copy **short-term student visa letter** issued from Queen's
- A valid passport
- Two passport photographs

- Several months' bank statements showing that you have enough money to support yourself during your stay in the UK. We recommend showing evidence of around £1015 per month of your visit.
- Evidence of where you will be staying in Belfast for your studies (if you have reserved University accommodation we will confirm this in your visa letter).
- Evidence that you intend to return home at the end of your studies, i.e. return ticket (or enough money to buy a plane ticket)

If applying for a short term study visa **in advance** of travelling to the UK you must complete and pay for the online application, submit the above supporting documents and you will need to have your fingerprints and photograph taken at a Visa Application Centre (VAC) as part of your application. The application fee for the short term study visa is £97 (or equivalent in your local currency) when you apply for the visa in advance.

There is no charge if you are a non-visa national and you apply at a UK airport. The standard application processing time is three weeks; however we recommend that you do not book your flights to the UK until your visa has been granted. For further information from UKVI about applying for the short term study visa visit <https://www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa/apply>

TRAVELLING TO THE UK

We strongly recommend that you arrive in the UK via a **UK port of entry** e.g. Belfast, London Heathrow, Manchester etc. When your visa is issued to you overseas it grants you entry clearance to arrive in the UK. When you enter a UK port of entry your visa will be stamped by a UK immigration officer. This stamp is very important as it activates your visa. If you come via the Republic of Ireland e.g. Dublin, you will **not** receive this stamp as the Republic of Ireland is **not** part of the UK. You may not be deemed as having a right to remain in the UK, and therefore, you will not have the right to study.

If you are a non-visa national and intend to apply for immigration permission at a UK Port of Entry you **MUST** arrive via a UK port of entry in order to obtain a UK short-term study visa endorsement in your passport. If you are a non-visa national and you are intending to arrive via the Republic of Ireland (e.g. Dublin) and then travel onwards to the UK, you **MUST** apply for a Short-term study Visa **BEFORE** you travel.

Arriving in the UK via the Republic of Ireland

Non-visa nationals who arrive into Dublin intending to get short-term study immigration permission for the UK are frequently receiving **48-hour** transit immigration permission. This type of immigration permission does **NOT** permit students to study in the UK. **Students will not be permitted to register on their course at Queen's on the basis of a transit stamp.** To correct this, students must fly out of the UK to a European country (excluding the Republic of Ireland) and re-enter the UK via a UK airport. When they arrive back into the UK they must provide the required documentation explaining they are a student to ensure they receive the correct short-term study immigration endorsement in their passport. For this reason, we strongly advise that students fly into a **UK airport** to avoid this situation. For further details about arriving via the Republic of Ireland visit UKCISA website at www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Arriving-via-Ireland

CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

International Student Support: immigration@qub.ac.uk

for immigration advice and further information about visa requirements

Admissions and Access Service: intl.student@qub.ac.uk

for further information about your course offer and issue of your CAS statement

Global Opportunities Team: studyabroad@qub.ac.uk

for further information about Exchange & Study Abroad programme and your short term student visa letter.

For further information about all of the available visa options visit the UKCISA website at
<https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/>