Your responsibilities under Tier 4

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Introduction

This document explains the responsibilities of a full-time student sponsored by the University of Cambridge for a Tier 4 visa and provides guidance on protecting your immigration status in the UK. It is important that you understand and comply with the responsibilities of your student visa and co-operate with the University in fulfilling our shared Tier 4 duties. Any breach could have serious implications on your studies and continued stay in the UK. In using the University’s CAS to apply for your Tier 4 visa, you agree to the requirements outlined in this document.

If you are a visiting student not affiliated to a College your host Faculty or Department undertakes the role of the College as described in this document.

Please note that the immigration rules and guidance are liable to change. The most up to date version of this guide is available online at www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/tier-4-responsibilities. The current Tier 4 Policy Guidance can be accessed via www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa.
International Student Office
The International Student Office provides a visa advice service to applicants and students and has a responsibility for ensuring institutional Tier 4 compliance. They can advise on queries relating to the conditions of a Tier 4 visa and should be contacted for information on how a change in your circumstances may have implications for your immigration status in the UK. Email international.students@admin.cam.ac.uk.

Your BRP

The Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) is the documentary evidence of your immigration permission in the UK. It is a credit-card sized document and contains your personal and biometric information. It is very important you keep it secure. You must take it with you if you travel overseas as you will require it to re-enter the UK, and may need it for flights within the UK. You do not need to carry this or your passport around with you in the UK.

If you applied for your Tier 4 visa overseas prior to April 2015, your visa will have been issued as a vignette in your passport and you would not have a BRP.

Collecting your BRP if you apply for your visa outside the UK
When you receive a successful decision on your visa application, you will be issued a 30 day entry vignette in your passport. You must ensure that you enter the UK during this 30 day period. If the 30 days expire, you will need to apply for a new permit from overseas at an additional cost.

You will need to collect your BRP within 10 days of arriving in the UK and prior to commencing your course. The collection point will either be the University, if you have used the relevant code in your application, or from the Post Office. This will be confirmed in the decision letter you receive after your visa application has been processed. Further information on collecting your BRP is available at www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/collecting-your-visa-brp.

Receiving your BRP if you apply for your visa inside the UK
If you apply for further leave to remain inside the UK, your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) will be sent to the address you use in the application form.

Checking your visa

It is a Home Office requirement to have any errors on your visa corrected.

Your BRP should contain the following information:

- **Type of Permit**: T4 GENERAL STUDENT
- **WORK 20HRS MAX IN TERM-TIME**
- **4NUV7KB58 (University of Cambridge sponsor licence number)**
If this information is missing or there are any other errors on your BRP with your name, personal details or the length of permission granted, please contact the International Student Office who will be able to advise you on getting it corrected.

The length of leave granted on a Tier 4 visa depends on the course. You should check your CAS course end date and ensure you have been granted the correct length of leave:

- the length of the course plus four months for undergraduate and PhD courses;
- the length of the course plus six months for Masters courses of 13 months or less, under the Tier 4 visa pilot;
- the length of the course plus four months for Masters courses lasting more than 13 months;
- the length of the course plus two months for other courses lasting less than 12 months, e.g. exchange students.

**On arrival**

**If you applied for your Tier 4 visa from outside the UK**
You will need to report to your College Tutorial Office and present your original passport and BRP before you start your studies. You will also need to provide evidence of when you entered the UK, which for most will be the entry stamp marked on the 30 day vignette in your passport by immigration control. Evidence of your flight (e.g. boarding pass) will be required in the absence of this stamp. Students on the ADTIS programme, preparatory economics course, MFin and MBA must present passports and immigration documentation at their course induction.

**If you applied for your Tier 4 visa in the UK**
If you currently hold a Tier 4 visa for a different Tier 4 sponsor, you cannot use that visa to study at Cambridge. A Tier 4 visa allows you to study a particular course at one Tier 4 Sponsor only. If you hold a Tier 4 visa for another institution, and you wish to make your new Tier 4 application for Cambridge inside the UK, you can only start your course after you have presented either a new Tier 4 BRP showing the University of Cambridge Tier 4 sponsor licence number or provided evidence that you have submitted an in-time application for a new Tier 4 visa for Cambridge.

