**Doctorate Extension Scheme (Tier 4 DES) for DPhil students:**

**for 12 months with work permission following completion of your studies**

**UPDATE 5 March 2021:**

**This scheme will close when the new Graduate Route opens on 1 July 2021**

**Please check the FAQs on the** [**student visa webpages**](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/work) **to see if you might be eligible for the new Graduate Route (3 year visa) instead before you decide to apply for DES. You cannot apply for the Graduate Route after having been granted a doctorate extension scheme visa.**

**If you need any advice email** [**student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk**](mailto:student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk)

**What is the scheme?**

If you have nearly completed a DPhil you can apply for the Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES) to stay in the UK for 12 months after your course has ended. On the scheme, once you have completed your DPhil you are free to look for and take full time work, be self-employed or develop a business.

To apply, you will need a new Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) from your Department giving an ‘expected end date’ based on when we think you will complete your course. You then need to submit the DES visa application before the earliest of these three dates:

* Your CAS ‘expected end date’
* The date you actually do receive leave to supplicate, or
* your current visa expiry date.

Timing is crucial for a DES application so please read these instructions. You can get further advice by emailing [student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk).

**Who can apply?**

To be eligible you must:

* be a DPhil student who has **not** yet finally completed their DPhil studies as marked by being granted ‘leave to supplicate.
* be within 60 days of completing;
* hold a current student visa: you are ineligible to apply if you hold any other kind of visa
* apply in the UK;
* have £2,030 in savings and be able to provide evidence to prove this, as set out in the Home Office’s [Policy Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/points-based-system-student-route). If the funding is in a bank account, the balance must have been at least £2,030 for 28 days. You will need more funding if dependants are applying
* have a new CAS for a DES application issued by your Department

**How to apply**

1. **Before your viva, tell your Department and Student Immigration that you are thinking of applying for DES so we can ensure a new CAS is issued for you at the right tim**

When you know your viva date, complete and email the attached CAS request form to the Graduate Studies Assistant in your department, copying in [student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk). A list of Graduate Studies Assistants can be found here: [www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/graduates/contacts/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/graduates/contacts/). In most cases the Graduate Studies Assistant will not issue your CAS until the outcome of the viva is known. In exceptional circumstances you may need your CAS before your viva. See your GSA for advice. If you want to apply but have already had your viva, contact your GSA and [student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk) immediately.

1. **Defining the ‘expected end date’ for your new CAS**

Your CAS can only be issued when the University estimates you are within 60 days of receiving your Leave to Supplicate.

The ‘expected end date’ will be agreed between the Graduate Studies Assistant in your department and Student Visa Compliance taking into account your viva date and viva outcome. It will also take into account the timeframe for possible corrections being agreed and when the examining board/committee for your department will formally confer your award (grant Leave to Supplicate).

Whether you can be issued with a DES CAS would depend on your viva outcome – please see the 3 possible case scenarios below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | **Usual course of action** |
| **minor corrections** | * DES CAS can be issued fairly quickly, normally within a week or so. * **DES end date: usually submission date + one month[[1]](#footnote-1)** |
| **no corrections** | * ‘Leave to Supplicate’ would usually be granted promptly after the viva. * **DES CAS end date: usually viva date + one week.** |
| **major corrections** | * You would usually be given 6 additional months if there are major corrections or if your thesis has been referred back – up to 6 terms. * **DES CAS cannot be issued as not within 60 days of completion.** * Contact your department again when within 1-2 months of submitting thesis. If a 2nd viva is required, would need to wait for its outcome too. * If Student visa expiring soon, might need to extend visa, then apply for DES. |

Please note that by the time it is possible to give an ‘expected end date’, this may be less than 60 days away.

1. **Prepare your application in advance**

Prepare for your visa application in advance and be ready to apply quickly. There is information on making a Student visa application including a DES application on the [immigration section of the University’s website](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/during/extend?wssl=1).

You need to show you can cover your ***living costs for two months (£2,030) in the exact format required by the Home Office as set out in the*** [***Policy Guidance***](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/points-based-system-student-route) ***document.***

If you are, or have within the last 12 months been, financially sponsored by a government or international scholarship agency for both fees and living expenses, you will need their permission in writing for your visa application.

