Tier 4 (General) Student visa:
Guide to applying in your home country
Updated September 2020

Coronavirus and your Tier 4 visa application:
We know that you will be thinking about the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and we want to reassure you that the University will support you through the visa application process, and will answer any questions you may have:

Please see the University webpages about coronavirus for new students
Visa application centres are now reopening, and you can check the status as follows:
- TLS contact: if you’re in Europe, Africa and parts of the Middle East
- VFS global: for all other countries

You MUST attend your biometrics appointment and obtain your Tier 4 visa before coming to the UK. You CANNOT come to the UK as a visitor and switch visa status.
We CANNOT enrol you on a visitor visa, so you would not be able to start your course.
These are Home Office requirements that students and the University must follow.

If, due to the pandemic, you are unable to secure a visa in time or cannot travel because of flight restrictions, your department/college and Student Immigration will look at solutions to help you start your studies which may include an initial online/remote period of study if deemed necessary.

This guide will help you complete the online visa application and includes specific points for Oxford students. Please read it carefully and also look at the Tier 4 Policy guidance issued by UK Visas and Immigration.

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http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/tier4
Some terminology:

**ATAS:** Academic Technology Approval scheme, some postgraduate students in Science, Engineering and Medical subjects may need special clearance for their research project - the department will inform you if this is required or you can check on the [graduate admissions webpage](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/tier4). This also applies to 4-year undergraduate degrees in Physics and Materials and your college will provide you a template letter to apply for ATAS.

**BRP:** Biometric residence permit - new students will be issued a 90-day travel visa to come to the UK and then you will need to collect the BRP with the visa for the duration of the course and some extra time after arriving in the UK. See step 16 to choose the best location to collect the BRP.

**CAS:** Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies number issued by your College (undergraduate or visiting student) or Department (graduate or recognised student) for you to apply for a visa.

**CAS Statement:** the email that contains your CAS number and details about your course and fees.

**Differentiation arrangements:** reduced evidence requirements for ‘low risk’ nationals and ‘pilot’ students see section 2 below.

**IHS:** Immigration Health Surcharge - you will need to pay £300 per year times the number of years of your course to access the NHS (National Health Service) in the UK throughout your course. This is paid upfront for the duration of your course and any extra time included in your visa. The IHS will increase to £470 per year for applications submitted on or after 1 October 2020.

**NQF/RQF:** National Qualification Framework/Regulated Qualification framework - codes used to specify level of course will appear as NQF on your CAS but RQF on visa application form i.e. NQF6 is the same as RQF6/SCQF9/10 for undergraduate/visiting students; NQF7 is RQF7/SCQF11 for Masters, MScRes, 4 year UG exit Masters awards’ NQF8 is RQF8/SCQF12 for DPhil students.

**Partner organisation** e.g. VFS Global or TLS contact – commercial companies who administer the visa application process on behalf of UKVI but who do not make the decision on your application.

**UKVI:** UK Visas and Immigration - will make the decision on your visa application.

**UKCISA:** UK Council for International Student Affairs, advice for international students on a range of topics.

**VAC:** Visa Application Centre - you will attend here to give biometrics (fingerprints and face scan) at an appointment and submit documents if not already uploaded.

1. **When and how to apply**

When you apply in your home country for a Tier 4 student visa you need to register for and complete an [online application](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/tier4).

You must have your CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies) from Oxford before you can apply. For information about your CAS, see the [Tier 4 webpage](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/tier4). You will receive an email while your CAS is being prepared; check the details carefully and reply with any changes you need. You will receive another email with your CAS number and other information you will need for completing the online application form: this is your ‘CAS statement’.

You cannot apply for your visa **earlier than three months** before your course start date as stated on your CAS. Your CAS number is valid to use to make a visa application for six months. If your CAS is more than six months old, contact your department or college to get a new one.

This Guide refers to UK Visas and Immigration’s [Tier 4 Policy Guidance](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/tier4) which sets out the exact requirements for a Tier 4 application. You will need to read this as well and follow the instructions very carefully.

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Can I apply in the UK instead?
In nearly all circumstances, you must obtain your Tier 4 visa before travelling to the UK.