You can start your studies at your own risk based on evidence of having applied for a new Tier 4 visa for Cambridge but you will need to keep your College up to date with the progress of your visa application and take your new BRP for copying when received. If your visa application is unsuccessful, you must notify the International Student Office immediately.

If you have completed one course at the University of Cambridge and are continuing to a further degree here, in line with Tier 4 policy you must apply for a new Tier 4 visa within six weeks of your new course start date or before your leave expires, whichever is earlier. You must provide evidence to your College which confirms you have submitted your new visa application.
Police Registration

Nationals from the following countries are required to register with the police after arrival in the UK: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Georgia, Hong Kong, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Palestine, Peru, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Stateless or travelling on a non-national document (i.e. Travel Document).

When you register with the police, you will be issued with a police registration certificate. It is important you keep this document in a safe place. You do not need to carry it around with you in Cambridge.

New to the UK
For students new to the UK starting their studies in Michaelmas Term, police registration is available at the University at the start of term on certain days but appointments must be booked in advance. If you do not have an appointment for police registration at the University or you are starting in Lent or Easter term, you will need to book an appointment with the Parkside Police Station in Cambridge. You must book an appointment in advance by emailing OVRD@cambs.pnn.police.uk.

To register you will need your passport, Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), the decision letter notifying you of your successful visa application and two passport size photographs. There is a charge of £34 which must be paid in cash. You will also need to complete the Registration Form which you should try and complete before registering on the day.

Previously studied in the UK
If you have previously studied in the UK but have changed address and/or obtained a new BRP, you will need to attend Parkside Police Station in Cambridge to update your details. You will need to take your passport, Certificate of Registration and BRP. You do not need an appointment.

Reporting changes of circumstances
You must also ensure that you update the police within seven days if you: change address during your studies; obtain a new BRP; renew your passport; get married; or if any of the other details on your Police Registration Certificate change.

Contact Details
You are required to keep your UK contact details up-to-date on your student record throughout your studies. This includes both your residential address and telephone number. You can update your details via CamSIS self-service or by informing your College of any changes.
Termly Registration

You will need to make termly registration at your College for the duration of your course*.

This means you must:

- report to your College Tutorial Office in person within seven working days of the start of each Full Term unless, owing to exceptional circumstances, prior agreement has been given for an alternative registration date;
- sign against your name, confirming that you are engaged with study and are abiding by the terms of your Tier 4 visa; and
- check that your contact details on your record remain current and that you have informed your College of any changes to your immigration status.

If you fail to register as required, and have not been permitted to defer your contact, the University must cease Tier 4 sponsorship and report this to the Home Office in accordance with the University’s Tier 4 compliance responsibilities. Action will also be considered if it is identified that a student is not engaging with their studies as expected.

If the University formally approves a period of study or research overseas during your course, you can continue to be sponsored under Tier 4 during this period. The termly contact remains a requirement but you will be able to register by email. If you are granted permission to study or undertake research outside of Cambridge but within the UK during your course, you will be required to return in person to Cambridge for termly registration.

If you are a PhD student you are considered to be studying throughout your time at Cambridge and must continue to attend termly registrations until you are formally approved for your degree, even after the course end date in your CAS has passed.

If you are a visiting student, you must register with your host Faculty or Department upon arrival and then within seven working days of the start of each Full Term for which you are present in Cambridge. Your Faculty or Department will inform you if they have additional requirements or alternative dates.

*Please note students granted a Tier 4 visa for a Masters courses of 13 months or less are exempt from this requirement in 2018/19 and 2019/20 as a concession of the Tier 4 visa pilot.

Working

The Home Office and the University restrict the number of hours a student can work in the UK and the type of work that can be undertaken. It is very important you understand the working conditions and check with the International Student Office if you are unsure prior to commencing any work, paid or unpaid.
University’s working restrictions
The University imposes the following restrictions on work:

- Undergraduate and Masters students are expected not to work during term-time.
- Graduate research students on courses of more than 12 months may, with approval from their Supervisor and College Tutor, work ten hours per week. The work should be academic-related, related to professional or career development, or outreach work on behalf of the University.

