

University of Chester

Protect Your Visa: A Guide for International Students

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This document is available in alternative formats upon request. Please allow a minimum of 3 working days notice for the completion of your request.

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Welcome

Congratulations on your acceptance for study at the University of Chester and successfully applying for your visa to enter the UK. You already know that you will need to study hard in order to complete your degree, but you will also need to keep your visa valid to be entitled to remain in the UK.

There are several rules and requirements you need to follow in order to protect your visa. This is sometimes referred to as protecting your 'Leave to Remain'. This document provides a summary of the rules and requirements that you will need to follow in order to retain your Leave to Remain. For the full details please read the letter that was issued with your visa and the relevant policy guidance available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>

Whilst this guide is aimed at students who require a Tier 4 (General) visa, there is a section for non-Tier 4 visa holders towards the end of this document. The information contained in this guide was accurate at the time of printing, but immigration rules are subject to change so for the most up-to-date version of this document, please go to the version held on the University website:

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/protect-your-visa>.

This document is divided into separate sections for each part of your student journey: Enrolment, During your Studies, and Completing your studies. There is also an Immigration Matters and FAQ section, and a list of useful web sites has been provided at the end of the guide.

Enrolment

As well as being essential for you to get started on your programme of study at Chester, enrolment is also an important step in maintaining your Tier 4 visa. For Tier 4 students, enrolment is split into three parts:

1. Online enrolment

Online enrolment is completed by all students on our website <https://pass.chester.ac.uk/>. As part of this process you are required to provide your photograph, agree to the University's rules, confirm your course details, and provide your UK address and phone number. You should always complete your online enrolment **before** you attend the International Centre.

2. Payment of Tuition Fees

During the online enrolment process new students will be asked (if you have not already done so) to pay 50% of the fees remaining after your deposit.

Returning

students need to

pay 50% of the total fee. This payment must be made to complete your enrolment. You may be required to log back into your online enrolment and complete the final pages once your fees have been paid.

Remember

Failing to pay your Tuition Fees will result in you not being enrolled and may mean that you will have to leave the UK.

3. Report to the International Centre

Your enrolment will not be completed until you provide all the relevant documents to the International Centre, who are based at **20B George Street, Chester, CH1 3EQ**. The International Centre will take copies of your documents to store in your file.

ALL international students MUST provide proof of their leave to remain in the UK as part of the enrolment process.

The documents you will be required to provide are as follows:

- ✓ Your passport
- ✓ Your visa
- ✓ Proof of English Language (if mentioned on your CAS)
- ✓ Previous qualifications
- ✓ ATAS certificate (if applicable)

Top Tip

You must provide *ALL* these documents to complete the enrolment process.

Shortly after enrolment you will also be required to provide a copy of your Police Registration Certificate, if you need one. Further information regarding Police Registration is given below.

Collecting your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

If you intend to apply for your visa from outside the UK you should arrange for your BRP to be sent to the University's International Centre. To do this, you should provide the University's Alternative Collection Location code **2HE477** on your Tier 4 application form. For more details, please read the information that was sent with your CAS email.

If you did not include the University's Alternative Collection Location code (**2HE477**) in your visa application to the Home Office, you will



Top Tip

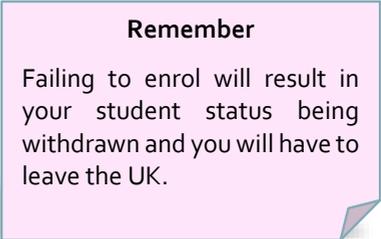
As soon as you arrive enrol on-line then visit the International Centre

be given details of which Post Office you need to attend to collect your BRP. The Post Office will be in either Wrexham, Liverpool or Salford.

Please ensure that you make collecting your BRP your **top** priority. You should pay your fees, enrol and collect your BRP at the International Centre first, before attending any of your other induction events. If you fail to collect your BRP promptly then it will be returned to the Home Office, and you will be required to leave the UK.

Enrolment Deadlines

If there is some reason why you are unable to attend the International Centre in order to complete enrolment by the course start date on your CAS, contact the International Centre immediately on



Remember

Failing to enrol will result in your student status being withdrawn and you will have to leave the UK.

applyinternational@chester.ac.uk and they will do their best to help you within the Home Office rules. **If you fail to enrol on time your visa may be cancelled and you will have to leave the UK**, so it is important that you communicate with the International Centre so you can avoid problems with the Home Office.

Some departments have to enforce very strict enrolment deadlines due to the way their modules are taught. This leads to some students arriving in the UK only one or two days late, but still being denied admission onto their programme, and their visas are subsequently withdrawn. If you are in any doubt about your enrolment deadline, please contact your department or the International Centre before you travel.