It is only possible to apply in the UK in very limited circumstances, please see our student visa webpages for further information. You cannot enter the UK as a visitor and then switch visa status.

2. Applicants who don’t need to submit evidence of qualifications or funding

You will not need to provide evidence of your funding or previous qualifications if are either, a) a low risk national or b) your course is a master’s not longer than 13 months. You will still need to provide any other required documents e.g. ATAS or TB certificate.

a. ‘low risk’ nationals

If you are a national of one of these countries below your application will come under the ‘differentiation arrangements’ and will not have to submit evidence of your qualifications or funding. If you rightfully hold passports from more than one country you can benefit from the arrangement as long as one of your nationalities is on the list.

Australia, Bahrain, Barbados, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, The Dominican Republic, Hong Kong SAR or BNO passport, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Macao SAR, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, New Zealand, Oman, Peru, Qatar, Serbia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan (holding Taiwanese passport which includes identification card number), Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and USA.

You must make sure you do have the correct documents ready in case you are asked for them later in the application process (there might be spot checks). Your application could be refused if you are not able to provide the specified documents within the requested time period.

b. Master’s students under the Tier 4 pilot scheme

Update: The Tier 4 Pilot Scheme for Master’s course of no longer than 13 months closed for visa applications made on or after 5 October 2020. If you applied on or after this date, you will not be eligible for the scheme.

As part of the Pilot Scheme you will not have to submit evidence of qualifications or funding. You will be issued with a visa valid for 6 months beyond the end date of your course. You must make sure you do have the correct documents ready in case you are asked for them later in the application process (there might be spot checks). Your application could be refused if you are not able to provide the specified documents within the requested time period.

Please see the student visa webpages for further information and FAQs about the pilot scheme.

3. Completing the online application form- personal details, family, travel history

Starting the online application Here is the start-point for the online application

Confirm your visa type
Four options are given.
• Short-term student visa. This is for courses of not more than six months and some longer part-time courses. This option is not covered in this guide. See our the student visa webpages for information on the Short-term study route. Do not select this option.

• Tier 4 (General) student visa. Most students will be selecting this option. Except see last option below for some scholarship holders only.

• Tier 4 (Child) student visa. Do not select this. The University of Oxford does not have a Tier 4 (Child) sponsor license. If you are 16 years old or over you can apply as a Tier 4 (General) student, but if you are under 16 years of age please contact tier4compliance@admin.ox.ac.uk for advice on applying.

• Tier 4 student visa (for Chevening, Marshall and Commonwealth scholars only). If you have any other kind of scholarship, select Tier 4 (General student visa).

Select a country to apply for your Tier 4 visa and provide your biometrics
You are allowed to apply for Tier 4 either in your country of nationality or, if you are not in that country when you want to apply, the country where you are living, but you can’t apply in a country which you are only visiting temporarily. If you are applying in a country which is not your country of nationality you will need to give evidence of your permission to live there.

You will need to apply for Tier 4 and attend an appointment to give biometrics in the same country, except where the country you apply in doesn’t have biometrics centres. In this situation you will need to give biometrics at a centre in a neighbouring country. You will see the options for biometrics centres now and you need to confirm that you will be able to go to one of the centres shown.

Passport/Travel Document
You need to have one blank page/side in your passport/travel document for the visa vignette/sticker to be affixed to.

Your passport needs to be valid at the time of application and for your intended arrival in the UK. It is not necessary at the time of your visa application to have a passport that will be valid for your entire course duration. This is because you will be issued a 90-day travel visa vignette/sticker in your passport and then you will collect a BRP (biometric residence permit) card on arrival in the UK which will be valid for your course duration and some additional time. This BRP card does not need changing or updating when you renew your passport in the future.

Personal information
Write your name exactly as shown in your passport and CAS statement. Include middle/other names with your Given name(s).

If you only have one name, click on the link ‘I cannot enter my name using a current passport or travel document’ and then click on ‘I do not have both a given and family name’ and then you can enter one name.

For Singaporean and Malaysian passports, the name order may be slightly different in your passport to the name order on your CAS, as long as the surname is correct this does not matter.

