



Foundation for International Education

TIER 4 (GENERAL) VISA GUIDE



WHICH TYPE OF VISA DO I NEED?

I **WILL** be undertaking an internship, service internship or service learning placement as part of my FIE program



I **DO NOT** hold a valid passport from a country within [the EU, EEA or Switzerland](#)



Tier 4 (General) visa
Please continue reading this guide

I **WILL NOT** be undertaking an internship, service internship or service learning placement as part of my FIE program



Short Term Study visa
This guide is not for you. Please see separate guide on the [FIE website](#)

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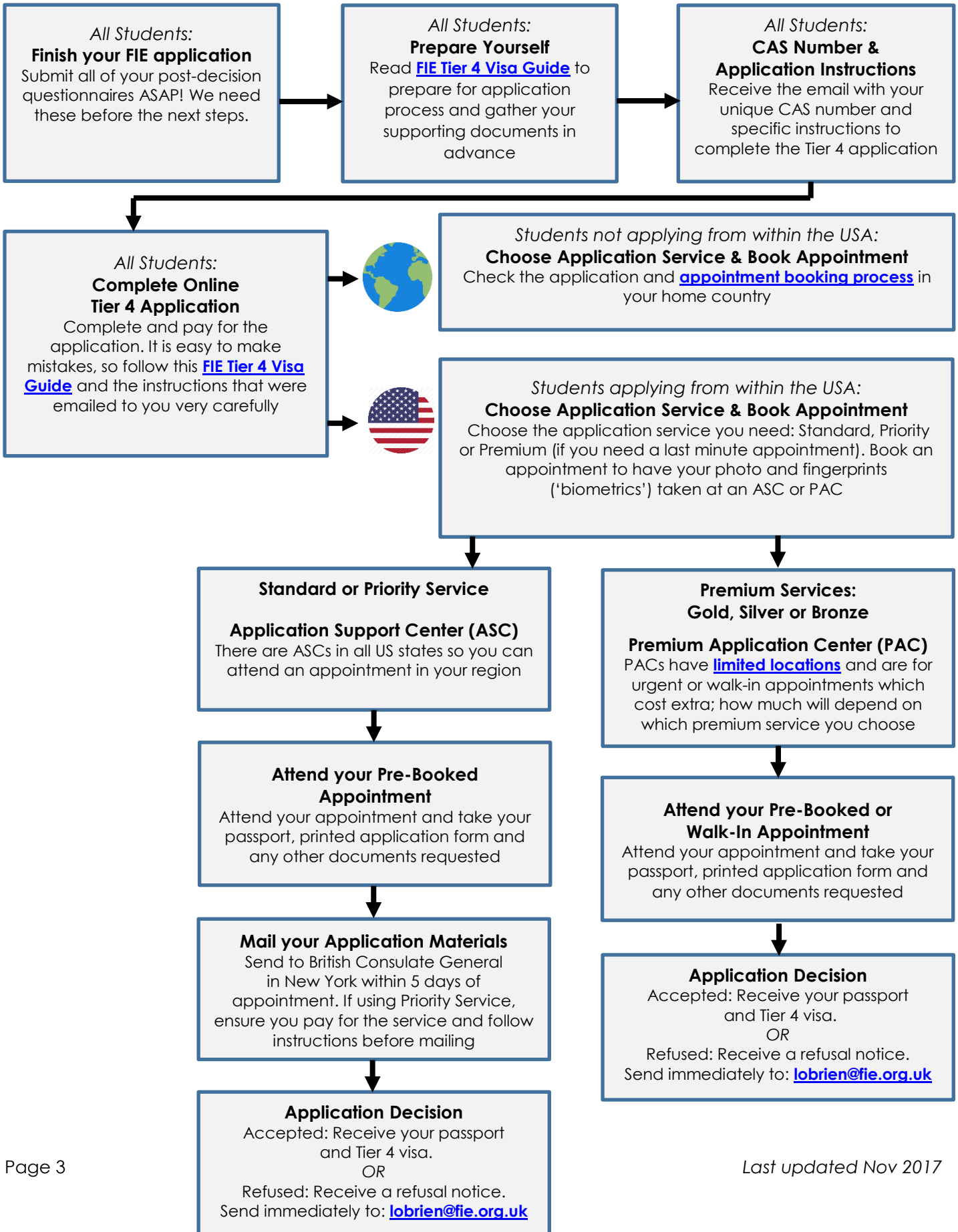
USEFUL CONTACTS

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- **Visa4UK**
[Online application FAQs](#)
- **UK Visas & Immigration**
[Contact Information](#)
Please note: There is a charge to contact the UKVI by phone or email:
 - **£5.48 per e-mail**. This includes the initial e-mail enquiry plus any follow-up e-mails to and from the contact centre relating to the same enquiry.
 - **£1.37 per minute for calls** to the helpline in addition to the standard network charge.
This pricing information is correct as of Oct 2017
- **UK Visas & Immigration**
[How to apply for a UK visa in the USA](#)
- **NAFSA**
[UK Visa FAQs](#)
- **UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)**
[Advice for international students coming to the UK](#)

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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APPLICATION PROCESS: A VISUAL GUIDE



TIER 4: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is a Tier 4 (General) visa?

If you are a citizen of a country that is not in the EU, EEA or Switzerland, a Tier 4 (General) visa gives you permission to enter the UK for the purposes of studying and undertaking a work placement. If your application is successful, your visa will be in the form of a vignette bearing your photograph and will be stuck to one of the pages of your passport. The Home Office's [Tier 4 Policy Guidance](#) includes full details of all the requirements for making an application, and the responsibilities you will have as a Tier 4 visa holder.

2. What if I hold a European Union (EU) / European Economic Area (EEA) / Swiss passport?

EU / EEA / Swiss passport holders are not subject to UK immigration control and so do not need permission to work or study in the UK. Therefore, you do not need a visa for the FIE program **but** please bear in mind the following:

- You must travel to and enter the UK on this passport; AND
- Your passport must be valid for the entire duration of your studies.

List of EU / EEA countries:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

3. Am I eligible for a Tier 4 visa?

In order to be eligible for the Tier 4 visa, you must:

- ✓ have a **unique CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Study) number** assigned to you from FIE.
- ✓ have **enough money** to support yourself while you are in London. This is known as "maintenance".
- ✓ be able to **speak, read, write and understand English** to a required level.
- ✓ **have acceptable supporting documents** that meet the criteria set out of the Tier 4 Policy Guidance.

Please see [Section 2: What do I need before I apply](#) for more information on each of these requirements.

