

University of Bristol obligations to the UKVI

As a Tier 4 licensed sponsor, the University of Bristol must fulfil a number of obligations required by the UKVI in order to allow us to sponsor you to study here. These obligations affect you and are outlined at the following website:

www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-tier-4-sponsor-licence

We have explained these obligations below, in addition to important information you must know and understand about your student visa.

Why must the University of Bristol take a copy of my passport and visa and/or ID card?

One of our obligations as a Tier 4 licensed sponsor with the UKVI is that we check and keep a copy of your passport and visa/biometric residence permit (BRP) card. This is to ensure that you possess the correct visa to enable you to study with us. This benefits you as well.

Should you ever lose your passport and/or BRP card, we maintain a copy which may be helpful to you in obtaining a replacement. Should you need to extend your visa during your course of study – or you obtain a new passport or BRP card – we will also need a copy of this. You are expected to show your new passport or visa/BRP card to the International Office *as soon as you receive it*.

Should I keep a copy of my passport and visa/BRP card?

The University keeps a copy of your passport, visa and/or BRP card, but we suggest that you also maintain copies. You should carry these with you when you travel, but keep them separate from the originals. In the event of loss or theft, possessing a copy of these documents makes securing a replacement much easier. You should inform the police as soon as you are aware of a loss or theft of these documents, as you will also need a crime reference number to secure a replacement.

What are the other obligations relating to students with a Tier 4 student visa?

We are required by the UKVI to ensure that you are studying for your programme and in regular contact with the University by attending lectures/seminars/tutorials/labs, handing in coursework, meeting with your personal tutor, etc. If you have not been carrying out your expected interactions with the University and do not have permission from the University to miss such interactions, *we will need to consider informing the UKVI*. This is why it is essential that if you are having any issues – for example problems with your health or if you are struggling academically – you speak with your personal tutor or another member of staff in your department/school as soon as possible. We want to ensure that any issues or concerns are dealt with before the situation gets to the point where we need to notify the UKVI.

If you successfully complete your course before your visa expires, we may need to inform the UKVI about this and you should seek advice from International Advice & Support (details are below) regarding your student visa. This most often applies to PhD students.

At the University of Bristol, we want you to be successful in your studies. While tracking your attendance is an immigration obligation placed upon us by the UKVI, we see academic and pastoral support for our students as of primary importance, and if you are struggling, for academic or personal reasons, we expect you to speak to a relevant member of staff early on, so that we can help you resolve any issues and proceed with your studies.

What if I want to suspend my studies or change my programme of study?

Before you make any decision to change your programme of study, request an extension of your programme of study, suspend your studies or withdraw from your studies, you should not only speak with your personal tutor but you *must* also seek immigration advice from International Advice & Support (details are below and on the back of this document). Any changes to your student status are likely to affect your immigration status and you should seek advice to enable you to make an informed decision before you act.

Conditions of your student visa

What should I know about my visa?

First and foremost, you should know that we have a team of trained immigration advisers in International Advice & Support who will try to help you with any query you may have regarding your student visa. In addition to the information provided on our website, you may drop in to see us, email or telephone if you have specific questions or concerns. Our contact details are as follows:

www.bristol.ac.uk/international-office/

0117 3318572

os-as@bristol.ac.uk

Third Floor, Richmond Building, Queen's Road, Bristol, BS8 1LN (Open Mon-Fri 9 am-5 pm)

If I have a student visa, can I work?

Yes, you are free to seek employment provided your visa does not state that you are prohibited from working. However, you are restricted to working part-time during term-time;

Type of student	Term time	Vacations
Degree	20 hours maximum per week	Full-time
Postgraduate	20 hours maximum per week	20 hours maximum per week all year round, as programmes do not include long vacations
Pre-sessional	10 hours maximum per week	Full-time
International Foundation Programme	10 hours maximum per week	Full-time

The University of Bristol recommends students work no more than 15 hours per week during term-time in order to leave sufficient time for academic study.

All students must not engage in business, be self-employed, provide services as a professional sports person or entertainer, or pursue a career by filling a permanent vacancy. If you have immigration permission that extends for up to four months beyond the end of your course, you can work full-time during those four months as long as you have completed all your studies. If you stay in the UK and apply for a Tier 2 visa, you can work full-time until your application is decided.