Sponsor
CAS reference number
Enter this as given on your CAS Statement being careful to make clear the difference between ‘0’ and ‘O’ and ‘1’ and ‘I’.

Personal Information
Your individual details, including your home address
Passport details
Include the information exactly as stated on your passport ID page. See above about passport validity queries.

Your planned travel information
Date you plan to arrive in the UK?
Give your intended date of travel to the UK, up to a maximum of one month before your course start date given on your CAS. You will be given an initial visa valid for 90 days to enter the UK which will start either 7 days before your intended travel date, or one month before your course start date, whichever is later.

English Language
This question only appears if your nationality is not on the list of English speaking majority countries or for Canada.
Are you coming to the UK to study at a higher education institution? Select ‘Yes’; Oxford is a higher education institution.
‘Does your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) statement indicate that your English language ability was assessed by your institution or that you are a ‘gifted’ student? select ‘Yes’.
Check your CAS, it should state ‘Higher Education Institution (HEI) sponsor has made assessment’

Information about a spouse or partner
Although a separate application must be made for each dependant coming to the UK with you, you are also required to give information on your own application about a partner or spouse or financially dependent family members whether they will accompany you or not.

Information about your parents, and any family in the UK
You will then need to enter information about your parents, and any close family members who live in the UK.

Accommodation in the UK
Do you have an address for where you are going to stay in the UK?
If you know the address include it here with dates. If you don’t know, state NO and go to the next question.

Where do you plan to stay in the UK?
Include details of where you are hoping to stay if not confirmed. If you will be in College accommodation but this has not been finalised, you can give the main College address as on the college website.

Travelling as part of an organised group
Answer No

UK Travel History
How many times have you been to the UK in the last 10 years?
Choose a number and give the details for up to 3 visits.

Medical Treatment
If you have been to the UK in the last 10 years you will be asked to include details and dates of any medical treatment received in the UK including visits to doctor’s surgery (known as a General Practitioner or GP) and whether you had to pay.
National insurance number
You will only have a National Insurance number if you applied for one e.g. if you did any employment during a previous UK stay.

International Travel History
How many times have you visited the following places in the past 10 years?
You are asked to record visits to a list of five countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, USA, Switzerland) plus the European Economic Area in the past 10 years. Follow the instructions and give the information as accurately as you can.

Have you been to any other countries in the past 10 years?
The form continues to ask about travel to all other countries. Again, try to answer this to the best of your ability.

Problems with immigration to the UK and other countries
It is very important that you give the required information about any immigration problems for the UK and other countries.

Convictions and other penalties, and further security questions
It is very important that you answer this section accurately and give details however long ago any offence occurred.

The form continues with further security questions and then another section about war crimes, terrorist activities and certain forms of employment.

Note: previous convictions will not necessarily lead to a visa refusal, particularly for non-custodial offences, but failure to disclose information that is requested here is likely to lead to a refusal.

4. Sponsor licence number and address
This section is asking for information from your CAS about your course, the title, level, etc. If you do not have a CAS number, you cannot proceed with your application. For information about receiving a CAS see Step 1 on our webpage. To be valid, your CAS must not be more than six months old at the time you apply for your visa.

If you are reapplying after a visa refusal, you must get a new CAS

The information you need for this section will appear on your CAS Statement:

Sponsor Licence Number UED4UGNF1
Sponsor’s address
University Offices
Wellington Square
Town/city: Oxford
Postcode: OX1 2JD

Place of Study
Oxford is a higher education institution
Did you apply for your course through UCAS?
Answer ‘no’ unless you are coming for an undergraduate degree

5. ATAS (Academic Technology Approval Scheme) Certificate

Your CAS will state whether you need an ATAS certificate, although it is not necessary to wait for your CAS to be issued to apply for ATAS, as long as you have the necessary information from your Department or College. For information about ATAS see Step 2 on our webpage. If you have a question about whether you need an ATAS certificate, contact your college (undergraduates: 4 year Physics and Materials courses only) or your Department (graduates) or see the graduate admissions webpages.

