Tier 4 visa Pilot
for Masters courses of 13 months or less at University of Oxford

Frequently asked questions

About the Pilot

A number of UK Universities are participating in the Tier 4 Pilot which provides a simpler application process and extra post study time included in the visa. The scheme is described in Annex 5 of the Tier 4 policy guidance. The Pilot means that:

• Your visa expiry date will be calculated by adding 6 months to your course end date as stated on your CAS. You could use this for example to stay on in the UK to look for work after your studies or to switch into another visa type. See also end of page 2 for information about the new Graduate Route.

• You will be considered as ‘low-risk’ meaning that although you have to meet the Tier 4 Immigration Rules, you do not need to provide evidence of funding or previous qualifications. UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) can request this evidence during the visa process (as there may be spot checks) so ensure you meet the requirements.

• If you are required to submit an ATAS certificate or a TB screening certificate you must still include these with your visa application.

Who is eligible?

• Students applying for a Master’s degree of 13 months or less at Oxford University in Autumn 2020 from outside or inside the UK. Postgraduate certificate or diploma students are not eligible.

• Dependants who apply at the same time will be given a visa of the same length and won’t need to provide funding evidence.

Please note that the Tier 4 Pilot will close for visa applications made on or after 1 October 2020, so you should make your visa application before this date to be eligible for the scheme.

Questions:

Q: The online application form says I need to submit supporting documents with my application, should I still do so?

A: The Tier 4 online visa application form may sometimes require you to provide financial or qualification documents when it is not required. If this happens, tick the boxes for submitting evidence as required and then in the ‘additional information’ section at the end type this: I am eligible for the Tier 4 Pilot and do not need to submit evidence for the financial requirements or previous qualification/s but the online form is not working properly. I have not submitted these documents as explained in Annex 5 of the Tier 4 policy guidance.

Q: I am from a low risk country and do not need to submit documents based on my low risk nationality how does this affect me?

A: Where asked you should still indicate you are from a low risk country on the application form and you do not need to submit supporting documents. You will also benefit from the additional time given under the Pilot.

Q: Do I still need to submit an ATAS certificate (if my subject requires this) or a TB (if required in my country) screening certificate?

A: Yes. The evidence exemption only applies for funding and qualifications.
Q: What happens if I submit documents when they are not required, will they still be considered?
A: Yes. If you submit financial documents or previous qualifications with your application when they are not required, the caseworker will assess them in the normal way. If they don't meet the Tier 4 requirements, your application will be refused.

Q: If I don’t have to supply financial documents with my visa application, does this mean I don’t need to hold money for 28 days before I apply if I am self-funded or funded by my parents/guardian?
A: It is essential that you meet the Tier 4 requirements at the time you submit your Tier 4 application online, including the requirement to maintain funds for 28 days. Although students under the pilot will not have to submit these documents to UK Visas and Immigration, the caseworker can request to see them and may do spot checks. If you are asked for documents and cannot provide them, your application will be refused.

Q: I am attending the (online) English language pre-sessional course or other short Oxford pre-sessional course before my main Masters course, am I still eligible for this scheme?
A: Yes. The Pilot is for courses of 13 months or less excluding any pre-sessional course. Note that a CAS or visa cannot be issued for the online English Language pre-sessional course.

Q: My partner or child is coming to the UK as my dependant but they will not be making their visa application at the same time as me. Will they still be included under the pilot?
A: If your dependant is applying at a different time or place to you they will have to provide funding evidence. They will, however, get the extra time so that their visa expiry date will be the same as yours.

Q: I am applying for a one year visa extension to complete my undergraduate exit Masters qualification or the second year of a two-year postgraduate degree, can I apply under this scheme?
A: No. You are only eligible if you are applying for a visa to start a Master’s degree of 13 months or less.

Q: Will my visa be processed more quickly under this scheme?
A: As most of the waiting time for a standard application is queuing the Pilot might not make a noticeable difference. If you need your visa processed urgently, you should see if a priority service is available.

Q: Can I opt out of this scheme?
A: No. If eligible, your application will automatically be considered under the pilot. You are of course not obliged to remain after the end of your studies if you do not wish to use the additional time added to your visa end date.

Q: My decision letter or BRP (Biometric Residence Permit) indicates I have not been granted the correct amount of extra time. Can I get this amended?
A: You will be collecting your BRP when you arrive in the UK. We will email you at the start of term to explain how we can get the end date amended for you if it is wrong.

Q: Will I be eligible for the new Graduate Route to stay on and work?
A: Yes, if you complete your studies in the Summer of 2021 you can apply for the new graduate route to stay on and look for, or start work. This will be a visa for two years and further details will follow soon.

Q: Who should I contact for further information?
A: Please contact student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk and include the title 'Tier 4 visa pilot (and your student number)' in the email subject.