4. What is a CAS?

Before you are able to make a Tier 4 application, you need to have a Tier 4 visa sponsor (which will be FIE). In order to sponsor your Tier 4 visa, FIE submits an electronic form to the UKVI with details of your passport, program and fees. In return, we receive a unique 'Confirmation of Acceptance to Study' (CAS) number for you.

When you have completed the steps [listed here](#), we will send you your CAS number in an email. You **must use the instructions in the CAS Statement email** to complete your Tier 4 visa application, otherwise you risk making a mistake that could lead to a refusal.


5. When should I apply?


You should begin your application **as soon as possible** after you receive your CAS number. The visa application process can often take several weeks to complete, especially over the Christmas and summer periods.


Bear in mind that you cannot submit your Tier 4 visa application more than 3 months before the start of your program.

6. How much will the Tier 4 (General) visa cost?

This will depend on several factors. Please see the following tables:

|  | Students applying from within the USA |
|---|--|
| Application fee | \$469.00 USD (£335.00 GBP) |
| Shipping | If you are using the standard or priority service, you will need to mail your documents to the British Consulate in New York after your biometric appointment. The UKVI only accepts a specific type of prepaid electronic shipping label , available to purchase on the VFS Global website : Round trip shipping labels: \$ 53.00 USD Return shipping label only: \$ 34.00 USD |
| Expedited processing | This application fee (above) covers the standard application processing time . 'Priority' and 'Premium' services are available at an additional cost. Please see this page for more details. |
| Additional costs | Please see 'All students' below |

|  | Students not applying from within the USA |
|---|---|
| Application fee | To find out how much the fee is in other currencies, please see the UKVI visa fee list |
| Shipping | Shipping costs vary by country. Please check the application process in your home country |
| Expedited processing | This application fee covers the standard processing times , but expedited services are also offered in most countries. Please check the application process in your home country for details of the services offered there, |
| Additional costs | Please see 'All students' below |

|  | All Students |
|---|--|
| Maintenance | All students must be able to prove that they have at least £1,265 GBP for each month of their time in London. This is for living costs or "maintenance" as the UKVI calls it. You are required to have these funds EVEN if your housing has already been paid for. Please see this page for more details on accepted types of financial documents. Always use OANDA when checking currency exchange rates. |
| Travel to/from your appointment | Factor in your travel costs when booking your biometric appointment. |



All Students (continued)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Photograph | You will be required to submit a UK-sized passport photograph with your application materials. This is in addition to the photo that will be taken of you at your appointment. Please see this page for more details. |
| Immigration Health Surcharge | If your program is longer than 6 months, you will be required to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS). Please see this page for more details. |
| English Language Test | If you are not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a citizen of a 'majority English-speaking country'; or • currently enrolled on a bachelor degree program at a US university you may be required to take the IELTS Academic Test for UKVI before you can apply for the Tier 4 visa. Please see this page for more details. |
| Official Translations | If any of your required supporting documents are not in English, you may be required to have them officially translated by a certified translator. Please see this page for more details. |
| TB Test | If your program is longer than 6 months, and you are resident in one of these listed countries , you may be required to undergo a tuberculosis (TB) test before coming to the UK. For more information, please see the UKVI's guidance for applicants required to take TB tests. |

All pricing information correct as of Oct 2017

7. Should I renew my passport before I apply?

Your passport **must be valid for AT LEAST the duration** of your FIE program.

If your passport expires within 6 months of the end of your FIE program, it is strongly recommended that you renew it before completing the Passport Questionnaire in your FIE application. You may not be permitted to travel if your passport is due to expire shortly.

Please note: Please let us know immediately if you have renewed or are going to renew your passport after your CAS has been issued. Your passport number is an important detail on your CAS and we will need to amend it if you have a new passport. Your visa application may be refused if your CAS has a different passport number than the one you submit with your application.

8. I have travel plans before I arrive in the UK. Will this be a problem?

You will be required to submit your original passport with your application, so **travel plans during the application process** are strongly discouraged.

Be aware that you may need to pay to expedite your application if you need to have your passport sooner than the [standard application processing time](#). Also see [FAQ: Where can I apply?](#)


9. Where can I apply?


- You **must** make your application from **your home country or the country where you are living**. In this context, "living" means somewhere where you are residing lawfully for a reason other than a short-term visit.
- You **cannot** make your application from within a **country you are visiting**. If you are currently travelling, you must first return home to make your Tier 4 application, before travelling to the UK.

- You **cannot** apply for a Tier 4 visa from **within the UK**. This is because you are applying for Tier 4 “entry clearance” meaning that you are asking for permission to “enter” the UK as a Tier 4 student. This also means that you cannot enter the UK as a tourist or “visitor”, as you will not have the necessary permission to begin your course.

10. Do I need to attend a Biometric Appointment?

Yes. All students must attend an in-person biometric appointment. At the biometric appointment, your fingerprints and photograph will be taken. This is known as your “biometric information”. You cannot complete the application process without first attending your biometric appointment.

| | |
|---|--|
|  | Students applying from within the USA |
| Biometric Appointments | <p>This will take place at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an Application Support Centre (ASC) - the application form should give you an option to choose the nearest ASC in your region; <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Premium Application Centre (PAC) if you choose to pay for a Premium service (Gold/Silver/Bronze). PACs are currently located in New York City, Washington DC, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, Houston, San Francisco, Boston, Atlanta and Seattle. <p>Be aware that you may also need to undertake a short 'credibility interview' during your appointment. Please see this page for the Credibility Interview section</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
|  | Students not applying from within the USA |
| Biometric Appointments | <p>Please check the application process in your home country for a list of locations of Visa Application Centres (VACs).</p> <p>Be aware that you may also need to undertake a short 'credibility interview' during your appointment. Please see this page for the Credibility Interview section</p> |

11. What are 'differentiation arrangements'?

The Home Office considers some countries 'low risk'; these countries have 'differentiation arrangements'. This means that citizens of those countries can submit fewer supporting documents with their application, i.e. evidence of qualifications (academic transcript) and finances (bank statement).

However, ALL STUDENTS must still have these original documents available to them before they apply so that they are ready to submit at short notice. If they want some additional information, the UKVI reserves the right to request any or all of these documents at short notice, and they will refuse your application if you do not provide them by the date stated in their request (usually less than a week).

The Tier 4 application form will ask you to list the supporting documents you will be submitting with your application. If you are eligible for differentiation arrangements, you will enter “Evidence not required under guidance, but held by applicant” in the boxes provided.