1. **The application process**

The Tier DES visa extension costs £475 for the Standard postal service (up to 8 weeks); £952 using the 10 day Priority Service or £1085 if you apply in person (under the UK application system other costs may be incurred).  You need to complete the Student Route application and mark where indicated that you are applying for the Doctorate Extension Scheme.  See our webpage [Submitting Your Application](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/during/extend/submit) for full details of the application process.

You can remain in the UK while your visa application is being processed and will be able to work full-time once you have finished your DPhil (received your Leave to Supplicate), even before your visa has been granted.

Please confirm by emailing [student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk) when you have applied and send them a scan of your visa when it is granted.

1. **Visa duration**

The visa will be granted for a period of 12 months from the ‘expected end date’ stated on the new CAS. You will not be able to make a further application under this scheme but if you find employment you may be able to extend your stay in the UK by applying for a Skilled worker visa or the Start-up visa if you are starting a business.

**During your time on Tier 4 DES**

* Please keep in touch by replying to our 3 times a year emails at the end of each academic term;
* Let us know by emailing [student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk) if you no longer need your visa (for example, you switch to a new type of visa or you decide to return to your home country).

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **My visa will expire before I can apply for the DES visa. What can I do?**

*You will probably have to make a normal student extension under the Student route for more time to complete your course and then apply for the DES visa at the appropriate time.*

1. **Can I apply from outside the UK?**

*No. You must make an application from within the UK. Overseas applications are not allowed.*

1. **Do I need to give biometric information again?**

*Yes. A digital facial scan and fingerprints need to be given each time you make a visa application.*

1. **Do I need to register with the police?**

*If your current visa states that police registration is required then you will need to register your new visa and any changes in address etc (see the back of the certificate).*

1. **What happens if I still have a long period remaining on my existing visa when I am due to complete e.g. 11 months, can I just use my existing visa to remain and look for work after I have completed?**  
     
   *No, if your student visa was issued with a CAS number once your degree is awarded (Leave to Supplicate), the University is obliged to report your early completion to the Home Office and your visa may be cut short (curtailed) by the Home Office to 60 days. You should instead apply under the Doctorate Extension Scheme before you complete to give you the correct permission to remain and look for work.*
2. **Can my expected CAS end date be after my current visa expires?**

*Yes, your CAS can have an ‘expected end date’ that is after your current visa expiry date, but you will still need to apply for the visa before your visa expires. Your visa will then be processed with the assumption that you are due to complete in the near future.*

1. **What type of employment am I not allowed to take up?**

*You cannot work as a doctor or dentist in training or a sportsperson (including coaches). You are permitted to take up any other form of employment or be self-employed. Note that if you wish to progress to a Skilled worker visa or a Start-up visa, you must at this stage be in employment or have started a business that meets the requirements for these visas.*

1. **Can my dependants apply at the same time for this extension?**

*Yes, your dependants can apply from within the UK at the same time as you and obtain a visa for the additional 12 months. Dependants who are outside the UK can apply to join you in line with the current immigration rules. You will need to show an additional £1,360 funding for each dependant. Dependants are your partner (spouse, civil partner, long-term unmarried partner) and children under 18, unless already with visas as your dependants.*

1. **What level of funding do I need to show?**

*You will have to provide evidence you have £2030 for your living costs as explained in the* [*Policy guidance*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/points-based-system-student-route)*. If the funding is in a bank account, the balance must have been at least £2,030 for at least 28 days. You will need more funding if dependants are applying.*

1. **How do I pay the Immigration Health Surcharge and obtain an IHS number?**

*You will be prompted during the online Tier 4 application form to pay the surcharge, which should be a maximum of £470– possibly less if you paid IHS for your last visa and it is not due to expire soon. If you have any difficulties please email* [*student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk*](mailto:student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk)*. Your IHS number will be shown on your completed application.*

1. **How long will the visa take to process?**

*For a Standard Postal application you should allow 8 weeks which is The Home Office’s published maximum processing time although some applications can be decided in 4-6 weeks.  The Postal Priority service takes 10 days. For the Premium Service you book an appointment to submit your documents and complete biometrics. You receive a decision on the day, retain your passport and receive your visa in the post a few working days later.*