Departmental contact details can be found on the relevant departmental pages on the University website at:

<http://www1.chester.ac.uk/departments>

Re-enrolment

If you are studying on a programme that is longer than one year (usually undergraduate or PhD students) then you are required to re-enrol with the University at the start of every academic year.

This means you must repeat the three-step enrolment process in order to be able to continue studying. If you fail to re-enrol, then the University is required to report this to the Home Office and your visa will be cancelled, and you will have to cease your studies and leave the UK.

If you cannot provide proof of your permission to be in the UK at re-enrolment, you will not be permitted to return to your studies until you can present the University

Remember

Failing to provide proof of your leave to remain or failing to pay your fees will result in you not being enrolled and you will have to leave the UK.

with the appropriate immigration documents. If you fail to provide this information by your re-enrolment deadline, then you will be withdrawn from your studies and you will be required to leave the UK.

UK Address

When you are deciding where to live while you are studying at Chester, please be aware that the Home Office can ask the University to provide details of the UK contact address of individual migrant students. This Home Office request for information can include the proximity of your residential address to the relevant University campus (teaching site). If you choose to live outside the Chester area (or Warrington or Shrewsbury area if your programme is based there) you may be advised to move closer to campus. Students who live over 60 minutes travel from the University may be investigated by the Home Office.

Police Registration Certificate (PRC)

After enrolment, some students are required to register with the Police. Your visa letter should state if you are required to do this.

Police Registration for students based at a Chester campus takes place at the Help Desk in the Blacon Police Station. This is located at **2A Blacon Avenue, Chester, CH1 5BD**. A map showing the location of the Police Station is available at:

<https://www.cheshire.police.uk/contact/police-stations-and-custody-suites-in-cheshire/blacon-police-station/>.

Police Registration for students based at the Warrington campus takes place at the Help Desk in the Warrington Police Station. This

is located at **Arpley Street, Warrington, WA1 1LO**. A map showing the location of the Police Station is available at:

<https://www.cheshire.police.uk/contact/police-stations-and-custody-suites-in-cheshire/warrington-police-station/>.

As part of Police Registration, you will be required to provide:

- ✓ Your passport
 - Including the 30 day entry clearance vignette
- ✓ Your visa
 - and the letter confirming your application for leave was successful
- ✓ A printed copy of your CAS or your Offer Letter
- ✓ Proof of your UK address
- ✓ 2 Passport sized photographs
- ✓ £34 registration fee (please take the exact amount).

To arrange your Police Registration appointment in Chester you should contact the International Centre. You may wish to do this at the same time as providing your documents to complete your enrolment. You

should arrange your Police Registration appointment within 7 days of your arrival in the UK, but it does not matter if your actual

appointment date with the Police is more than 7 days after your arrival in the UK. Once you have received your Police Registration Certificate, you should take it to the International Centre so they can take a copy for your file.

Top Tip

You are advised not to carry the PRC with you but to keep it in a safe place together with your passport/travel documents

A list of the Nationals who will need to obtain a Police Registration Certificate is shown in the following table and may be found at:

<http://www.cheshire.police.uk/contact/registration-of-foreign-nationals/>.

Foreign Nationals of Countries Required to Register¹

					
Afghanistan	Algeria	Argentina	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Bahrain
					
Belarus	Bolivia	Brazil	China	Colombia	Cuba
					
Egypt	Georgia	Iran	Iraq	Israel	Jordan
					
Kazakhstan	Kuwait	Kyrgyzstan	Lebanon	Libya	Moldova
					
Morocco	North Korea	Oman	Palestine	Peru	Qatar
					
Russia	Saudi Arabia	Sudan	Syria	Tajikistan	Tunisia
					
Turkey	Turkmenistan	Ukraine	United Arab Emirates	Uzbekistan	Yemen

¹ <http://www.cheshire.police.uk/contact/registration-of-foreign-nationals/>

Tier 4 Compliance Moodle

During the induction period, you will be required to complete the Tier 4 Compliance Induction moodle. This is an online course that you can access via portal. The course will cover all the key areas of Tier 4 compliance, and there will be a multiple-choice test at the end.

You will have three attempts to pass the test, if you fail all three you may be asked to attend a meeting with Legal Services.

The Tier 4 Compliance Induction moodle can be found under the "Training and Skills" tab on Portal, or you can access it directly via this link:

<https://moodle.chester.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=9357> .

During your Studies

As you continue with your studies there are a number of things that you must do to ensure that you protect your visa and retain your Leave to Remain.

Attendance Monitoring

The Home Office requires that as a Tier 4 student you attend **all** the sessions that are part of your course. Your financial sponsor, overseas employer or home government may also impose an attendance requirement and may request that the University inform them about your engagement with studies, including your attendance in classes.