12. Who is eligible for 'differentiation arrangements'?

You are eligible for 'differentiation arrangements' if you hold one of the following passports and you make your application from within that country:

- Argentina
- Australia
- Barbados
- Botswana
- British National (Overseas)
- Brunei
- Canada
- Chile
- Hong Kong
- Japan
- Malaysia
- New Zealand
- Oman
- Qatar
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Taiwan*
- Trinidad and Tobago
- United Arab Emirates
- **USA**

**those who hold a passport issued by Taiwan that includes the number of the identification card issued by the competent authority in Taiwan*

Where an applicant is a dual national and only one of their nationalities is listed above, they will be able to apply using the 'differentiation arrangements' provided they are applying from within the country of nationality listed above.

13. What supporting documents do I need?

Please see [Section 2: What do I need before I apply](#) for details of which supporting documents you will need to submit with your application.

14. Do I have to mail anything? If so, when should I do this?

Yes, unless you plan to pay for a Premium service that will ship your application materials for you. Please see [FAQ: How much will the Tier 4 \(General\) visa cost?](#) and [this page](#) for shipping information.

You should aim to mail your application materials **no later than 5 days after of your biometric appointment.**

15. Do I need to take an English test?

Please see 'English Language Ability' on [this page](#) to find out if this will be a requirement for you.

16. Do I need to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)?



All Students

| | |
|---|---|
| If your study abroad program is less than 6 months long: | No. As your course lasts less than 6 months, you do not need to pay the IHS as part of your visa application. |
| If your study abroad program is more than 6 months long: | Yes. You will be required to pay the IHS as part of your visa application. Students are currently required to pay £150 per year of their program. More information on this IHS can be found here . |

17. Will I need a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)?



| All Students | |
|---|---|
| If your study abroad program is less than 6 months long: | <p>No. As your course lasts less than 6 months, you will not be given a BRP. A BRP is a visa in the form of a separate card (like a driving licence) as opposed to a paper visa that is stuck in your passport. Anyone applying for a UK visa for longer than 6 months is required to collect their BRP from a designated Post Office shortly after arriving in the UK.</p> <p>Even though BRP collection does not apply to you, the Tier 4 online application form still has a compulsory section for choosing a BRP Collection Location. You will need to provide a default answer in order to be able to continue with your application. Please see this page for more details on this.</p> |
| If your study abroad program is more than 6 months long: | <p>Yes. You will initially receive a paper visa (vignette) in your passport that only lasts 30 days. This is a “temporary entry” visa. You will travel to the UK within the validity dates of your temporary entry visa and once you are here, you will collect your Tier 4 visa from a nearby designated Post Office. The visa will be in the form of a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), which looks like a driving licence.</p> |

18. I have a conviction. Do I need to declare this in my application?

Yes. Applicants should always declare any type of criminal conviction (including traffic-related offences). The Entry Clearance Officer processing your application may request additional information from you, so be prepared to provide documentation related to the conviction at short notice.

Depending on the circumstances, this may have an impact on the decision but it is important that you complete the form truthfully.

19. How long will my Tier 4 visa last?



| All Students | | |
|--|---|----------|
| If your study abroad program is less than 6 months long: | Period of entry clearance usually granted before the program start date. Your program start date will be listed on your CAS Statement. | 7 days |
| | Period of entry clearance usually granted after the program end date. Your program end date will be listed on your CAS Statement. (Note: the program end date is the last day of academic commitments, not the program move-out/departure date). | 7 days |
| If your study abroad program is more than 6 months, but less than 12 months long: | Period of entry clearance usually granted before the program start date. Your program start date will be listed on your CAS Statement. | 1 month |
| | Period of entry clearance usually granted after the program end date. Your program end date will be listed on your CAS Statement. (Note: the program end date is the last day of academic commitments, not the program move-out/departure date). | 2 months |

20. How early can I travel to the UK?

You will only be able to arrive in the UK to start your program **on or after the 'valid from' date** on your visa (please see the table above). You may be refused entry by UK Border Force if you attempt to arrive before your visa is valid.

If you intend to travel to the UK before the 'valid from' date on your visa, you will be required to:

- **Travel back out of the UK** and the 'Common Travel Area' (Ireland, Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey) before your program begins so that you can re-enter within the validity dates of your Tier 4 visa.
- **Bring proof of your travel out of the UK** (e.g. a printed flight confirmation email) when you initially enter the UK. You will be entering as a 'Standard Visitor' (tourist) so you will need to show the Border Force Officer at passport control that you plan to validate your Tier 4 visa by entering the UK again at a later date.

21. Can I travel to the UK via Ireland?

It is strongly recommended that you **do not** travel to Ireland before arriving in the UK as this can cause complications. The UK and Ireland are in a "Common Travel Area" and so have no passport control between them. This means you would not encounter a UK Border Force Officer and your Tier 4 visa would not be stamped on entry. In this case, you would be required to retain proof of your travel (i.e. boarding pass) from Ireland to the UK to account for the missing entry stamp. You must have a record that you entered the UK within the dates permitted in your Tier 4 visa.



22. What do I need to do at the border when I arrive in the UK?

Please see [Section 4: Arriving in the UK](#) for:

- instructions on what you must have with you at passport control
- information on what you may be asked by the Border Force Officer
- what kind of entry stamp you should receive in order to validate your Tier 4 visa

23. Can I stay in the UK after my Tier 4 visa expires?

You **must leave the UK no later than the 'valid until' date** listed on your Tier 4 visa.

There is no grace period for overstaying your visa, and you cannot 'switch' to being a tourist without leaving the country.

This does not necessarily mean you have to go straight home; you can of course travel through Europe (or anywhere else) on your way home.

It is absolutely essential that you protect your immigration status and that you do not breach your visa regulations in any way, including overstaying. **Overstaying your visa can have serious consequences on future visa applications you make to any country.**

SECTION 2: WHAT DO I NEED BEFORE I APPLY?

SECTION 2: WHAT DO I NEED BEFORE I APPLY?

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1. CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE FOR STUDIES (CAS) NUMBER

To generate a CAS for you, FIE submits information about you and your program to UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI). We then receive your CAS number and send this to you in an email called the 'CAS Statement'. This email also contains instructions that you must follow carefully when completing the Tier 4 Student section of your online visa application.

To be issued with a CAS, you must first do the following:

- ✓ Submit your program application via FIE's online admin system and be accepted
- ✓ Complete the Passport Questionnaire in your application. Before you do this, please see [FAQ: Should I renew my passport before I apply?](#)
- ✓ Complete the Transcript Questionnaire in your application. You must upload a scan of an official academic transcript
- ✓ Complete the English Language Requirement Questionnaire in your application, if this applies to you. Please see [this page](#) for more details on whether you are exempt from taking an English test.