Working restrictions on Tier 4 and definition of term and vacation dates
You are expected to abide by the University restrictions as outlined above even though a Tier 4 visa allows you to work for up to 20 hours per week during term-time, paid or unpaid. A Tier 4 visa allows you to work full-time during official vacation periods but term and vacation dates differ depending on your level of study:

- **Undergraduate students** can view term and vacation dates at [www.cam.ac.uk/about-the-university/term-dates-and-calendars](http://www.cam.ac.uk/about-the-university/term-dates-and-calendars).
- **Masters students** should consult with their Faculty or Department on vacation dates for their specific course. These are likely to be limited to short breaks between terms with continuous study during the summer until the end of the course.
- **Graduate research students** on courses of more than 12 months are expected to study throughout the academic year (1 October – 30 September). Whilst breaks for holidays are permitted, at times agreed with your supervisor, these are not periods that would permit full-time work. It is not possible, for example, for a graduate research student to undertake full-time work during the summer period. A work placement or internship is only possible while being sponsored under Tier 4 where it will directly contribute to your research and is approved through the [Leave to Work Away](http://www.cam.ac.uk/about-the-university/term-dates-and-calendars) application procedures. The number of hours you can work after submission of your soft-bound thesis differs depending on what stage you are at in the examination process as outlined at [www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/studying/working-and-studying](http://www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/studying/working-and-studying).

There are also restrictions on the type of work that can be undertaken on a Tier 4 visa. You must not:

- be self-employed;
- engage in business activity;
- take a permanent full-time job;
- be employed as a professional sportsperson including as a sports coach;
- be employed as an entertainer;
- work as a doctor or dentist in training, unless you are on the foundation programme.

Self-employment
A Tier 4 visa does not allow you to be self-employed. Self-employment includes activities such as freelance writing, private tutoring or selling goods or services directly to an end customer. If tax will not be deducted automatically from your wages, it is likely the work being offered is on a self-employed basis.
This means in order to undertake work you should be given a formal document by the employer such as a 'contract of employment' or a 'worker's agreement' or some other written statement confirming your employment status. This includes where you will be undertaking work for one or more of the Colleges, or for the University. Please note you may find that other students (who are not on a Tier 4 visa) may not need to have the same documentation in place.

**Engaging in Business Activity**

If you applied for your Tier 4 immigration permission on or after 6 April 2016, you are not allowed to engage in business activity. The Home Office defines this as working for a business in a capacity other than an employee in which you have a financial or other significant beneficial interest. You would not be permitted, for example, to set up a business that is trading or has a trading presence, be employed by a company in which you hold shares of 10% or more or work for a company where you hold a statutory role, such as a director. This is not an exhaustive list but provides examples of the types of circumstance in which you would be considered to be engaged in business activity.

**Course completion**

Once you have completed your course, the Home Office allows you to work full-time until your Tier 4 visa expiry but the restrictions on the type of work, as outlined above, continue to apply. For PhD students, course completion means receiving the official notification of unconditional approval of degree. For Masters and undergraduate students, course completion means the course end date as stated on your CAS as long as you have completed all required assessment by this date.

**No recourse to public funds**

On a Tier 4 visa you are not eligible to claim access to public funds such as local authority housing benefits and welfare benefits.

### Changes in Circumstances

The following changes in circumstances are likely to have implications for your Tier 4 visa:

**Changing your course during your studies**

Your Tier 4 visa only permits you to change course if you fulfil all of the following requirements:

- the new course is at the same or a higher level as the course for which your visa was granted;
- the new course can be completed within the existing validity of your current visa, unless you are progressing from a Bachelors to a Masters as part of an integrated programme;
- if you have previously studied in the UK, you would still fulfil the Tier 4 academic progression requirements on the new course if you had originally applied for the new course instead of your current course.

If the University approves a change of course, and the new course meets the conditions outlined above, this will be reported to the Home Office. Students who have been issued a visa for a Bachelors only and
are progressing to an integrated Masters will be required to apply for a new Tier 4 visa in the summer of their third year.