The University will monitor your attendance at all academic sessions. These include:

- ❖ Lectures
- ❖ Practical Sessions
- ❖ Seminars
- ❖ Field Trips
- ❖ Tutorials
- ❖ Exams
- ❖ Meetings with Staff
- ❖ Assignment hand-in

So that you can prove you have attended your sessions you will be required to 'Check-in'. It is your

responsibility to do this, you must speak to your tutor at the end of the class if you think your attendance has not been recorded.

WARNING

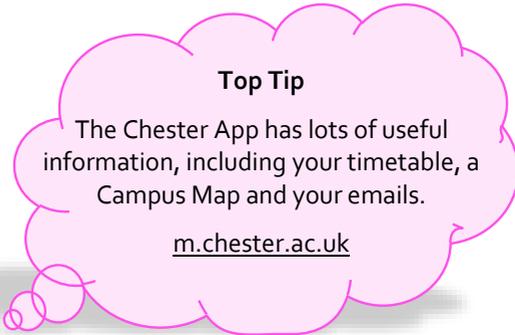
Falsely recording your attendance at **any** session will result in you being reported to UKVI and your visa being curtailed.

You must not check in for another student, or ask another student to check in for you. If you 'check-in' to a session that you do not attend, this is regarded as fraudulent activity and you will be subject to University disciplinary procedures, and the University will curtail your visa.

Attendance Check-in – Chester App

Students on certain programmes will be required to 'check-in' to their classes using the Chester App.

The Chester App can be downloaded from m.chester.ac.uk.



Top Tip

The Chester App has lots of useful information, including your timetable, a Campus Map and your emails.

m.chester.ac.uk

The App will show your next class, what time it starts, and what room it is in. When you get to your class you should ensure that you are logged in to the University wi-fi, and that your GPS and Bluetooth are turned on. You can then open the App and tap 'check-in', and your attendance will be recorded. You can only 'check in' during the first 30 minutes of your class.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you 'check-in'. If you are unable to 'check-in' then speak to your tutor at the end of the session and they will be able to 'check-in' for you.

If you 'check-in' to say you are present in a class, but you do not

Remember

If you do not 'check in' or sign the register then you will be regarded as absent for the session.

attend that specific class, this will be treated as fraudulent activity and will result in your visa being cancelled.

Further information regarding 'Check-In' can be found on

Portal in the Student's Guide to Attendance Monitoring at:

<https://portal.chester.ac.uk/attendance/Pages/default.aspx>

Notified Absences

As a migrant student you are expected to attend **all** classes, sessions and lectures however the University understands that there may be times when you need to be absent from an expected contact for good reason, such as an appointment with a Doctor. You should ensure that you keep these absences to a minimum and only request an absence in exceptional circumstances.

If you need to be absent you should ensure that you seek permission from your tutor. You will also need to provide satisfactory

Remember

If you have been absent from an expected contact due to illness then you must provide satisfactory medical evidence to explain your absence.

evidence to explain why you need to be absent. However, your tutor does not have to agree to your absence.

If you are required to 'check-in' using the Chester App you should give a reason and explanation by tapping the class that you were absent from, and then completing the absence report.

Please note that any requests for absences from studies or expected contacts for a period longer than two weeks will be regarded as a request for an interruption to your studies and your sponsorship may be withdrawn. You would then need to apply for a fresh visa to be allowed to return to the UK. Any requests for a CAS will be considered in line with the University's CAS policy and UKVI guidance in force.

Where it is absolutely necessary that you return to your home country during the term time, you should provide evidence of why the leave is necessary and copies of your travel itinerary or tickets detailing the dates that you will leave and return to the UK. Copies should be sent to tier4@chester.ac.uk.

Unauthorised Absences

If you fail to attend your classes, or you ask for an unreasonable number of absences, you will be referred to a meeting with the University's Tier 4 Compliance Team. If the Compliance Team believes that your absences were unwarranted, or that you are breaking any of the other conditions of your visa, including that you are not behaving as a genuine student, then you will be reported to the Home Office and you will be required to leave the UK.

Remember

If you need to return to your home country during term time you must provide evidence and your travel itinerary.

Checking-in when Absent

Should you be absent from a session, you can use the App to inform your tutor as to why you were absent.

But you must not sign/check-in to indicate that you were in attendance or check-in for another student, or ask another student to sign/check in for you. If you 'check-in' to a session that you do not attend this is regarded as fraudulent activity and you will be subject to University disciplinary procedures, and the University will curtail your visa.

WARNING

Falsely recording your attendance at **any** session will result in you being reported to UKVI and your visa being curtailed.

Placements - UK

If you complete a work placement in the UK as part of your course,

Remember

Your placement can be full-time, but the 20 hour a week restriction still applies to any additional employment.

the University will need to provide details of the location, hours of work, and duration of the work placement, to the Home Office. Information about the hours you are completing on your placement will be reviewed to ensure you are

not in breach of entry clearance. Please email Tier4@chester.ac.uk once your placement details are confirmed.

