

Information Notes for Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur

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Introduction

This guide is for candidates who have been interviewed by the University's Tier 1 Panel and been recommended for endorsement under Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur. If you have not yet made an application to the Tier 1 Panel please refer to our webpages for further information and guidance:

<https://www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/tier-1-graduate-entrepreneur>

This document is to provide an overview of endorsement under the scheme to help you consider and prepare your visa application, and explain the conditions you must adhere to whilst endorsed by the University.

NB while this information is accurate, to the best of our knowledge, at the time of writing, the immigration rules and guidance change and we may not be able to inform you directly of any changes that may affect you and your visa application. Please familiarise yourself with the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur information and Policy Guidance on the gov.uk website: www.gov.uk/tier-1-graduate-entrepreneur-visa/overview

International Student Office

The International Student Office, based in Student Operations, administers the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur scheme at the University. We are also authorised to provide students with visa advice and have a responsibility for ensuring institutional compliance under Tier 4 and any related schemes.

If you have any questions about endorsement under Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur, please contact us at international.students@admin.cam.ac.uk

Endorsement process overview

Once the interview panel has approved endorsement of your business idea, in order to proceed with a visa application under Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur, you will need to complete and sign the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur declaration. The University will then issue you with a letter of endorsement. If you have been awarded your degree we issue the letter when we confirm endorsement. Otherwise, if we recommend endorsement, pending outcome of your degree, we will issue the letter soon after the date of award.

You cannot apply for your Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa before receiving your letter of endorsement

Once you receive the letter of endorsement, you must apply within three months of the date on the letter, or, if you are applying in the UK, before your current visa expires, whichever is sooner.

The Home Office allows you to work on your business venture only when you have submitted your application.

Sign the declaration for Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur endorsement

After the International Student Office receives confirmation that the panel has recommended you for endorsement under this scheme you will receive an email attachment with the Tier 1 GE declaration. This document sets out the terms and conditions of receiving endorsement from the University as outlined on pages 4&5 of this document and by signing the declaration you agree to those conditions.

In order to receive your endorsement letter you must first sign and return the declaration by email to the International Student Office.

Prepare to apply for your visa

- Decide whether to apply for your visa from inside or outside the UK, and familiarise yourself with the application process and requirements as detailed on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk). The application cost is £363 outside the UK and £493 within the UK.
- If applying in the UK, ensure your visa is valid at the time of your application, if your visa has expired contact the International Student Office immediately. You can only apply for a Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa if your current visa is Tier 4 or Tier 2 (post-doctoral researcher sponsored by the University).
- Ensure you have the financial documentation to meet the specific requirements of the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa. See information in the 'Maintenance' section.
- If you are going to be in the UK with dependant family members, ensure you are familiar with the [PBS Dependant Guidance](#). The application fee for any dependants is £363 for applications made outside of the UK and £493 for those made inside the UK.
- If you are currently sponsored by a Government or international scholarship agency, or such scholarship ended in the past 12 months, you must obtain and provide written consent from your sponsor giving their unconditional consent for you to remain in the UK. Without this, your visa application will be unsuccessful.

- Provide all the documents specified, and in the format stated; otherwise, your application is likely to be refused.
- Only send the documents required by the Home Office.

When and how to apply for your visa

The Home Office requires you to apply within three months of the date on your letter of endorsement and whilst your visa is valid if you are applying in the UK. As you cannot start working on your business venture until you have submitted your Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa application, we expect you to apply shortly after receiving your degree award and endorsement letter.

You will need to apply for your visa online and then have your biometric information taken at an application centre.

To be successful, your application must score 95 points: 75 points for 'Attributes'; 10 points for 'English Language', and 10 points for 'Maintenance'. The letter of endorsement awards you both the 75 points for Attributes and 10 points for English Language. You must then provide the evidence to achieve the remaining 10 points for Maintenance.

If applying for your Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa from within the UK you should note that there is no priority or super priority service available. The advertised processing time using the standard service is 8 weeks, and you cannot travel outside the UK during this time.

Please keep the International Student Office updated with the progress of your visa application.

Maintenance

The Home Office determines the amount and documents you need to supply to show that you can support yourself during your time in the UK. The amount you need to show depends on whether you are applying from outside or within the UK:

- If you are applying outside of the UK, you need to demonstrate you have at least **£1,890**.
- If you are applying in the UK you must show that you hold at least **£945**.