For full details please see the Policy Guidance:

www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa

UKCISA can provide further information on protecting your Tier 4 student status and working during your studies in the UK:

<http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Protecting-your-Tier-4-status>

www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Study-work--more/Working-during-your-studies/

You do not need a work permit to work whilst holding a student visa, but you will need a national insurance number. Please see our website for further details about working whilst studying:

www.bristol.ac.uk/international-office/current-students/

Will I be required to register with the police when I arrive in the UK?

Some nationals are required to register their stay with the police when they arrive in the UK/obtain new visas. If you need to register/update your registration certificate, this requirement will be stated on your entry clearance sticker/ID card and you will be required to register with the police within 7 days.

Immigration law also requires that nationalities who must register with the police must report to the police registration unit within 7 days if any of the following change:

- Your local Bristol address
- Name
- Marital status
- You receive an extension of your leave to remain (visa) in the UK
- You obtain a new passport

Please see our website for details on how to register with the police:

www.bristol.ac.uk/international-office/visas-immigration/

What if I change my name or address – do I also have to tell the University of Bristol?

You *must* also inform the University of any changes to your name or address so that we can maintain accurate student records. You can do this by going to www.bris.ac.uk/studentinfo/ and updating your personal details. You can also access Student Info via the My Bristol portal.

Can I do a work placement whilst I have a student visa?

Yes, you can do a work placement providing that it is an assessed part of your course and that it is no more than 50% of the total length of the course, for example, a two year degree course with one of the years doing a work placement. If your CAS is issued for a course which involves a work placement, the University of Bristol will remain responsible for you throughout the work placement.

I am enrolled on a higher education course at an overseas higher education institution, can I do a work placement?

Yes, if you are coming to the UK to do part of your course you may also do a work placement as part of your course as long it is no more than 50% of your study in the UK. If your CAS is issued for a course which involves a work placement, the University of Bristol will remain responsible for you throughout the work placement.

Can I change my institution?

If you want to study at a new institution, you MUST apply for a new Tier 4 visa. You can start the new course if you are studying with a highly trusted sponsor (HTS), have an existing visa, have been issued a CAS for your new institution and have made your application to the UKVI. The University of Bristol is an HTS. You can leave your current institute before the visa has been issued, but you do so at your own risk as your new Tier 4 visa may be refused and then you may not be able to go back to the old course.

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/261401/Tier4migrantguidance.pdf

Can I do a different course at the University of Bristol?

Yes and you will not need to obtain permission from the UKVI as long as you have enough time left on your current visa. However, if the length of your new course is longer than the time you have left on your current visa, you will need to apply with a new visa application to the UKVI. If your new course is shorter than the course you got your current visa for, you must inform the UKVI by e-mailing migrantreporting@ukba.gsi.gov.uk. The University will also need to inform the UKVI about the change to your course of study.

Are there restrictions on the level I can study at?

Yes, the UKVI expect to see you making 'academic progress' within the UK. Therefore, the University can only give you a CAS for a new course if your new course represents academic progress from your previous studies that you completed within the UK. You can read further information about these restrictions in the UKVI Tier 4 Policy Guidance;

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/261401/Tier4migrantguidance.pdf

Are there restrictions on how long I can study in the UK?

Yes, the UKVI limit the amount of the time that you can spend studying in the UK at or above degree level to 5 years, even if these are not consecutive years. However, there are exemptions to this general rule, which include a student's first postgraduate research qualification. You can read further information about these restrictions in the UKVI Tier 4 Policy Guidance;

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/261401/Tier4migrantguidance.pdf

What happens if my course ends early?

The UKVI will limit your visa to 60 days if your course ends earlier than expected, this includes if you submit your thesis early if you are a postgraduate student. The UKVI will be informed by the University that you have completed early. Therefore, even if you finish your course in the final 60 days before your course end date, your leave will be curtailed and you will lose the additional time at the end of your visa.

Can I claim state benefits (public funds)?

No, the conditions of the student visa prohibit you from claiming public funds.

What do I do when my visa is due to expire?

You *must* leave the UK or make a visa application to either extend your student visa or switch to another visa status in the UK before your student visa expires. You will only be able to extend your student visa if you are continuing your current programme of study or beginning another. You *must* seek immigration advice at least three months prior to your visa expiring if you do not intend to leave the UK.

BRP cards

If you have a BRP card, there is further information on our website that you should read:

www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/international-office/advice-and-support/documents/Lost.stolen%20passport%20etc.pdf