Placements – Overseas

Short Placement Overseas

If you intend to complete a short placement outside of the UK (e.g. 5 Week Experiential Learning in the Wider World - WB5004) as part of your studies, you must ensure that the placement is organised and approved by the University.

Should you wish to organise your own placement the University will not be able to monitor your studies in line with Home Office requirements and your visa sponsorship will be withdrawn. You should read the section [Year-Long Placement Overseas](#) for further information.

Year-Long Placement Overseas

If you intend to complete a year-long placement abroad (e.g. Year Long Study Abroad Experience - WB5008), the University will not be able to monitor your studies in line with Home Office requirements.

Therefore, the University will withdraw sponsorship of your Tier 4 visa at the point you start your placement.

Because your visa will no longer be valid the Home Office will write to you when your Leave has ended. Please do not travel to the UK,

Note

If you choose to complete a placement overseas the University will need to withdraw your sponsorship.

you will be exempt from attending re-registration for that academic year.

When it is time for you to return to your course, you will need to request a new CAS from the University.

You will need this CAS in order to apply for a new Tier 4 (General) visa from outside the UK. You will also need to be able to evidence that you have enough money to cover your tuition fees and living costs. You will also have to pay the immigration health surcharge as part of your visa application.

Further details regarding applying for a visa may be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>

Information on the Health Surcharge is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/overview>

Change of Circumstances

In order to maintain your sponsorship, you should remain enrolled on a full-time programme of study. If you have a change of circumstances while you are in the UK on a Tier 4 visa, the Home Office need to be informed.

The University must report any significant changes to a student's circumstances

within 10 days of the changes occurring. Therefore, you should inform Tier4@chester.ac.uk immediately if you undergo any of the following changes:



- You transfer to a different programme
- You move to a different study location (e.g. Warrington to Chester)
- You suspend your studies or you defer an assessment
- You have an authorised absence
- You complete your final assessment more than two weeks **before** the course end date stated on your CAS
- You obtain a new visa
- You start a work placement or a study placement
- You have an immigration application refused

If at any point during term-time you are not required to attend classes or expected contacts, or if you interrupt your studies, the University will not be able to meet its sponsor obligations to monitor

your attendance. This may result in your visa sponsorship being withdrawn, and you being required to leave the UK and apply for a fresh visa when it is time for you to resume your studies.

Please note that the academic decision to authorise any absence, suspension of studies or a change in programme is separate from any actions taken regarding your visa sponsorship. The University may authorise your request to change programme or have an authorised absence, but this does not necessarily mean that the Home Office will allow you to keep your current visa.

Please be aware that any change to your study status may have an effect on your visa, and you may be required to leave the UK. Please see the section below titled "[Extending your Visa](#)" for more information.

Change of Programme or Course

If you choose to change to a programme other than the one printed on your CAS, be aware that this will have an impact on your visa.

The Home Office does not permit all students to change their programme. If you are considering a change, you should consult with the Tier 4 Compliance Office via Tier4@chester.ac.uk before submitting the change of programme form. If the Home Office does not agree to your change of programme then your visa may be cancelled and you would have to leave the UK to apply for fresh Leave to Enter.

Repeating study or re-sitting

If a student fails some of their assessed work, or is found guilty of academic malpractice, they may be required to repeat one or more modules or re-submit an assessment or exam. If their attendance is not required for this repeat/re-sit (i.e. they are doing the module without attendance) a Tier 4 student would not be able to keep their visa. This is, one reason, why it is important to make every effort to **pass your modules first time**. If your attendance is not required your Tier 4 visa will be withdrawn and you must leave the UK. You may apply for a new visa if you need to return to the UK at a later point in order to complete your studies (see the section titled "[Extending your Visa](#)").

Record Keeping

Remember that in order to protect your Leave to Remain you are required to provide the University with a copy of the following documents:

- ✓ Your passport
- ✓ Your visa
- ✓ Proof of English Language (if mentioned on your CAS)
- ✓ Previous qualifications
- ✓ ATAS certificate (if applicable)
- ✓ Police Registration Certificate (if required)

If at any point any of these documents change then you must visit the International Centre with the new document within 7 working days of the change.

Examples of such changes might include:

- ❖ If you get a new passport
- ❖ If you get a new visa
- ❖ If you update your Police registration certificate because you have moved house
- ❖ If you get a new ATAS certificate because you have changed programme

Remember

All migrant students, irrespective of visa type, must provide proof of their valid Leave to Remain and right to study in the UK.

You should also keep your contact details updated on the University Portal. This includes your phone number, email address, your UK and your home country address. This serves a dual purpose, as well

Top Tip

Just got a shiny new phone with a new phone number? Update your phone number on the University portal!

as being a requirement for Tier 4 students, it is sensible for any student to keep their contact details up to date with the University. That way, the University will not post any important letters or documents to the wrong address.