If you do require an ATAS certificate, you must get it before you submit your visa application – this could take 30 working days or more. You will receive your ATAS certificate by email – you must print this out and include it with your application.

Update: the following nationalities are exempt from ATAS if you applied for your visa on or after 5 October 2020- Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea and the USA

6. Future official financial sponsorship

The online form contains the definition of an ‘official financial sponsor’ and asks for information from those being financially sponsored for studies in the UK and will receive or continue to receive a scholarship for the period of study being applied for. “Wholly sponsored” means funding to cover your fees in full and at least £1,015 per month for living expenses. You may be receiving funding from another source, but it will not count as an ‘official financial sponsor’.

Note that if you will be funding your studies using a student loan, answer ‘No’ here.

Please note that your CAS will not contain details of financial sponsorship so do not choose ‘My Tier 4 sponsor has confirmed this information on my CAS’. If you are not exempt from needing to submit the evidence (see section 2) you will need to submit your scholarship letter.

7. Course information

Name of sponsor institution
Enter ‘The University of Oxford’

Course name
Enter the Programme Title given on your CAS

Qualification you will get
This should match ‘Course Level’ on your CAS Statement – course level is stated as an NQF number on your CAS, for example NQF7. On the application form, select the option where the RQF section of the code matches the NQF section of the code from your CAS as follows:
Undergraduate or visiting students (on **CAS NQF 6**) select RQF6/SCQF9/10
Undergraduate Masters eg MEng, MChem, MBiochem, MPhys (on **CAS NQF 7**) select RQF7/SCQF 11
Masters students or MScRes (on **CAS NQF 7**) select RQF7/SCQF 11
DPhil (on **CAS NQF 8**) select RQF8/SCQF12

**Course start date**
If you are starting a new course, enter ‘start date 2’ from your CAS. *(this is often an earlier date than Start date 1 to allow you to attend induction events)*

If you are a continuing student applying for more time to complete a course, including returning to Oxford after suspension, enter ‘start date 1’ from your CAS

**Are you taking a pre-sessional course?**
Do not include any course that you have taken on-line here. This year, the Oxford University Language Centre Pre-sessional course is being held on-line only. You cannot be issued a CAS or have an earlier start date for this online course. If you are taking a Departmental or College pre-sessional course that is taught face to face, select yes, and enter the dates.

The induction week from 5 October to 9 October does not count as a pre-sessional course.

**Course end date**
Use the ‘Expected End Date’ from your CAS statement

**8. Accommodation Payments**

Currently UKVI require a minimum of £1,015 a month for living expenses. The maximum amount you will need is for **9 months (£9,135)** even if your course is longer than this. You will need to use this figure as a basis for living costs with this application.

You can only state an amount paid towards accommodation if you will be or are staying in College or University accommodation, the money has been paid to college/university and:

- this amount is shown on your CAS statement as ‘Accommodation Fee Already Paid’ or
- you have an original official paper receipt for the amount paid from college
- your CAS also states Accommodation Provided ‘Yes’

In both cases choose “Yes”, enter the amount below and choose how this will be evidenced

*Note: even if you have paid a higher amount to College or the University for accommodation, you are only allowed to offset a maximum of £1,265 towards the amount you may need to show for maintenance.*

If you are not in College or University accommodation answer No

If you are a Visiting student who is not required to pay any accommodation fees to Oxford, because your home institution is paying Oxford directly, answer No
9. Course fees

What are your course fees for the first year?
Enter the ‘Total Fees’ figure from your CAS Statement, which you will find under the heading, ‘Fees and Payment’. Note that for courses longer than one year, this is your fees for the first year only.

Have you or your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) already paid any of your course fees?
Select ‘yes’ here if you have paid anything towards your fees and this is either recorded on your CAS or for which you have a paper receipt from the University or College, and enter the amount as shown on your CAS or receipt.

If you are a Visiting Student who is not required to pay any course fees direct to Oxford because your home institution is paying Oxford and you have £0.00 for ‘Total Fees’ on your CAS, state No to this question. You might have to include with your visa application a letter from your home institution confirming the arrangement.

