



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Tier 4 visa pilot scheme: for Masters courses of 13 months duration or less at Oxford University

Frequently asked questions

About the pilot scheme

A small number of UK Universities have been selected to take part in a pilot scheme in conjunction with the Home Office which provides Masters' students the opportunity to benefit from an easier visa application process. The scheme is referenced in Annex 6 of the [Tier 4 policy guidance](#). The scheme offers several important advantages for students:

- Your visa expiry date will be calculated by adding 6 months to your course end date (as stated on your CAS). This will be helpful if you wish to stay on in the UK to look for work after you have completed your studies or to attend a graduation ceremony at a later date.
- You will be considered as 'low-risk' for immigration purposes and therefore, although you are required to meet the Tier 4 Immigration Rules, you do not need to include any documentation with your visa application demonstrating you meet the financial requirements. Plus you are not required to provide evidence of the academic qualifications upon which your place at Oxford is based as part of your visa application. Please bear in mind, however, that UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) can request this evidence during the visa process and will be undertaking some spot-checks on applications submitted under this pilot. Therefore, if you are self-funded or funded by parents/guardian, you should wait until you have maintained the required amount of money for 28 days until you make your Tier 4 application.
- **Please note:** If you are required to submit an ATAS certificate and/or a TB screening certificate you **must** include these with your visa application.

Who is Eligible?

- Students applying for a Tier 4 visa to commence a Master's degree of 13 months duration or less at Oxford University in September/October 2017. You are eligible for the pilot scheme if you are applying for a visa overseas (entry clearance) or if you are applying from within the UK following successful completion of an undergraduate or previous postgraduate degree. Postgraduate certificate or diploma students are not eligible.
- Dependants are eligible to make a Tier 4 student dependant visa application at the same time as an eligible main applicant.

Questions:

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

A: As this is a pilot scheme affecting only a limited number of students at certain institutions, the Tier 4 online application form has not been changed to reflect this scheme. Therefore, it might still indicate that you need to include documents with your visa application but you may disregard this and you do not need to submit financial documents or your previous qualifications.

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 benefit from the additional time added onto your visa end date. The low risk country exemption only applies in your home country, however if you are eligible to apply in another country because you are resident there (not just visiting) you can also benefit from this scheme in not needing to submit documents and receive the longer visa.

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. If you require either of these additional clearances, you must include these with your visa application.

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: No. 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 if required and may do spot-checks on applicants applying under the pilot. If you are asked for documents and cannot provide them, your application will be refused.

Q: I am attending an English language pre-session course or other short Oxford pre-session course before my main Masters course, am I still eligible for this scheme?

A: Yes. Although, if your entry to the main course is conditional based on successful completion of your pre-session course, you will get an initial visa for the pre-session course only. You will then benefit from the pilot once you make your visa application for the main masters course. If you are already unconditionally accepted on to the main course but are *choosing* to undertake a language centre pre-session course or other Oxford pre-session course, your application will be considered under the pilot scheme and a visa issued including the extra 6 months to cover the pre-session and the main course.

Q: My dependant is planning on coming to the UK under Tier 4 but they will not be making their visa application at the same time as me. Will they still be included under the pilot?

A: No. If your dependant is not applying at the same time as you they will be required to include full evidence of their finances with their visa application. They will, however, get the extra time so that their visa expiry date will be the same as yours.

Q: I am studying a Masters that is less than 12 months does the additional six months added on my visa end date mean that my dependant/s can now apply for a Tier 4 dependant visa?

A: No. For family members to be eligible to apply as dependants your course still needs to be 12 months or longer and at postgraduate level, or if you are funded by the UK Government or the Government in your home country and the course is longer than six months.

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 for the pilot if you are applying for a visa to start a Master's degree of 13 months duration or less at Oxford.

Q: Will my visa be processed more quickly under this scheme?

A: It is anticipated that processing of your application will be quicker as the staff will be assessing fewer documents. However, please bear in mind that faster processing times cannot be guaranteed, and you should consider priority schemes available in your country of application if you need your application processed urgently.

Q: Can I opt out of this scheme?

A: No. If you are applying for a Tier 4 visa to study an eligible course at Oxford then 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: A decision on my visa has been made and the letter I have been provided with states that I have not been granted the correct amount of extra time. Can I get this amended?

A: If possible you should contact the centre where you applied for your visa straight away and ask that this document be corrected before you travel to the UK. You will be collecting your visa (Biometric Residence Permit or BRP) when you arrive in the UK and the end date on the BRP will be in line with the information in the letter you received. If you do not have time to do this, upon arrival in the UK and when you have collected your BRP please contact student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk who will guide you on how to have this corrected.

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 so we can easily identify these queries and help you.