If your UK address changes, as well as informing us, you should inform the UKVI. You can update your address on this website:

<https://eforms.homeoffice.gov.uk/outreach/AddressUpdate.ofml>

Working in the UK

One of the advantages of a Tier 4 visa is that you are permitted to do a small amount of work (paid or voluntary) alongside your studies. Anyone who wishes to work in the UK is required to obtain a National Insurance (NI) Number. For information on how to get an NI number, and for advice and support on applying for jobs, you can speak to our Careers and Employability department on campus. Their website is

www1.chester.ac.uk/careers-and-employability

Work Restrictions

Tier 4 students should be aware that the following employment is prohibited:

- ✘ Filling a full-time permanent vacancy
- ✘ Being self-employed or engaging in business activity
- ✘ Be employed as a doctor or dentist in training
- ✘ Be employed as a professional sports person (including sports coach)
- ✘ Be employed as an entertainer

Your visa will detail the maximum hours that you are permitted to work each week. If you have entered the UK on a short-term study visa you are **not** permitted to work at all during your stay.

Below is a rough guide to the maximum working hours for Tier 4 students on different programmes of study, however you should ensure that you refer to the UKVI guidance:



Remember

Both you and your employer can get into serious trouble if you work over your restricted hours.

- **Below Degree Level Students** (Foundation Year, etc) - You are limited to **10 hours** per week if you are studying a course that is below UK degree level. You can work full-time during official [University vacations](#).
- **Undergraduate Degree Students** (BA, BSc) - **20 hours** per week is the maximum amount of part-time work you can do during

term time. You can work full-time during official [University vacations](#).

- **Postgraduate students** - You are limited to working **20 hours** per week in term-time. If you are completing a Postgraduate course at the University you should note that different term dates apply to you.
 - You should note that collecting data and writing up your dissertation/thesis are still considered to be term-time and you are limited to working **20 hours** per week until you have reached the official end date of your course as detailed on your CAS.

Dates

University Vacation Dates are available from:

<http://www1.chester.ac.uk/vacationdates>.

University Term Dates are available from:

<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/about/about-university/term-dates>.

If the University has reason to suspect that you are violating any of the terms of your visa including work restrictions, we are required to report this to the Home Office and you will be required to leave the UK. We would not offer you any further CAS to complete your studies with us.

Tuition Fee Payments

As a new student you are required to pay a deposit before being issued with a CAS, and then pay 50% of the remaining tuition fee prior to enrolment. After that, you must pay the full remaining balance by the 31st January if you started your programme in September, or by the 30th April if you started your programme in January.

You are required to show all tuition fees are available to you before the Home Office will issue your Tier 4 visa.

If you fail to pay your tuition fees on time when you arrive in the UK, then you are violating the terms of your visa. This will result in your Tier 4 sponsorship being removed, and you will be required to leave the UK.

It is important for visa compliance purposes that you have the correct fee status. Please see the [home/overseas fee status](#) section of this guide for more information.

Extending your Visa

If you need more time in the UK because you are undertaking a re-sit or a repeat assessment, or you have had an interruption in your studies or a deferral, you should be aware that you are not automatically permitted to extend your visa in the UK.

Remember

Be careful when making your tuition fee payments.

Ensure that you type the bank details carefully, and do not give your money to anyone else even if they claim they can get you a "discount".

If you need more time in the UK to complete your course you will either apply for a 6 month short-term study visa or another Tier 4 visa, depending on how much time you need in the UK in order to complete the course. You may also need to apply for your new visa from outside the UK.

If you are required to leave the UK to apply for your new visa, you may be advised to leave the UK during one of our official vacations, even if that is some time before your visa expires.

Please speak to the International Centre as soon as you become aware that your visa may not be long enough to complete your course.

Extending your visa to start a new course

If you need more time in the UK because you are starting a new course, you may be able to extend your Tier 4 visa inside the UK. However, this only applies if,

- Your new course starts no more than 28 days after your current visa expires
- You have completed your previous course;
- You are able to demonstrate Academic Progression from your previous course in the UK.

In all other circumstances you will be required to return to your home country before applying to extend your Tier 4 visa. If you think this applies to you, please speak to the International Centre for more information.

Completing your Studies

We understand that once you have completed your programme at the University of Chester, you may be under the impression that your visa responsibilities have ended. However, there are some rules you still need to follow, and these are very important if you ever intend to return to the UK in the future.

Finishing Early

If you complete your course of study prior to the course end date that was stated on your CAS, you should inform the University's Compliance Team via email at Tier4@chester.ac.uk.

If you have successfully completed your course earlier than expected, the Home Office will curtail your visa so that you have the same wrap-up period of Leave to Remain after your end date as you were originally given for the end date as detailed on your CAS.