1. **Can the University help with my application?**

*Yes, contact the University’s Visa Advisers by emailing* [*student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk*](mailto:student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk) *if you have questions or would like your application checked before you submit it. See:* [*http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/during/extend*](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/during/extend)

1. **What options are available after the Doctorate Extension Scheme?**

*As long as your DES visa is still valid (not expired) you can switch into Skilled worker, Start-up visa or Innovator visa from within the UK. You would need to meet the requirements for the relevant tier. There is no option to extend the DES visa for longer than 12 months.*

**Checklist for students wishing to apply**

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| --- | --- |
| 1. Do you have a current student visa? |  |
| 1. If you have a financial sponsor, do you need to obtain [permission](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/during/extend?wssl=1) from them to apply, and if so, can you get it quickly enough? |  |
| 1. Can you meet the financial requirements for the visa application for yourself and any family members, i.e. £2,030 for living expenses and £1,360 for each dependant, held for 28 consecutive days? |  |
| 1. Have you been given a viva date? |  |
| 1. Have you made any travel plans during the time when you might need to apply for the visa? |  |
| 1. Have you completed and sent your CAS request form to your GSA and [student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk)? |  |
| 1. Are you aware of the different visa application options (by post or in person) and the visa fees? |  |
| 1. If you need advice, do you know you can contact the University’s Visa Advisers? Please email [student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk). |  |
| 1. Have you considered other visa options, e.g. a skilled worker visa and concluded this is the one for you at this stage? |  |
| 1. Have you checked whether you are eligible for the 3 year Graduate Route visa and   whether this might be a better option for you? |  |

**Doctorate Extension Scheme CAS request form**

**Please submit this form before your viva date, when you know it** by email to the Graduate Studies Assistant in your department or the relevant Divisional Office, and copy [student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk). A list of Graduate Studies Assistants can be found here on the [graduate contacts](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/graduates/contacts/) webpage. **Please note your CAS will not normally be issued until your GSA knows your viva outcome.**

Please confirm you have read these Doctorate Extension Scheme notes and checklist:   
Please also see the note at the top of this document about the new Graduate Route (3 year visa) and check whether you are eligible and if this is a better option for you

If you need advice on DES or the new Graduate Route please contact [student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk).

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| --- | --- |
| **Personal details** |  |
| First Name: |  |
| Family Name: |  |
| Nationality: |  |
| Your Student ID number (6 digits): *this can be found on your university card above the expiry date* |  |
| Current visa type (note this must be a student visa) |  |
| Start and end date of current visa: |  |
| Current passport number and expiry date: |  |
| **Course details** |  |
| Programme Title: |  |
| Department: |  |
| Viva date: |  |
| **Contact details** |  |
| *As your sponsor, we need to keep in touch during your year on DES, so please notify us of any change of contact details immediately. If we can’t contact you we may have to make a report to the Home Office and your visa could be cancelled. In the first instance we will always contact you by email.* | |
| Oxford Email address: |  |
| Personal email (if available): |  |
| Mobile: |  |
| **Further information** |  |
| Comments: *Please write any other relevant details here.* |  |

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**Declaration**

* I will notify my department and [student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk) once I have applied for my visa.
* I will send a copy of my visa once granted to Student Visa Compliance to enable them to comply with their duties as a licensed Sponsor.
* I understand that the University will need to contact me at least three times a year to confirm that I am still in the UK and seeking, or engaged in employment. This contact will happen at the end of each Oxford term (i.e. March, June, and December).
* I agree that I will keep my contact details (email and telephone contact numbers) up-to-date by emailing Student Visa Compliance ([student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk)](mailto:student.visacompliance@admin.ox.ac.uk) straight away with any changes. I understand that failure to reply to contacts from the University could result in a report being made to the Home Office and the visa being cancelled.
* I will notify the University if I no longer require the visa for example because I obtain another visa or leave the UK permanently.

**Signed: …………………………………………….. Dated: ……………………………………………..**

*I have read and understood the above declaration and confirm all the information provided above is accurate to the best of my knowledge. Electronic signature or typed name above is acceptable.*

1. If more than one month is needed for the minor corrections (in exceptional cases), then the issuing of CAS needs to be delayed. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)