Irrespective of where you make the application, your financial documentation must demonstrate that you have held the funds for a consecutive 90 day period, ending not more than 31 days before the date of application. The funds must be in personal savings as cash funds. You cannot use another person's funds as evidence and this includes your parents. Please see the [Tier 1 Policy Guidance](#) for further information about the documentation that can be used to meet the financial requirement.

Failure of the applicant to meet the Home Office's financial requirements is one of the most common reasons for visa application refusals. Ensure you do not make one of the common mistakes outlined below:

- Submitting bank statements that are too old
- Submitting bank statements for accounts where the funds are not accessible
- Submitting bank statements that do not evidence that the required funds have been in the account constantly throughout the required 90-day period

- Showing evidence of the wrong amount of money
- Using a bank statement of a relative.
- Failing to allow time to organise finances before submitting the visa application
- Submitting evidence of non-cash funds, e.g. shares, bonds
- Relying on frozen funds.

If you are applying with dependants, you will need to ensure that, in addition to the financial requirements for Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur, you are also able to meet the dependant financial requirements as outlined in the [PBS Dependant Policy Guidance](#).

Immigration Healthcare Surcharge

You will have to pay the Immigration Healthcare Surcharge as part of your visa application, this is also referred to as the 'IHS payment'. When making your Tier 1 GE application online you pay the surcharge as part of the application, if you apply through a premium service centre you pay the surcharge when you book an appointment.

The IHS is calculated at £400 for the first year of the Tier 1 GE route. You would also need to pay the IHS fee for any dependants you will be including in your application.

Outcome of application

The Home Office ultimately decides on whether to grant you the visa.

If granted, your visa should be valid for one year. Generally the Home Office does not inform the University directly of the outcome of your application. Therefore you must notify the International Student Office as soon as you receive the decision and you will be required to bring in your visa so we can copy the original for our records.

If the Home Office refuses your application, you must inform the International Student Office immediately. Please note that it is unlikely the University will be able to support a further visa application. This is because the University is given a limited number of endorsements by the Home Office each year and once an endorsement has been submitted with a visa application, it cannot be used again.

Conditions of endorsement

The University is pleased to sponsor you as a Graduate Entrepreneur, but you need to be aware that there are certain conditions attached to your visa as detailed below. It is very important that you fully understand and comply with these responsibilities. If you fail to comply, the Home Office requires the University to report this, which may result in the curtailment of your visa.

These conditions apply once you receive your new visa and remain until that visa expires or date curtailed.

- Start your venture only after making your Tier 1 application.
- Spend majority of time in the UK in order to work on the business

- Maintain at least quarterly contact with your appointed University representative. Please read the further detail on this which can be found on the next page.
- Actively work on developing your business in the UK. Your University representative will assess progress at each contact.
- Keep to the conditions of your leave.
- Do not claim UK state benefits.
- Update your [Police Registration Certificate](#) if required.
- Do not take employment as a Doctor or Dentist in training or professional sports person (including a sports coach).
- Inform the Home Office of any 'change in your circumstances' (e.g. change in contact details, dependants' details, your name, nationality, appearance).
- Apply for a new Biometric Residence Permit if yours is lost, stolen or damaged

The Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur declaration provides further details of the terms and conditions of being endorsed by the University

Quarterly Contacts

It is a condition of your endorsement that you maintain quarterly contact with your University representative. The Home Office requires these contacts for compliance purposes and you will use these sessions to discuss the progress of your business. The University contact will also determine whether the business is making satisfactory progress in order to be supported for a further 12 months.

Applicants endorsed on or after 1 January 2018 are required to make arrangements to meet with the University contact in January, April, July and October, the first of which should take place once a visa application has been submitted. All contacts must be in-person.

The University is required to inform the Home Office if you have missed a scheduled contact, it is therefore very important that if you are unable to make an agreed contact you must inform the University representative, explaining why an alternative date is required, you should also copy the International Student Office into this correspondence.

Extension process

After one year, the Home Office allows you to apply for one further year to remain in the UK under the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur scheme. This requires further endorsement from the University and we must assess that you are making satisfactory progress in developing your business. Therefore, at your fourth contact, you are given the opportunity to be considered and you may be asked to give a presentation to a panel.