If your studies have ended early but you have not successfully achieved the qualification you were originally aiming for, the Home Office will shorten your visa to 60 days, unless you already have less than 60 days remaining on your visa at that point.

Remember

If you need to return to your home country during term time you must provide evidence and your travel itinerary.

In either of the above circumstances, please ensure that you provide the University with proof that you have left the UK, or with proof that you have made a new visa application. Further information

regarding this requirement is available in the Leaving the UK section of this guide.

If you are on a Masters level programme, the completion of the taught element of the programme does not constitute an end to your studies. You will still be required to complete the dissertation element. Your attendance for tutorials will still be required.

Leaving the UK

When you are leave the UK, for whatever reason, please provide exit evidence that you have left the UK to the University. You should do this within **7 days** of arriving in your home country.

Top Tip

We are happy to accept a copy of your:

- ✓ Flight tickets
- ✓ Boarding pass
- ✓ Booking confirmation
- ✓ Dated stamp in passport

Please send a copy of your exit evidence to both Tier4@chester.ac.uk and applyinternational@chester.ac.uk.

Return your Police Certificate

If you have completed your studies and intend to leave the UK, it is essential that you return your Police Registration Certificate (if you have one) to your nearest Police station and inform them of your intended departure date (please take your flight ticket).

Return your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

After you have left the UK for the last time, you should also return your BRP to the UK Government.

When returning your Residence Permit you should cut the card in half and post it in a plain, windowless envelope with a covering letter listing your details, including the BRP number and the reason for its return.

You should send your BRP to the following address:



If you intend to return to the UK, or if you intend to extend your visa, DO NOT destroy your BRP as you will need it for immigration purposes.

Graduation

Graduation ceremony dates and locations are published on the University's Graduation website at;

www.chester.ac.uk/graduation.

Special Graduation Ceremonies for international students are held in the University Chapel and usually take place each year in January and September. You should have enough time on your Tier4 visa to attend one of the Special ceremonies in the Chapel. If not, you will need to apply for an appropriate Visitor visa.

Please note that under UKVI rules the University is **unable** to issue a CAS to extend your Tier 4 visa in order to cover attendance at Graduation ceremonies. You may need, therefore, to apply for a different visa in order to cover attendance at the Graduation ceremony.

Remember

Both you and your family may need to obtain a Standard Visitor visa in order to attend the Graduation Ceremony.

If you choose not to attend the ceremony you will graduate "in absentia". Your degree certificate will be sent to you within 4 weeks of the ceremonies taking place. It is your responsibility to make sure that the University has up to date address details in order

to ensure that your certificate is posted to the correct address.

Immigration Matters

UKVI Top Tips – Travelling to the UK

 Border Force

Student arrivals top tip

Check what you can and can't bring with you

- Do not bring in any meat or dairy products from outside the EU.
- Do not exceed your duty-free allowance for tobacco, alcohol and gifts.
- You must declare cash of €10,000 or more.



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 Border Force

Student arrivals top tip

Keep all important documents in your hand luggage

Be ready to show your passport, information about your course and recent bank statements to border staff.



 Border Force

Student arrivals top tip

Keep your proof of travel

Make sure you keep a paper or digital copy of your flight information or boarding pass as you may need to show this to your course provider or landlord after you have arrived in the UK.



www.gov.uk/border-force/fastertravel

Home/Overseas Fee Status

Universities in the UK normally charge two levels of tuition fee: a 'home' fee and an 'overseas' fee; usually the 'overseas' fee is higher. To qualify for 'home' status in England, you need to have been living in the UK for three years prior to the course start date and have 'settled' status in the UK (i.e. ordinarily resident in the UK and without any immigration restriction on the length of your stay in the UK). You may also qualify for 'home' fees if you are an EU national who has been ordinarily resident in the EEA for the three years prior to the course start date.

Because of the above, it is possible for a UK national to be charged the 'overseas' fee status if you have not been living in the UK consistently for the three years leading up to the course start date. Equally, an applicant may have been living in the

UK for much longer than three years, but because they have Limited Leave to Remain (i.e. their visa has an end date) they would not qualify for 'home' fee status.

Please be aware that if you have an 'overseas' fee status you cannot change to 'home' status part-way through the course, even if you acquire settled status (indefinite leave to remain). You have to meet all the criteria for Home status from the first day of their programme of study. Further guidance can be obtained from: UKCISA at:

Remember

Just because you have been living or studying in the UK for a number of years does not mean that you will be automatically regarded as a 'home' student.

<https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Fees-and-Money/Home-or-Overseas-fees-the-basics#layer-3832>

Non-Tier 4 or other Leave to Remain

If your permission to be in the UK is for a limited time, and your Leave to Remain is under a category that is not Tier 4, there are still some rules that you have to follow in order to protect your visa and to remain enrolled at the University.