If your new course is at a lower level or your visa will expire prior to the new course completion date, you will normally need to apply for a new visa for the new course from outside the UK in accordance with the Tier 4 academic progression rules. You will not be able to start your new course until you have returned on the new visa. There is an exception for students who are applying to extend their visa to progress from a Bachelors to a Masters as part of an integrated programme and they will be able to apply for the new visa inside the UK. There are also some exceptions if you applied for your visa prior to 6 April 2016. You are advised to contact the International Student Office for further advice if you are considering changing course.

**Intermission**
A period of intermission (a break in your studies) is likely to have significant implications for a Tier 4 visa.

**Undergraduate and taught graduate students**
On approval of a break in studies, the University is required to cease Tier 4 sponsorship and report the change in circumstances to the Home Office. Your visa would subsequently be curtailed to sixty days within which time you would be required to leave the UK. Once return to study has been approved, the University will issue you with a new CAS to support a new visa application from overseas to cover the remainder of the course.

**Graduate research students**
For graduate research students, the implications of intermission, medical or non-medical, on a Tier 4 visa will depend on the length of time the intermission has been approved for:

- If an intermission is granted for more than sixty days, the University is required to cease Tier 4 sponsorship and report the change of circumstances to the Home Office. The Home Office will subsequently curtail the visa to sixty days within which time you would need to leave the UK. The University will be able to re-sponsor and issue a new CAS to support a visa application to return to studies at the end of the intermission period, subject to approval of return if required.

- For a period of intermission of up to sixty days, the University is able to continue sponsorship for a Tier 4 visa providing you would still be able to complete your course within the validity of your existing visa. If you do not return to studies after this intermission, the University is required to cease sponsorship in line with the above.

- In exceptional circumstances, such as serious illness or injury, or maternity/paternity leave, Tier 4 sponsorship can be continued for an intermission providing you would still be able to complete your course within the validity of your existing visa. The maximum period of continued sponsorship would be four months.

- Any previous intermission must be taken into account when considering whether Tier 4 sponsorship can be continued.
Where a short period of intermission is approved and it is agreed that Tier 4 sponsorship will continue, you must continue to undertake termly contact with your College.

**Discontinuing studies**
If you cease to be a student because your studies at Cambridge are discontinued temporarily or permanently, the University is required to report this change in circumstances to the Home Office. The Home Office will subsequently curtail your visa to 60 days within which time you will be required to leave the UK or apply for a new visa. Examples include:

- a student who withdraws from their studies;
- a student who is withdrawn by the University;
- a research graduate student who does not submit their thesis for examination by the deadline;
- a research graduate student who exits with a lower level award.

**Additional time required**
The University expects you to complete your course according to the date provided in your CAS. If you are approved to have more time to complete your studies and are unable to complete within the validity of your visa, the University can support you in obtaining a new visa. Whether you can apply to extend your visa in the UK depends on your level of study:

- A PhD student can extend their Tier 4 visa in the UK or overseas. You will be required to make a new Tier 4 visa application prior to your current visa expiring. Contact the International Student Office at least three months ahead of your visa expiring. Students on relevant programmes will first need to re-apply for ATAS clearance. Once you have applied for the Tier 4 extension, you will need to provide evidence of the application to the International Student Office. You will then need to keep them updated with the progress of the application.
- A student studying an undergraduate or Masters course would normally be required to apply for a new visa from outside the UK, in their country of nationality or where they have permission to live, as they would not meet Tier 4 academic progression requirements to apply in the UK.

You will need to provide your new BRP to your College in person for scanning to your student record.

**Change of sponsor**
If you wish to change to another education provider you must receive a CAS from that institution and make a new Tier 4 application before starting your studies with them. Depending on the circumstances, you may need to make the application from overseas, in your country of nationality or where you have permission to live. The University must report this change to the Home Office.

**ATAS**
Students undertaking a PhD-level research degree, Masters course or four year undergraduate degree in certain science and technology subjects require an ATAS (Academic Technology Approval Scheme)
clearance certificate. You would have been informed if you had to apply for an ATAS certificate for your course prior to applying for your visa. You are required to apply for a new certificate:

- if there are any changes to the course content or research proposal. Changes are those other than minor changes to the areas of research or the use of any new research technique;
- if your course end date is postponed by more than 3 calendar months;
- if you wish to start a new course that requires ATAS clearance.

