Working in the UK - visa guidance for early years PhD students

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International Student Office

• Provides a visa advice service.
• Area of expertise is student-related visas.
• Information and guidance on post-study visa options.
Agenda

• Working on Tier 4
• Graduate Immigration Route
• Doctorate Extension Scheme
• Tier 2
The UK Government is currently reviewing the UK visa system, working towards EEA and Swiss nationals becoming subject to immigration controls following Brexit.

A global immigration system for the UK is expected to be introduced from January 2021.

The information included in this presentation is therefore subject to change.
University’s restrictions

- PhD students can work a maximum of 10 hours per week with the approval of their supervisor. The work must be academic-related, outreach work on behalf of the University or work related to professional or career development.

- Academic year for graduate students is continuous throughout the year (1 October – 30 September). Breaks for holidays permitted but these periods are not to be used for employment or internships.

- University’s restrictions do not apply once you submit your thesis for examination (unless viva outcome is ‘revise and resubmit’).
Working during studies on Tier 4 as a PhD student

- Work for up to 20 hours a week.

- After submission of thesis for examination, it depends on the stage of the process:
  - Period between softbound submission and official notification of viva outcome is considered a vacation and you can work full-time on a Tier 4 visa.
  - Period between viva outcome and unconditional approval of degree is a return to full-time studies, and work is restricted to 20 hours a week.

- Unlimited hours after course completion.
Working during studies on Tier 4

Cannot:

• Be self-employed;

• Engage in business activity (if visa granted after April 2016);

• Fill a full-time permanent position;

• Work as a professional sportsperson (including coach), an entertainer or a doctor in training.

Further details: [www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/tier-4-responsibilities/working-tier-4-visa](http://www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/tier-4-responsibilities/working-tier-4-visa)
Graduate Immigration Route

• Government announced in September 2019 it was introducing a new ‘Graduate Immigration Route’ which will enable international students to switch to a two year post-study visa on completion of degree.

• Full details have not yet been confirmed.

www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/immigration/work-visas-after-study/graduate-immigration-route
Graduate Immigration Route – what we know so far

- Will be introduced Summer 2021.
- A sponsor will not be required.
- Eligibility will be based on successful completion of degree and holding a valid Tier 4 visa.
- A new visa application will need to be made in the UK but the process will be simple.
- Can work in any sector and at any level.
- Will be possible to switch into the skilled work route (subject to meeting the requirements).
Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme

• A one year post-study visa for **PhD students only**.

• Must apply inside UK.

• Designed as a bridge from Tier 4 to Tier 2.

• Type of work unrestricted except cannot work as a doctor or dentist in training, sports person or coach.

• Visa valid for 12 months from expected completion date.
Tier 2 (General)

For those who obtain an offer for a graduate level job with a registered Sponsor, paying industry equivalent salary either before your Tier 4 visa expires or from overseas if you meet other requirements.

Tier 2 (General)

- Employer must be on [Tier 2 Sponsor Register](#).

- Job must be at graduate level or above as outlined in the [Immigration Rules Appendix J](#): code of practice for skilled work.

- Minimum salary level specific to occupation, also outlined in Immigration Rules Appendix J:
  - ‘New entrant’ rate is applicable to those switching from Tier 4.
  - Lowest possible is £20800 but many occupations higher.
Special provisions for switching between Tier 4 to Tier 2 in the UK:

- Employers are exempt from having to undertake the Resident Labour Market Test.
- Issuing of Certificate of Sponsorship is not subject to national limit.
- Employer does not have to pay the Immigration Skills Charge.
Tier 2 (General)

Switching requirements:

• Completed a minimum 12 months study in the UK towards a UK PhD*.

• Applying inside the UK.

*If switching into Tier 2 prior to completion of PhD, the International Student Office can issue a letter to confirm you have completed at least 12 months of study. If switching after completion, you can use an official transcript or certificate.
International Student Office

Further information:

www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/visas-after-studying

Email: international.students@admin.cam.ac.uk