

Research Degrees: Guidance notes series

**#9.** STUDENTS STUDYING UNDER A TIER 4 VISA

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## # 9. STUDENTS STUDYING UNDER A TIER 4 VISA

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### Related documents

Policy 2R: Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students  
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/documents/academic-services/academic-handbook/section-2/2r---regulations-for-pgr-students.pdf?t=1534525946909>

Solent University UKVI Tier 4 Handbook  
[UKVI Tier 4 Compliance Handbook](#)

### Further reading

## KEY PRINCIPLES

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1. All students seeking advice relating to visa and immigration should contact the International Support Team in the first instance by either contacting [internationalsupport@solent.ac.uk](mailto:internationalsupport@solent.ac.uk) or visiting the Student Hub, located in the Andrews Building.
2. Support from the University for a visa application does not guarantee the approval of a visa application from the Home Office.
3. The University, as a Tier 4 Sponsor has certain responsibilities and rules which it is required to follow by the Home Office. The University's [UKVI Tier 4 Compliance Handbook](#) sets out how the University meets its duties in respect of Sponsor License and specific University Policy relating to Tier 4 sponsored students.

## ADMISSION

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4. Upon acceptance of an offer to study, students requiring a Tier 4 student visa to study in the UK are asked to pay a deposit of £3,000 before the Admissions and Enrolment Team can raise a CAS number (Confirmation of Acceptance to Study). A CAS is confirmation the University is supporting a student's visa application and a mandatory requirement for Tier 4 visa applications.
5. Copies of all original documentation are required before raising a CAS; the original documents will need to be verified at registration. Once all documentation has been received raising a CAS number can take up to three working days.
6. Students must meet with University Admissions and Enrolment Team at the start of their course to complete their registration. Failure to do so will result in Tier 4 sponsorship being withdrawn and the visa cancelled.
7. Students may register and commence their studies with the University whilst their Tier 4 visa application is pending with the Home Office (if the visa application was made in the UK and prior to their previous visa expiring). However, they must show evidence that they have a current application with the Home Office and sign the 'Tier 4 visa disclaimer form' when they enrol.
8. If a student's visa application is later refused by the Home Office, their registration at the University is terminated immediately.

### Changes to registration status

9. The University informs the Home Office of all suspended or withdrawn international students holding a Tier 4 visa. Students with an illness exceeding a consistent six week period would be required to suspend their registration. For further information on Home Office Tier 4 Policy, students are advised to visit Solent University's International Team, [internationalsupport@solent.ac.uk](mailto:internationalsupport@solent.ac.uk) for further information.

## CONTACT DETAILS

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10. The University is required to hold up to date contact details for Tier 4 visa students. If a student's contact details change (address, phone number, email), they need to log into the [portal to update](#).

## ATTENDANCE MONITORING

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11. The University is legally required to monitor the attendance of Tier 4 visa-sponsored students. In alignment with this requirement, doctoral research students must visit Doctoral Student Administration in RIE at each contact point throughout the year, of which there are twelve. Details of these contact points are provided to students at the beginning of each academic session.
12. Where a student is unable to attend a contact point, students must seek approval for their absence from a member of their supervisory team using the RD11HA form and they must have the request logged in by Doctoral Student Administration in advance.
13. Students who fail to attend a contact point without a satisfactory reason approved by a member of their supervisory team and recorded on their RD11HA form, must report to Doctoral Student Administration in person on the next working day.
14. Failure to attend on the next working day will result in the initiation of a staged withdrawal process resulting in the student being withdrawn from their programme of study and reported to the Home Office.
15. Student and supervisors are expected to meet on a regular basis and are required to keep a written record of all their supervisory meetings. Students and supervisors must be able to show such records to Doctoral Student Administration on request and at each Annual Monitoring point (*see Guidance note 11*).
16. Supervisors who are concerned by a student's lack of engagement with their research should contact Doctoral Student Administration immediately.
17. Students are permitted leave during University closure periods (Christmas) and Bank Holidays, (not summer). In addition to University closure periods, Postgraduate Research students are permitted to take a further 35 days annual leave and should contact Doctoral Student Administration for more information.

## VISA EXTENSIONS

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18. Students who need to apply to extend their student visa should seek advice from the International Support Team at the earliest possible opportunity. Students are strongly advised to apply for their Tier 4 student visa through the University's 'check and send' service, available through the International Support Team.
19. A student may need to apply to extend their visa to complete their course, for example once the outcome of their viva examination is known. Please note, the University is only able to continue/extend Tier 4 sponsorship if a student's continued participation is required on the course e.g the student is required to maintain contact with their supervisor and can continue to attend monthly meetings (*as per guidance note 11*).
20. The University calculates end of registration dates on CAS applications by the thesis submission date plus three months to take into account time for the viva examination.

21. If a course of study requires an ATAS certificate and a student needs to make a new Tier 4 visa application they must make a new ATAS application and clearance must be granted before a new CAS can be issued. Students will also need to make a new ATAS application if they change their area of research or switch to one of the courses that requires ATAS. Please see the [ATAS portal page](#) for more information.
22. If student foresee a problem in submitting their thesis within the maximum registration period for their mode of study, in addition to seeking advice from their supervisory team, they should contact Doctoral Student Administration to seek advice immediately with regards to the implications this will have on their visa.
  - a) Students awarded an MPhil are not permitted to extend their Tier 4 visa
  - b) Students failing without the right to resubmit are not permitted to extend their Tier 4 student visa

## WORKING DURING STUDIES

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23. Most Tier 4 students have immigration permission which allows them to work during their studies. However, the hours and type of work can do are restricted, e.g maximum 20 hours per week during term time, as specified on the BRP card. Please note, research students are only outside of term time when periods of leave, *as per guidance note 17* have been granted.
24. Tier 4 visa students are not permitted to be self-employed or engaged in Business Activity, which includes, setting up a business, being employed for a company in which you hold shares of 10% or more or holding a statutory role, such as a director.

## DOCTORATE EXTENSION SCHEME (DES)

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25. The Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES) is designed to allow students who have almost finished their PhD to apply for an additional 12 months of Tier 4 (General) immigration permission, enabling them to look for employment, set up a business or start work in the UK.
26. Please note, students have a short window to apply for a DES visa and the timing of the application is important. Students who are interested in the scheme should contact the International Support Team at least two-months prior to your viva examination to arrange a meeting to start preparing documents and discuss the timing of their visa application.
27. For more information and eligibility students should contact the International Support Team or view the [University Portal](#).