Firstly, you must be able to present evidence of your valid Leave to Remain as part of enrolment. Usually, this will take the form of your Passport and your visa vignette or BRP card. The University is not obliged to enrol you onto your programme of study if your application for Leave to Remain is still being processed at the Home Office.

Migrant students, irrespective of their visa status, must always ensure they fulfil the requirements of their visa so that their Leave to Remain is preserved. It is true that you are permitted to study on many types of visa. However, if it is not a Tier 4 visa or a Short-term Study Visa, then the visa **was not issued for the purpose of study**. You must always ensure you meet the original requirements of your visa in order to be able to continue your studies.

Remember

All migrant students must provide proof to the University of their valid Leave to Remain.

For example, if your visa is a **work visa** such as Tier 2 or Tier 5, you should ensure that you remain employed with your sponsor, and are not absent from work.

Please read the policy guidance for your visa type to learn the full requirements of your visa.

Students with **non-Tier 4** Limited Leave to Remain in the UK wishing to enrol at the University of Chester must sign an agreement to fulfil the requirements of their current visa, and maintain their Leave to Remain throughout their time registered at the University.

A copy of the agreement form is available from:

http://ganymede2.chester.ac.uk/view.php?title_id=932909

If your visa is due to expire before you complete your course, you must ensure that you apply for an extension to your visa or that you leave the UK before your visa expires. If you wish to switch to a Tier 4 visa, you must contact the International Centre at least **one month** before your current **Non-Tier 4 visa** is due to expire. A CAS will only be issued in line with the University CAS Policy.

Short-term Study Visa (STS)

International students are sometimes advised to enter the UK on a Short-term Study Visa. The advantages of this visa compared to Tier 4 include:

- ❖ Cheaper application fee (only £85)
- ❖ Simpler application process
- ❖ Lower maintenance fund requirement
- ❖ Less restrictions on the mode of study.

But:

- ❖ You are not permitted to work in the UK on a Short-term visa
- ❖ Your studies cannot include a work placement or work experience
- ❖ You cannot extend a Short-term visa's end date
- ❖ You cannot switch from a Short-term visa to another type of visa inside the UK

There are some exceptions to the above for Syrian nationals.

Further information is available from:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/595762/concessions-to-the-immigration-rules-for-syrian-nationals_v3.pdf.

Due to restrictions in the Immigration Rules, the University is not always permitted to issue a second CAS to students who have been unable to complete their programme.

Sometimes, a student may start their studies on a Tier 4 visa, but be unable to complete their programme before their Tier 4 visa expiry date. In this case the student may be asked to return to their home country and apply for a six-month Short-term Study Visa.

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Electronic Gates (e-gates)

Nationals of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea and the United States of America **must not** use an e-gate if they wish to study in the UK as a short-term student for less than 6 months, unless they have obtained prior entry clearance.

Instead, when arriving at the airport please speak to a member of staff and request a passport stamp. You can show them the image on the right if that helps.



Lost, Stolen or Damaged Immigration Documents

If your passport and/or BRP card is lost or stolen, you should report this to the Police. This is important as you may be required to provide a Police crime reference number in order to get your documents replaced. To report a lost passport you must visit the Police in person at the Blacon Help Desk, which is located at **2A Blacon Avenue, Chester, CH1 5BD**.

If your visa or BRP card gets lost, stolen or damaged, you should report this to the Home Office. You can do this by completing the online form available from the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/lost-stolen-damaged>.

The Home Office will contact you within 1 working day to advise you what to do next.

Please note that it can take 8 weeks to receive a new BRP. Once you have reported that your BRP is lost/stolen you must apply for a replacement within 3 months or face a £1,000 fine. If you experience any problems with the BRP replacement process, please contact the Home Office on BRPLost@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

The University of Chester has noticed an increase in the number of students who have lost their passport and/or their BRP card. Please remember that you are not required to keep your documents with you at all times. Instead, you may wish to consider keeping them in a secure place at your address.

Visa Withdrawal

If the University is required to withdraw your Tier 4 visa sponsorship, the report will be submitted to the UKVI within 10 working days. The University of Chester will write to your term-time and overseas address to confirm the withdrawal of your visa sponsorship, and a copy will be sent to your University email address and your personal email address.

Following the submission of the report to the UKVI, you will be required to leave the UK within 60 days and you will no longer be able to engage in any form of either work or study.

When you travel, please keep a copy of your boarding pass, as you

Remember

You should provide the University with copies of your flight itinerary, exit stamps from the UK and boarding pass.

will need to send a copy to Tier4@chester.ac.uk as confirmation of your journey. A scan of the stamp in your passport will also suffice. Failure to provide proof of your journey

may prevent you from travelling to the UK in the future.