Some continuing students are likely to have £0.00 for ‘Total Fees’ on the CAS. You must also answer No

10. Maintenance funds (fees and living costs)

Are all of the maintenance funds required for this application in a bank account with your name on it? If you are self-funding, answer ‘Yes’. For other sources of funding answer, ‘No’ and continue to the next question.

Are you relying on money held in an account under your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) name?
There is only a Yes/No option.
Some students will be answering no to both these questions because they will be funded through a scholarship or a student loan. Note that if you are using bank statements for evidence you must use your own or a parent’s or legal guardian’s.

11. Documents

You will now have to indicate that you are providing the documents listed. If your application comes under the ‘differentiation arrangements’ for low risk students, because of your nationality, you should not be asked to provide financial or qualifications evidence.

You may be able to submit required documents by uploading them before your visa appointment, although this varies by country so look at instructions you are given by your local visa application centre. Note that you will always have to submit your physical passport at some stage.

a. Documentary evidence to show funding

i. If you come under the reduced evidence ‘differentiation arrangements’ provision (low risk nationals) you will not have to provide supporting documents but remember you must have the documents available to provide if UK Visas and Immigration asks for them later (there may be spot checks).

ii. If you are not exempt based on the above conditions you must follow the requirements for evidence of funding as given in the Tier 4 Policy Guidance and get translations if necessary. Only the specified documents will be accepted. Note: these requirements to show evidence of funding for your visa
application are separate from any requirements you may already have had to comply with to fulfil your college Financial Declaration – do not assume the same evidence will be adequate. The requirements for documentary evidence of funding are in the Tier 4 Policy Guidance and you should read it very carefully.

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If you are showing evidence of money held in either your own or a parent/guardian’s account, you must be able to show (as set out in the Tier 4 Policy Guidance) that you have held the required level of funding for 28 consecutive days prior to application; any documents must also be dated within 31 days of the date you submit and pay for the application, otherwise your application is likely to be refused.

If you will be funded by a US Federal Student Loan, ensure you have proof of the loan and notification from the University’s Student Fees and Funding office. Send this with your visa application unless you come under the reduced evidence ‘differentiation arrangements’ provision (see above).

If you need further information about this, email us.loans@admin.ox.ac.uk. Remember that if the loan is partial you may need to provide other documents as specified in Tier 4 Policy Guidance to show that you have the balance.

b. Documentary evidence of academic qualifications

i. If you come under the reduced evidence provision (low risk nationals) you will not have to provide supporting documents for any academic qualification/s upon which your offer to study at Oxford has been based. However, make sure you have them available in case UK Visas and Immigration request them for a spot check.

If you are coming to Oxford as a visiting student, your CAS may state ‘student has been assessed as competent by the home institution – we have not required to see any qualifications’ and you are not required to submit any evidence with your application.

ii. If you are not exempt from submitting documents based on the above conditions, look at the heading on your CAS Statement, ‘Evidence Considered in Accepting Application’. For qualifications listed here, you are required to provide a scan/copy of your certificate or transcript for the award(s) listed. There is also the option of submitting printouts of your qualification or transcript results from the awarding body’s online checking service. The printouts must clearly show your name, the title and date of the award, and the name of the awarding body.

You must have completed any qualifications listed; UK Visas and Immigration will not accept provisional documents*.

*NOTE FOR SOME INDIAN STUDENTS ONLY – if your CAS states "please note we have accepted the provisional certificate as the degree is complete and awarded" you can provide a provisional certificate as evidence of your academic qualification.

Look at the Tier 4 Policy Guidance to ensure your documents fully meet the requirements. If you cannot provide the required documents, contact your College (undergraduate and visiting students) or Department (graduate and recognised students) for advice, including where qualifications that you have not completed are mentioned. If any of these documents are not in English, you must also send a translation in the required format. Only send evidence for qualifications listed on your CAS Statement.
iii. Current Oxford students: If your CAS mentions ‘satisfactory progress’ or ‘coming back from a break’ or to ‘complete an exam resit’ because you are a current Oxford student then you are not required to provide evidence of any academic qualification.