2. MAINTENANCE

The UKVI requires that **ALL STUDENTS** possess sufficient funds ("maintenance") to cover the duration of their studies. The minimum amount of maintenance you are required to have will depend on your FIE program fees and the length of your program.



| All Students | |
|---|--|
| Students eligible for differentiation arrangements | Even though you do not need to submit financial evidence with your application in the first instance, you still need be able to demonstrate that you have the required funds available, using one of the accepted financial document types. This is because the UKVI may request that you provide financial evidence while your application is being processed; your application will be refused if you cannot. |
| Students NOT eligible for differentiation arrangements | You must be able to demonstrate that you have the required funds available, using one of the accepted financial document types. You will be required to submit this evidence with your application. |

a. Tuition Fees

The application form will ask you how much your tuition fees are and if you have already paid them. You must refer to your CAS Statement Email when filling in this section as the details you enter must match your CAS.

- If you have paid your program fees directly to your home institution, we will have confirmed this information in your CAS, and you will not need to show additional evidence that you have paid your tuition.
- If you have paid your program fees directly to FIE in full, we will have confirmed this information in your CAS, and you will not need to show additional evidence that you have paid your tuition.
- If you are paying your program fees directly to FIE and you had not yet paid at the time of receiving the CAS, you may be required to include proof of payment as a supporting document with your application.

In the online application, under the question “Have any of your course fees been paid?” the following options will appear:

- Yes - Paid to Overseas Higher Education Institution
- Yes - Paid to UK Education Institution
- No

You must select the option instructed in your **CAS Statement Email**.

Options for how you are providing evidence of this payment will be as follows:

- Shown in CAS
- An official or original receipt
- Evidence not required under guidance but held by applicant

You must select the option instructed in your **CAS Statement Email**.

b. Living Costs

On top of tuition fees, the UKVI requires **ALL STUDENTS** to have **£1,265 for every month** that they will be in the UK. For example:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} 4 \text{ months} & \times & \text{£1,265} & = & \text{£5,060} \\ 3 \text{ months} & \times & \text{£1,265} & = & \text{£3,795} \end{array}$$

Please note: If your program includes a part of a month, the UKVI will round the time up to the next month when calculating maintenance funds. For example, if your program is eight weeks and four days, you are required to have maintenance for three months.

c. Accommodation Fees

The application form will ask you how much your accommodation (housing) fees are and if you have already paid them. You must refer to your CAS Statement Email when filling in this section as the details you enter must match your CAS.

If you are living in FIE housing during your program, you are allowed to deduct up to one month (maximum of £1,265) from the total amount you are required to have.

For example, a student is participating in a semester program AND staying in FIE accommodation:

$$4 \text{ months} \times \text{£1,265} = \text{£5,060} - \text{£1,265 (for staying in FIE housing)} = \text{£3,795}$$

Your CAS will state if you are staying in FIE housing. In the online application, under the question “Have any of your accommodation fees been paid?” the following options will appear:

- Yes - Paid to Overseas Higher Education Institution
- Yes - Paid to UK Education Institution
- No

You must select the option instructed in your **CAS Statement Email**.

Options for how you are providing evidence of this payment will be as follows:

- Shown in CAS
- An official or original receipt
- Evidence not required under guidance but held by applicant

You must select the option instructed in your **CAS Statement Email**.

d. Currency Conversions

Please note: The UKVI uses the official exchange rate on the [OANDA website](#). Always use this when calculating your funds in an overseas currency.

3. ENGLISH LANGUAGE ABILITY

The UKVI requires that Tier 4 applicants possess a certain level of English. The required level for your program is the equivalent of level B2 on the Common European Framework (CEFR).

a. Exemption categories

The **only** applicants who are exempt from the English language requirement are:

Nationals of a majority English-speaking country:

- Antigua & Barbuda
- Australia
- The Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Canada
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Jamaica
- New Zealand
- St Kitts & Nevis
- St Lucia
- St Vincent & the Grenadines
- Trinidad & Tobago
- **USA**

OR

Those who have completed the equivalent of a UK bachelor's degree which was taught in one of the majority English speaking countries

OR

Those who are applying for a Tier 4 (General) visa in order to participate in a study abroad program in the UK as part of their bachelor's or master's degree at a Higher Education Institution in the USA.

→ **I DO fall into one of these three categories, so I am exempt from the English language requirement**

You can skip to the next section – [Supporting Documents](#)

→ **I DO NOT fall into one of these three categories, what should I do?**

You must provide evidence of your English language ability. See below.

b. Evidence of English language ability

The only UKVI-accepted evidence is the **IELTS Academic Test for UKVI**. This is a Secure English Language Test (SELT) for immigration applications from overseas applicants. An updated list of IELTS test locations can be found on the below links:

- **IELTS Test Locations:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests>
- **Booking a UKVI IELTS test:**
<http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/ielts-ukvi/book-ielts-ukvi>

What scores do I need?

You must achieve a score of at least 5.5 in each of the four skill areas; reading, writing, listening and speaking.

When should I take the IELTS test?

You should arrange to take a test as soon as possible, as it can be difficult to secure a place on one of the tests during busy periods. If you find that you cannot secure a place with one test location, you should try another.

What if I have already taken an English test?

You must have taken the **IELTS Academic Test for UKVI** specifically, and this must have been passed within the two years of the date you submit your visa application.

The UKVI will only accept this type of SELT. They will not accept any other test, including programs such as the International Baccalaureate Diploma or English courses taken in high school.

My university/college already assessed my English language ability. Do I still need to take a test?

Yes. The UKVI will not accept any assessments or waivers made by an overseas institution.

Can I get my CAS before passing the IELTS test?

Under UKVI rules, FIE cannot issue a CAS until we receive a copy of your IELTS test results and confirmed you meet the English Language requirement of the Tier 4 visa.

I have passed my IELTS test, how do I send you my results?

You can do this by logging into your application on FIE's Study Abroad system and accessing the English Language Requirement Questionnaire. Upload a scan (ideally PDF) of the original Test Report Form showing the UKVI test reference number.

When completing your Tier 4 application, you do not need to send your IELTS Test Report Form as supporting evidence as long as you quote your unique UKVI IELTS reference number on your application. You will find this number on your IELTS Test Report Form.

4. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

a. Acceptable types of documents for financial evidence

All Tier 4 applicants must have the required maintenance funds for their studies. Whether or not you need to include financial supporting documents when you submit your application materials depends on whether you are eligible for differentiation arrangements.



| | All Students |
|---|--|
| Students eligible for differentiation arrangements | <p>Even though you do not need to submit evidence that you have the required amount of maintenance funds with your application in the first instance, you still need to have financial evidence that meets the requirements listed in the accepted financial document types.</p> <p>This is because the UKVI may request that you provide financial evidence while your application is being processed; your application will be refused if you cannot.</p> <p>When filling in the online visa application, you will be asked what financial evidence you are submitting with your application. You should enter “Evidence not required under guidance but held by applicant” in the box provided. This means you are confirming that you have funds and you can provide an accepted type of financial document if requested at short notice.</p> |
| Students NOT eligible for differentiation arrangements | <p>You must submit supporting evidence with your application otherwise it will be rejected. You can submit evidence in one or more of four accepted financial document types:</p> |

i. Funds from an account in your name

You can submit a statement or letter from your bank confirming that you hold the required funds in a bank account in your own name. The statement(s) or letter must show:

- That you have had the **required funds in your account for at least 28 days prior** to making your visa application.
- The account balance has not dropped below the required amount during the 28-day period.
- The date of the bank statement or letter. This must be **dated within 1 month** of the date you submit your visa application.
- Your name, account number and the financial institution's name and logo.
- The funds must be **cash funds**, held in a regular current/checking account or a savings account. Salary, stocks, shares portfolios, property value or other non-cash assets are not acceptable.

Please note: You can contact lobrien@fie.org.uk if you wish to request a **bank letter template**.

ii. Funds from an account in a parent/guardian's name

You can submit a statement or letter from your parent/legal guardian's bank confirming all of the criteria in (A) above. In addition, you must also submit the following:

- Your original (or a notarised copy) long form birth certificate, adoption certificate or court document confirming legal guardian status; AND
- A signed and dated letter from the parent(s)/guardian(s), confirming your relationship to them, the funds available, and that they give their consent for you to use these funds to study in the UK.

iii. Official Financial Sponsorship

An 'official financial sponsor' is ONLY one of the following: A university, your home government, an international organisation or company, the UK government, the British Council or an independent school in the UK **who is covering your course and accommodation costs with a scholarship or grant**. No one else will count as a UKVI official financial sponsor, including a federal loan, your parents, or any other private sponsor.

If you have an official financial sponsor who is covering your maintenance costs, you will need to submit a letter of confirmation from your sponsor stating the following:

- Your name
- The name and contact details of the sponsor
- The date of the letter
- The length of the sponsorship
- The amount of money your sponsor is giving to you, or a statement that they will cover all of your fees and/or living costs.

iv. Student Loans

You can also use student loans from a financial institution or organisation in your home country. The financial institution must be regulated by the official regulatory body in the country where they are based.

You will need to submit a letter from the financial institution stating the following:

- Your name
- The financial institution's name and logo
- The date of the letter
- The amount of money available as a loan
- That the money is provided by your national government, a government sponsored Student Loan Company or part of an academic/educational loans scheme.

Please note: The UKVI has created a list of financial institutions which they consider do not verify financial information to their satisfaction. Students will receive no points for maintenance funds if they submit documents showing that their funds are held in one of these financial institutions. You can find list of these institutions [here](#).

b. Academic Transcripts

The official academic transcript must be the original (not a copy) and must clearly show:

- your name; and
- the name of the academic institution; and
- the title of your course or qualification; and
- course dates



| All Students | |
|---|--|
| Students eligible for differentiation arrangements | <p>Even though you do not need to submit an official academic transcript ('qualification evidence') with your application in the first instance, you still need to have one that meets the requirements listed above.</p> <p>This is because the UKVI may request that you provide qualification evidence while your application is being processed; your application will be refused if you cannot.</p> |
| Students NOT eligible for differentiation arrangements | <p>If you do not qualify for differentiation arrangements, you must submit evidence that you meet the academic requirements of your program, by providing an official academic transcript that meets the requirements listed above.</p> |

c. Translations

ALL supporting documents that are not in English must be officially translated by a certified translator. You must submit original documents as well as the original certified translation with your application.

Translations must include the following:

- That it is an accurate translation of the original document
- The date of the translation
- The translator's full name and signature
- The translator's contact details

d. Photograph

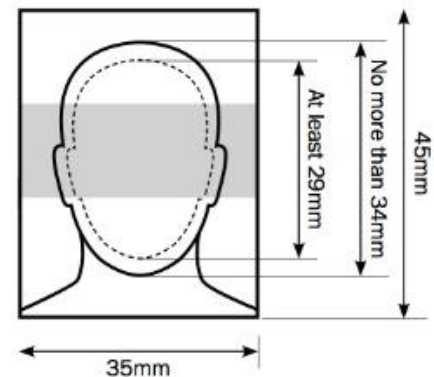
ALL applicants must submit a photograph with the visa application. This is in addition to the photo taken at your biometric appointment. Your photo must:

- measure 45mm x 35mm (standard size in the **UK/EU**)
- not be a cut down version of a larger picture

Full list of criteria for photographs can be found [here](#)

I am having trouble finding a location that will take a photo that is 35mm x 45mm. Would it be possible for me to trim one of these photos myself and send it with the application?

Do not trim photographs as they may be rejected. Take the time to find a photo service that can issue 45mm x 35mm photos.



SECTION 3: COMPLETING THE TIER 4 APPLICATION PROCESS

| | |
|---|-------|
| <u>Step 1: Receive CAS Statement Email from FIE</u> | 19 |
| <u>Step 2a: Complete Online Application Form</u> | 19-21 |
| <u>Step 2b: Next Steps of Online Application</u> | 22-23 |
| <u>Step 3: Attend Biometric Appointment</u> | 24 |
| <u>Step 4: Mail Application Materials</u> | 25-27 |
| <u>Step 5: Receive & Check Tier 4 Visa</u> | 28 |

STEP 1: RECEIVE CAS STATEMENT EMAIL FROM FIE

FIE will send your CAS Statement email which will contain your CAS number and guidance on how to complete the Tier 4 section on your online visa application. This email will be emailed directly to the address you provided in your Profile on FIE's Study Abroad system.

Once you receive the email, you should check that all the information listed for you is correct.

What should I do if I find an error on the CAS Statement?

Please send FIE an email describing the error. We will then update your information on the UKVI's system.

What if any of my information changes (for e.g. I renew my passport)?