Immigration Crime

If at any point the University believes that you are not a “genuine student” or we learn that you have broken the rules of your Leave to Remain, you may be reported to the UK Government’s Immigration Crime Unit.

The University looks at several sources of information to decide whether or not a student is genuine and whether they are complying with the rules of their visa. These include;

- Monitoring students’ attendance on their programmes.
- Checking how far away the students’ UK addresses are from their study site.
- Noting any instances of Academic Malpractice amongst Tier 4 students.
- Looking at the students’ engagement with the University and how they respond to emails and letters.
- Acting on any information received about students’ employment.
- Checking whether students have valid Leave to Remain.

If any of this or any other information suggests that an individual's main reason for entering the UK was not to study, the individual may be reported to Immigration Crime. This may result in the individual being removed from the UK, and being banned from returning to the UK for a set period of time.

Bringing items into the UK

If you have been overseas and you are returning to the UK make sure that you are not carrying any banned items.

You are strongly advised not to bring any sort of food into the UK. It is illegal to bring meat, milk or cheese into the UK. You **MUST** declare food items at UK Customs to avoid prosecution and a fine.



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FAQs

Q: "What do I need to take with me when I travel to the UK?"

A: As well as your passport and visa, ensure you keep a copy of your CAS and your course offer letter in your hand luggage so you are able to present them to Border Force at the airport. You will also need your letter from the Home Office to tell you where to collect your BRP. Do not carry large sums of cash with you when you travel.

Q: "My BRP is not at the International Centre, what should I do?"

A: Please read the letter that was given to you after your Tier 4 application was processed in your home country. It should state which post office your BRP card is in.

Q: "Can I go home for some time to visit my relatives?"

A: Any unauthorised absence over two weeks may result in your visa being cancelled. You should avoid any absence from the University during term-time. Please email Tier4@chester.ac.uk if you have an emergency and you want to travel home. You will be required to provide a copy of your travel itinerary.

Q: "I wish to spend a year abroad as part of my studies, is this ok?"

A: A number of University programmes do offer students the option to spend a year abroad. As a student you may be able to take advantage of this option. However, the University will not be able to monitor your studies in line with Home Office requirements. The University will withdraw its sponsorship of your Tier4 status in the UK. Once you have completed your year

abroad you will need to apply for a new CAS from the University and a new visa to recommence your studies in the UK. You will also need to ensure that you are able to evidence the correct funds.

Q: "I have handed in my dissertation early, or before the hand-in date. Can I now work full-time?"

A: No, handing in your final piece of work before the deadline does not mean that you have completed your studies and are able to work full-time. You may only work full time during the University vacation dates and following the official end date of your course as detailed on your CAS.

Q: "Can I extend my visa to attend the Graduation ceremony?"

A: The Home Office does not permit students to extend their visa to attend Graduation. Instead, students should return to their home country and apply for a Standard Visitor visa at:

<https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa/overview>

Q: "Why do I need to prove that I have left the UK?"

A: When you leave the UK after finishing your studies, you will be asked to provide proof you have left the UK. This can be done by sending us a copy of your boarding pass, your passport stamps or your flight tickets.

Q: "I need to extend my Tier 4 Visa what should I do?"

A: "Speak to the International Office as soon as you realise your visa is not long enough. Be aware you may have to leave the UK to apply for your new visa"

Web Links

University Links

- Tier 4 Compliance Moodle - <https://moodle.chester.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=9357>
- Protect you visa - <https://www1.chester.ac.uk/protect-your-visa>
- Tier 4 policy guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>
- University Term Dates - <https://www1.chester.ac.uk/about/about-university/term-dates>
- University Vacation Dates - <http://www1.chester.ac.uk/vacationdates>
- University CAS policies - <https://portal.chester.ac.uk/internationalcentre/Pages/forms.aspx>
- University of Chester App – <https://m.chester.ac.uk>
- University On-Line Enrolment - <https://pass.chester.ac.uk/>
- Non-Tier 4 Agreement - http://ganymede2.chester.ac.uk/view.php?title_id=932909
- Working in the UK - <https://www1.chester.ac.uk/international/visas-arrival-and-enrolment/visa-regulations/working-uk>

External Links

- The Immigration Rules - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-rules>
- UKCISA guide to applying for a Tier 4 Visa - <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Making-a-Tier-4-General-application-in-the-UK>
- UKCISA guide to Home/Overseas fee status criteria - <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Fees-and-Money/England-fee-status#layer-6082>
- UKVI guide to student visitor visas - <https://www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa/overview>
- UKVI guide to Tier 4 - <https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/overview>
- UK Health Surcharge - <https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/overview>
- How to find an Immigration Adviser who is approved by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner - http://home.oisc.gov.uk/adviser_finder/finder.aspx
- Guide to faster travel through the UK border - <https://www.gov.uk/border-force/fastertravel>

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