**Reporting changes of circumstance to the Home Office**

You are required to apply for a new BRP if any of the following change:

- name, e.g. if you have got married
- nationality
- gender
- facial appearance
- date of birth

You are required to report the following changes to the Home Office using the change of circumstances form: [www.gov.uk/change-circumstances-visa-brp](http://www.gov.uk/change-circumstances-visa-brp)

- your contact details
- criminal convictions
- passport number
- dependants’ details, for example if the relationship breaks down
- if any children stop living permanently with you

**Changes to immigration documentation during studies**

If you obtain a new passport or BRP during your studies, you are required to take this to your College for scanning and uploading onto your record.

If you lose your visa/BRP, or it is stolen, you are required by the Home Office to apply for a replacement at an additional cost if it is valid for 3 months or more, or if it is valid for less than 3 months and you plan to travel overseas and re-enter the UK as a Tier 4 student. The International Student Office can be contacted for further guidance in these circumstances.

If you switch to another visa category during your studies or acquire EEA or Swiss citizenship and wish to reside in the UK with this status, you must notify your College within 7 working days of the change and provide your updated visa documentation or passport/national identity card. The University is required to report this change to the Home Office and cease Tier 4 sponsorship.

**Completing your studies**

Completion means unconditional approval of your degree.
If you complete your course on or after the expected date as stated on your CAS, then your visa expiry date does not change.

**Completing early**
If you complete your course earlier than the date stated on your CAS, the University is required to report this to the Home Office. The Home Office will curtail your leave to remain in the UK to the normal entitlement period following a course end date. If you leave the UK after your visa has been curtailed, or you are overseas at the point of curtailment action, you may not be permitted re-entry to the UK on your Tier 4 visa.

**Visa expiry and ‘overstaying’**
You must leave the UK by the expiry date of your visa unless you have submitted a visa application to extend your permission in the UK. There is no ‘grace period’ following the expiry date of your visa. You will become an ‘overstayer’ if you are in the UK the day after your visa expires without having submitted a valid application for further leave or having obtained other valid immigration permission. This is the case even if you are able to enter the UK as a visitor without a visa. You cannot switch from Tier 4 to visitor status automatically from within the UK. You would need to leave the UK and re-enter as a visitor. Entry to the UK is at the discretion of Border Force officials.

The University will not allow you to continue your studies as an ‘overstayer’. You would also need to declare any periods of overstay on future visa applications to the UK and many other countries.

**Post-study visa options**
Information on post-study visa options is outlined at [www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/visas-after-studying](http://www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/visas-after-studying).

**Protecting your immigration status: Checklist**
This section provides a summary of what you need to do to adhere to the University’s Tier 4 sponsor licence responsibilities, your Tier 4 conditions and other considerations.

**Tier 4 sponsor responsibilities**
- Enrol by the course dates specified in your CAS.
- Before starting your studies, present your passport and immigration documentation to your College.
- Check your BRP and contact the International Student Office if there are any errors as they will need to be corrected.
- Keep your UK contact details on your student record up to date throughout your studies. This includes residential address, telephone number and email address.
- Continue to engage with your studies.
• Undertake Tier 4 termly registration with your College within seven days of the start of each Full Term for the duration of your course, unless you are a Masters student on a course of 13 months or less.
• Check with the International Student Office how changes to your studies may have implications for your visa.
• Complete your course on time, and within the time limits imposed by your visa. If your visa is expiring and you need more time to complete your studies, and the University has approved an extension, contact the International Student Office to discuss your options.
• If you obtain a new passport or BRP during your studies, present this to your College.
• Inform your College if you switch out of Tier 4.

Adhere to your Tier 4 conditions
• If required, register with the police, keep your police registration certificate safe and update the police with any changes (e.g. change of address).
• Only work within the conditions set by the Home Office for a Tier 4 visa, and the greater restrictions set by the University.
• Do not attempt to apply for ‘public funds’, including welfare and local authority housing benefits.
• Report any relevant changes of circumstance to the Home Office.
• Apply for a new BRP if your personal details change. Such changes include name and nationality.
• Apply for a replacement if your BRP, or visa in your passport, is lost or stolen.
• Make sure you leave the UK prior to your visa expiring unless you obtain further leave or have submitted a valid visa application to extend your permission in the UK.