Please let us know immediately if you have renewed or are going to renew your passport after your CAS has been issued. Your passport number is an important detail on your CAS and we will need to amend it if you have a new passport. Your visa application may be refused if your CAS has a different passport number than the one you submit with your application.

Please note: It is your responsibility to let FIE know of any errors on your CAS statement or any changes to your information.

STEP 2a: COMPLETE ONLINE APPLICATION FORM

REGISTER YOUR ACCOUNT with Visa4UK: <https://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/>

- Make a note of your username and password.
WARNING: Make sure you make a note of the email address and password you have used to create your account. Keep them safe. You may have trouble resetting the account and submitting your application on time if you lose these details.
- Follow the link sent to your email address and log in

CREATE YOUR APPLICATION.

Click Apply for Myself and read the Important Information. Click Continue

- Complete section: Applicant Details. Enter your passport details and intended date of travel.
Please note: You will not be able to come to UK before the start date on the visa. Be aware that your visa will be issued to start no earlier than one week before the start of the FIE program.
- Please make sure that you read the important information that is displayed when you select your country of residence as there may be specific requirements for visa applications made there.
- Select your Visa Type:
 - Reason for Visit: **Study**
 - Visa Type: **PBS Tier 4 Student**
 - Visa Sub Type: **Tier 4 (General) Student**
- Click Create Application. **Make a note of your unique application reference number.**



WARNING: Please save your answers regularly as you fill in the form so changes are not lost. There is a Save button on the left hand side. If you do not write anything for several minutes you will be automatically logged out, and changes will be lost.

FILL IN THE FORM

Most questions are straightforward and have a brief explanation on the right-hand side. Below we have listed answers to some questions on the form which you may find difficult to answer.



In this section you will need to enter the details of your passport and all other passports/travel documents held over the last 10 years. It also requires information about family members who may be travelling with you and your address in London.

- **Given Name/Forename(s) & Family Name/Surname**
Even if your CAS statement email contains only your first and last name, you still need to enter your **full name** as it appears on your passport
- **Place of Issue**
If your place of issue does not fit into this box for example 'United States Department of State' then you can simply enter 'U.S.DOS' or 'USA'
- **Is this your first passport?**
If you have held previous passports, you will be asked to give details of each. If your expired passports are no longer in your possession, you can just answer the mandatory questions marked with an asterisk*: 'Nationality' and 'Is this travel document lost, stolen or in your possession'. You should also confirm in the 'Additional Information' section that your expired passport(s) are not in your possession.
- **Date of planned arrival in the UK?**
You should **not** plan to arrive in the UK more than one week before the start of your program, as your visa will not be valid yet.
- **Are you a national of the country in which you're applying?**
If you're making your application from within a country other than your country of nationality you will need evidence that you have the right to reside there. You cannot apply for a visa from a country in which you are only a Visitor. The form asks you to state the permission you have to be in that country.
- **How long do you intend to stay in the UK?**
Put the length of your FIE course (the end date of your course is listed in your CAS Statement email)
- **What is the main address and contact details of where you will be staying whilst in the UK?**

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Name of Person/Hotel: | FIE: Metrogate House |
| Line 1: | 3-7 Queen's Gate Terrace |
| Line 2: | London |
| Postcode: | SW7 5PE |
| Primary contact no: | 020 7808 0130 |
| Email: | admin@fie.org.uk |

Personal Details and Travel History

This section asks for information about your immigration history. Please answer as fully and accurately as possible. If you can't remember the exact dates of your previous trips, at least confirm the month e.g. June 2013.

For students who have previously held UK visas: Some questions will ask for the Home Office reference number for that visa application. This should be on the letter that accompanied your visa but if you cannot find it, please write 'not known' in the field.

- **Have you travelled to the UK in the last 10 years?**

You should enter up to 5 of your most recent visits. If you cannot remember the exact dates, once you have entered the purpose, please write 'dates are approximate'; e.g. 'Tourism – dates are approximate'

- **Have you ever travelled outside your country of residence, excluding the UK, in the last 10 years?**

Please do the same as you did for the previous question. If you have travelled extensively over the last 10 years, you can give details in the 'Additional Information' section at the end of the application.

Family Details

You will need to enter the details of your parents, including their dates and places of birth.

Medical Treatment

If you visited the UK before and required medical treatment, enter the address of the doctor's office or hospital where you received treatment.

Tier 4 Student

Please note: You **must not** complete this section until you receive your CAS statement, as your responses must match the details sent to you by FIE. Your **CAS Statement email** will have instructions on how to complete the Tier 4 Student section of the application form.

Additional Information

You do not have to enter anything in this section. However, you can use this section to input any additional information you wish to be considered as part of your application.

Confirm Application

When everything is complete, '**confirm**' your application. You should be able to read through your answers and check for any mistakes.

When you are happy, '**submit**' your application.

Please note: you will not be able to make any amendments to it after this stage.

STEP 2b: NEXT STEPS OF ONLINE APPLICATION

1. SIGN DECLARATION

Click on the *Sign Declaration* button on the My Applications screen to sign your application.


2. BIOMETRIC RESIDENCE PERMIT (BRP) COLLECTION LOCATION

Click on the *BRP Collection Location* button to complete this section.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>If your study abroad program is less than 6 months long:</p> | <p>BRPs are only issued to visa holders who will be in the UK longer than 6 months, so you will not receive one; your visa will be in the form of a paper vignette stuck in your passport (as opposed to a plastic BRP card).</p> <p>Despite this, you will still be asked the question about BRP collection. You should just select the default allocated Post Office and continue with the application. If you are not allocated a default Post Office, please enter the postcode for FIE (Foundation House): SW7 4ES</p> |
| <p>If your study abroad program is more than 6 months long:</p> | <p>You will initially receive a paper visa (vignette) in your passport that only lasts 30 days. This is a "temporary entry" visa.</p> <p>You will travel to the UK within the validity dates of your temporary entry visa and once you are here, you will collect your Tier 4 BRP from a nearby designated Post Office within 10 days. In this section, you should select the default allocated Post Office or if you are not allocated a default Post Office, please enter the postcode for FIE (Foundation House): SW7 4ES.</p> |

3. BOOK A BIOMETRIC APPOINTMENT

All applicants must attend an in-person biometric appointment. At this appointment you will have your fingerprints and photograph taken.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Students applying from within the USA</p>  | <p>You should first select your Region and then the Application Support Centers (ASCs) in that region will be displayed to you. You can then view and select an available date and time at your chosen ASC. Select an ASC if you are using the Standard or Priority application service.</p> <div data-bbox="321 1312 1149 1774" style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px;"> <p>Country UNITED STATES</p> <p>Region <input type="text" value="Illinois"/></p> <p>Appointment Location <input type="text" value="Select Appointment Location"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select Appointment Location Premium Application Center, Chicago Chicago-Broadway Chicago-Norridge Chicago-Pulaski Naperville Waukegan, IL </div> <p>Be careful when you select the appointment location. Unless you wish to use a Premium application service (Gold/ Silver/ Bronze), you should not select a Premium Application Center (PAC). This will book your appointment at a site that will charge an additional fee to handle your application.</p> <p>PACs are currently located in New York City, Washington DC, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, Houston, San Francisco, Boston, Atlanta and Seattle.</p> |
|---|---|

Students not applying from within the USA



There are two methods of making an appointment, dependent upon your location. For some locations you will be directed to make your appointment as a step in the application process. For other locations you need to arrange your appointment directly with the VAC.