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12. Additional Information

Add anything here that you think is relevant to your application, particularly where you were unable to answer one of the application questions in the field provided.

13. Declaration

You must then make a declaration that all the information is correct to the best of your knowledge. Note that you will not be able to edit your application after completing the declaration.

14. Immigration Health Surcharge

For information about how the IHS is calculated and why you have to pay it at this stage, see step 6 on our webpage.

Note that you will not be able to edit your visa application after clicking through to the IHS website. You will be asked to re-enter your course start and end date again on the IHS website and answer some other questions. Use start date 2 and the expected end date from your CAS.

15. Application payment

After you have paid you will be prompted to arrange an appointment for giving your biometrics (fingerprint and face scan) which must be done before your application can be processed, and also to select where to collect your BRP after arrival in the UK.

16. Arranging to collect your BRP (biometric residence permit) in the UK

Deciding where to collect your BRP card – for new students

When prompted, you will have to choose where to collect your BRP when you arrive in the UK (this will include any BRPs for your dependant/s who are travelling with you). You should collect it as soon as you can but note the previous requirement to collect it within 10 days is not as strict during the pandemic but do not delay collecting it. Choose option a. or b. below based on your travel plans and when you need the BRP:

a. If you are arriving between 28 September and 6 October 2020 (or slightly earlier for quarantine):
   This option is no longer available choose option b.
   you should choose to collect the BRP at your Oxford College which will be easier and more convenient than the Oxford Post Office.
   • You must enter the alternative collection code on the visa application form: (option no longer available)
     for yourself and also on any application/s for your dependant/s.
   • You must then sign up on the Eventbrite page to let us know you have chosen this option and for us to give your college a list of students collecting their BRP from the college office.
• You will collect your BRP at enrolment and at the same time as you collect your University student id card; you must follow enrolment instructions from your college about dates and times to ensure social distancing measures can be maintained.
• Your College Office cannot give you the card earlier than 28 September as the cards are stored at the Home Office and then only delivered to Oxford shortly before this date. You will need the BRP card to open a bank account and to enrol so choose option a. or b. based on your travel plans.

b. If you are arriving before 28 September 2020:
   It will be better to collect the BRP at the Oxford St Aldates Post Office or another Post Office near where you are staying for the reasons explained above. The Oxford Post Office are expecting a number of early start students to collect their BRPs and have ensured social distancing procedures can be maintained.
   • To collect the BRP at the Oxford Post Office select ‘Sponsor Address Postcode’ and enter OX1 2JD
   • To choose another location (Post Office) in the UK, you can enter your residential address and postcode

After your visa is issued

Once your application has been processed you will be issued with a 90-day travel visa which will be a sticker (vignette) in your passport and an explanatory letter confirming where to collect your BRP. The date you can enter the UK using this travel visa will be calculated to start based on either 7 days before your ‘intended date of travel’ as included on your application form or one month before the course start date on your CAS, whichever is later.

Example: if your CAS start date is 4 October 2020 and you choose an ‘intended date of travel’ of 1 October 2020 your 90-day travel visa will start 7 days before i.e. 24 September 2020 and run until 23 December 2020. You cannot ask for the travel visa to start earlier than 4 September 2020 in this example.

If you are currently studying in the UK at another University and apply for a new visa to study at Oxford within the UK, your BRP will be sent to you by courier.

17. Biometric Appointment

You will be prompted to book an appointment to give biometric information at a Visa Application Centre (VAC). Please follow the instructions on the application.

18. Further help

If you experience any difficulties email student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk for advice. In the summer months, it may take us two or three days to reply due to the volume of queries. If it is an urgent matter, we will try to reply the same day.

If your visa application is refused, please email us a copy of the refusal notice so we can advise you before a new CAS number is issued.

If you think you have made a mistake on your application after submission and payment, please do not cancel it until you have contacted us and received advice on how to proceed.

NOTE FOR STUDENTS APPLYING IN THE USA

UK Visas and Immigration in the US has produced a guide. You are required to provide a return shipping waybill and envelope. This must not be hand written but electronic: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/usa-apply-for-a-uk-visa