Please check the [application process](#) in your home country for information arranging appointments.

4. PAY FOR IHS (IMMIGRATION HEALTH SURCHARGE)

Click on the *Pay for IHS* button to complete this section.

| | |
|---|--|
| If your study abroad program is less than 6 months long: | You will be directed to the IHS payment page and will be required to complete a questionnaire in order to get an IHS reference number. At the end of this process, you will be redirected back to your application and the IHS reference number will be added to your application but you will not be charged. You can then proceed to the next step and pay for your visa application. |
| If your study abroad program is more than 6 months long: | You will be required to pay the IHS as part of your visa application. Students are currently required to pay £150 per year of their program. More information on this IHS can be found here . You will be directed to the IHS payment page and will be required to complete a questionnaire in order to get an IHS reference number. At the end of this process, you will be redirected back to your application and the IHS reference number will be added to your application. You can then proceed to the next step and pay for your visa application. |

5. PAY FOR APPLICATION

Click on the *Pay for Application* button to pay the visa application fee of **£335 GBP** in your [local currency](#).

By mail - applicants must | ▾
Please Select
By mail - applicants must provide a prepaid return shipping label and packaging.
For Travel Agent Use Only

On the Supporting Documents screen select **By Mail** from the dropdown menu which asks how you would like your documents returned.

If you are paying by credit card, we recommend you advise your credit card company that you will making this transaction before doing this. Otherwise, the payment might be blocked.

6. PRINT APPLICATION

You must print out the whole application, including the confirmation page containing a barcode. This must be taken to the biometrics appointment where the barcode is scanned. The confirmation page is then stamped to show your biometrics have been taken.

Please note: It is a good idea to keep a printed copy of your application for your own records.

STEP 3: ATTEND YOUR BIOMETRIC APPOINTMENT

Please make sure you arrive on time and in the correct location for your biometric appointment. At this appointment, your "biometrics" (fingerprints and photograph) will be taken. These are security measures for the UK that all visa applicants must fulfil.

You will need to bring the following to your biometric appointment:

- **your passport**
- **a printout of your entire online application, INCLUDING your appointment confirmation page with barcode**

Do not forget your passport, the online application printout and the appointment confirmation page. Without them, your biometrics cannot be taken and your application will be cancelled. This will mean that you will have to start the application process again, including paying the fee.

At the appointment, please ensure that the appointment confirmation page with the barcode is stamped as you will need to send this with your application for processing.

Please note: After your biometric appointment, you will only have **5 DAYS** to mail your application materials to the UKVI.

Credibility Interviews

Depending on your circumstances, you may also be asked to undertake a short credibility interview. The purpose of these interviews is to confirm that the applicant is a genuine student with legitimate reasons for coming to the UK. If you are asked to undertake an interview, it will take place when you go to have your biometrics taken. The interview will normally be conducted by secure telecommunications system (similar to Skype), conducted in English, with a member of staff at the Home Office in the UK. It should last less than 10 minutes and should be quite informal.

You may be asked questions like:

- Why do you want to study in the UK?
- Why did you choose to study with FIE?
- How did your studies fit into your future career plans?
- Where will you be living during your studies?
- What is the level of your course?
- Are you planning to work while you are in the UK?
- How are you financing your studies while you are in the UK?

The Home Office will want to be satisfied that you are genuine student who can communicate in English to the required level, and that you have the necessary funds to pay for your studies and living costs. If there are technical problems with the video link and you cannot hear properly, please make sure you point this out to the interviewer. Afterwards, an interview report will then be sent to the Entry Clearance Officer processing your visa application.



You may be called for a longer face to face or telephone interview if the Entry Clearance Officer needs more information. If you are requested to attend an interview, notification will be sent to the email address you provided on your online application form.

What happens if I cannot attend the interview?

Attendance at the interview is mandatory. If you do not attend without a satisfactory explanation your visa application will be automatically refused. You may be able to reschedule your appointment in advance, but not if you have missed it.

STEP 4: MAIL YOUR APPLICATION MATERIALS

a. Document Checklist

| Document | Information | Who Does This Apply To? |
|--|--|---|
| Passport | You must submit your original passport (not a copy). | All students |
| Printout of Online Application | This is the application you completed at the visa4uk website. You must include ALL the pages, including the one that shows payment for your visa. | All students |
| Biometric Appointment Confirmation Page | This is the page with a barcode that was stamped at your biometric appointment. | All students |
| Letter of Support for Tier 4 (General) Student visa application | You will receive this letter from FIE. It will contain your CAS number and information about your study abroad course. | All students |
| 1 X Colour Photograph <i>This is in addition to the photo taken at your biometric appointment.</i> | Your photo must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measure 45 mm x 35mm (standard size in the UK/EU) • not be a cut down version of a larger picture | All students Full list of criteria for photographs can be found here |
| Financial Evidence | Evidence that you hold the minimum funds required for maintenance , in an acceptable form (e.g. bank statement). | Students who DO NOT qualify for the differentiation arrangements . |
| Academic Transcript | An official academic transcript from your home institution. | Students who DO NOT qualify for the differentiation arrangements . |
| Return shipping / Submission | Prepaid electronic shipping label and appropriate packaging from an accepted provider. |  Students applying from within the USA, using the Standard or Priority service |
| | Follow the submission instructions given by your particular Visa Application Centre (VAC). |  Students not applying from within the USA |

b. Shipping Information



Students not applying from within the USA:

The following section only applies to applications made within the USA. You must follow the shipping/submission instructions given by your [particular Visa Application Centre](#) (VAC).

RETURN SHIPPING LABEL

The UKVI only accepts a **specific type of prepaid electronic shipping label**, available to purchase on the [VFS Global website](#):

- Round trip shipping labels: \$ 53.00 USD
- Return shipping label only: \$ 34.00 USD

This pricing information is correct as of Oct 2017

WARNING: FedEx and US Postal Service shipping labels are NOT accepted. If you are using the Standard or Priority application processing service, you must buy your shipping label ("courier service") from [VFS Global](#) as they are officially partnered with the UKVI.

Please include your return shipping label and envelope with the application package, and keep a copy of the waybill for your records.

Country of Residence * United States Of America

Visa Category * -Select Value-

Decision Making Center *

- Other fees
- Other fees (Channel Islands and Isle of Man)
- Other student visas
- Other Visa
- Other Visas
- Other work categories – Channel Islands and Isle of Man
- Points Based System (Isle of Man) Tier 1
- Points Based System (Isle of Man) Tier 2
- Points Based System (isle of Man) Tier 4
- Points Based System (Isle of Man) Tier 5
- Points Based System Tier 1 (UK mainland)
- Points Based System Tier 2 (UK mainland)
- Points Based System Tier 4 (UK mainland)**
- Points Based System Tier 5 (UK Mainland)

When selecting the type of Visa for the shipping label, do I select "PBS Tier 4 (UK Mainland)" or "Other Student Visas"?

Select "Points Based System Tier 4 (UK Mainland)"

I need to purchase a new courier label. The VFS global website will not allow me to repurchase a roundtrip courier label.

UPS can duplicate the label you have purchased from the VFS Global website.

I accidentally used a method of return shipping which is not accepted by the Consulate. My application has already been sent. What should I do?

- Go to the [VFS Global website](#) and purchase a return shipping label
- Save the shipping label/waybill as a PDF or other image.
- Email it to info.vfsnewyork@vfsglobal.com immediately. Make sure the subject of the email includes your application reference number, e.g. "Shipping Waybill – GWF*****"
- Include your full name, date of birth and GWF number in the body of the email.

WHERE TO SEND

For all applications made within the United States, send your application materials to:

**Non-settlement applications
UK Visas and Immigration
British Consulate General
845 Third Avenue
New York, 10022**

WHEN TO SUBMIT

Everything must be submitted **within 5 days of completing your biometric appointment**. You should send all your documentation as soon as you have completed your biometric appointment and collected all required supporting documents.

HOW TO SUBMIT

If applying from within the USA, your application processing service options are as follows:

| | Standard Service | Priority Service | Premium Services (Gold, Silver or Bronze) |
|---|--|--|--|
| Notes | | Optional service to have your visa application processed ahead of non-priority applications. | Optional services that enable applicants to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •receive a faster decision and/or •attend a walk-in appointment |
| Fee <i>in addition to application fee and shipping costs</i> | \$0 | Currently \$250 USD | Varies depending on which service chosen (Gold /Silver /Bronze) |
| Typical processing time | Typically, 15 working days (excluding posting time). Please allow extra time if applying over a holiday period. | Typically, 5 working days (excluding posting time). Please allow extra time if applying over a holiday period. | Gold: next day Silver: 5 working days Bronze: 15 working days |
| Means of submission | Applicant mails application documents to British Consulate in New York after biometric appointment | Applicant mails application documents British Consulate in New York, along with a receipt that the Priority Service has been purchased, and clearly marking the outermost envelope 'Priority Service'. Information on how to purchase the Priority Service can be found here | Applicants attends an in-person appointment at a one of 10 Premium Application Centers (PACs) with their application documents. Information on how to purchase the Premium Services and the difference between them can be found here |

STEP 5: RECEIVE AND CHECK YOUR TIER 4 VISA

It is very important that you check your visa to make sure that all the information is correct.

Below, you will find an example of what your visa should look like when it is pasted into your passport. Make sure that the sections highlighted in the example are correct. If you believe any of the information on your visa is incorrect, please email us **immediately** with a clear scan of your visa.



- **Check the dates of validity*:**
They should cover the duration of your course. It is particularly important that you check the 'valid until' date. Remember, the start and end dates of your visa depend on the [length of your program](#) and whether you will need a [BRP after you arrive in the UK](#).

- **Check the type:**
Tier 4 (General) Student

- **Entry stamp:**
Your visa should be stamped by a Border Force Officer when you enter the UK.

WARNING: DO NOT enter the UK before your 'Valid from' date.

- **Check your details:**
Make sure your name, date of birth and passport number are correct

- **Check the Sponsor Licence:**
WRXMF40W2

My visa application has been returned because I did not submit all the required documents. What should I do?

You will have received a letter from the Home Office explaining why your application was returned. The letter will also state if you can re-submit your application with the missing document(s). You should do this immediately and return your application to the Consulate by registered mail.

If you are not sure why your application has been returned, you should scan the letter you received and email it to lobrien@fie.org.uk or admin@fie.org.uk. We can then advise you further.

My visa application has been refused. What should I do?

You will have received a letter from the Home Office explaining why your application was refused. You should scan the letter you received and email it to lobrien@fie.org.uk or admin@fie.org.uk. Please also include scans of all supporting documents you submitted. We can then advise you further.

SECTION 4: ARRIVING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

What documents will I need other than my passport?

- You will receive a Tier 4 Letter of Support from FIE prior to your departure confirming that you will be a student in the UK and giving details of your program. This letter can be presented to a Border Force Officer if they ask for information about your studies.
- Keep recent bank statements and the address of your accommodation (if you are not staying in FIE housing) in your hand luggage. as Border Force Officers may ask to see this information.

What should I do at passport control?

- **Make sure that you have your Tier 4 visa endorsed with an entry stamp by the Border Force Officer.** It would be helpful if you have your passport already open on the visa page when you present it to them.
- Expect Border Force officers to ask simple questions about your stay in the UK when you arrive at passport control.
- Have your passport ready. Remove it from any cover.
- Complete the landing card given to you during your flight before you arrive at border control.

Anything else?

- Do not bring in any meat or dairy products from outside the European Union (EU). There are restrictions on traditional medicines, food products such as fish, eggs and honey, and some fruit, vegetables and plants (including bulbs, seeds, cut flowers and tree bark).
- Never give false or misleading information (including forged or counterfeit documents).
- You must declare cash of 10,000 Euros or more (or the equivalent in another currency) if you are travelling from a country outside the EU.
- There are also restrictions on the amount of tobacco, alcohol and gifts you can bring to the UK. If you exceed your duty-free allowance and do not declare them, all of your items could be taken away from you.
- Never bring in counterfeit goods, illegal drugs, offensive weapons or indecent or obscene material. Some items are restricted and will require a licence or permit.