

UKBA Points Based System – Guidance for Students

How does the Points Based System affect students applying to come to Canterbury Christ Church University, and those extending their visas once here?

To gain permission to enter or remain in the UK under the student immigration category (known as **Tier 4**), non-European Economic Area (non-EEA) nationals/non-European Union (non-EU) nationals/non-Swiss nationals must obtain enough 'points' before applying.

This means you must:

- be intending to study a full-time course/programme with a UKBA-licensed education sponsor¹ and have accepted an unconditional offer for this course/programme. If so, a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (**CAS**) will be issued (**30 points**)
- meet the maintenance requirements (**10 points**)
 - Students on courses/programmes of less than one year duration must show they have sufficient funds to cover the full cost of their course/programme fee plus £600.00 per month for each month of their course/programme (outside London)
 - Students on courses/programmes that last more than one year duration must show they have sufficient funds to cover the first year of their course/programme fees plus £5400.00 to cover living costs for the first nine months (outside London)
 - Students with accompanying dependants will need to show they have an additional £400.00 per month, for up to 9 months, for each dependant they have

Under this new system, **all current students** who extend their visas will also be subject to these strict immigration rules and must adhere to them in order to remain in the UK under Tier 4.

How will the Points Based System affect students during their studies?

The following information should be noted by all students with a Tier 4 student visa:

- Any Tier 4 student who fails to register with the University before the published deadline for registration will be reported to the UKBA within 10 working days
- It is the responsibility of all students to ensure that their contact details, as held by the University, are always up to date
- It is the responsibility of all students to attend their course/programme and to notify the University immediately of any absence due to ill health

¹ Canterbury Christ Church University has registered with the UKBA and has been granted a status 'A' sponsor licence.

- Absence due to short term sickness or personal circumstances that have been notified to the University are considered “authorised” and will not be reported to the UKBA
- By February 2010, Canterbury Christ Church University is obliged to define 10 points of contact between itself (as an education provider) and its students. These are known as “expected student learning contacts”. The University has a duty to report any student with a Tier 4 visa to the UKBA when they have missed 10 expected student learning contacts. Being reported to the UKBA for non-attendance will have serious implications for a student’s immigration status and their ability to remain in the UK. The University is not released from its obligation to report a student to the UKBA, even if a student interacts with the University after the tenth missed expected student learning contact
- Examples of expected student learning contacts may be:
 - attendance at a department introductory meeting in the first week
 - attendance at a specified lecture/tutorial/seminar
 - physical submission of assessed work by the stipulated deadline

(This list is not exhaustive – please refer to your Programme Handbook for more detailed information. It is recognised by the University, and accepted by the UKBA, that there will be variance between Programmes)

- An expected student learning contact is one which the student is reasonably expected to attend. Examples of when a student is not reasonably expected to attend are:
 - if staff sickness results in a student learning contact being cancelled
 - if a student has requested a leave of absence through the formal University procedure, using Form LA1 (Student Request for Leave of Absence) - available to [download](#) - and has submitted it, or made contact with their Programme Director, tutor or a nominated Programme Administrator to report sickness absence
- There should never be more than a 59 day interval between expected student learning contacts, as this will constitute a breach of visa conditions for a student with a Tier 4 visa and will require them to leave the UK and return home with immediate effect
- Programme Directors are responsible for reporting non-attendance by initiating action in line with the University’s Attendance Policy and the University’s Cause for Care and Concern procedure
- The University’s Attendance Policy and the University’s Cause for Care and Concern procedure have been revised by the University in light of its legal duties and the new versions can be found on the University’s web pages
- Being reported to the UKBA for failure to register or non-attendance will lead to a student’s automatic withdrawal from their programme and a withdrawal of the University’s support for their visa

- Research students in their “writing-up” period and students writing a dissertation are also subject to attendance monitoring for appropriate interactions – which might be a telephone call or email contact with tutors
- Students with a Tier 4 visa must not interrupt or defer their studies, or become a part-time student, without first seeking advice. The immigration rules state that international students on a Tier 4 visa must be enrolled on a **full-time degree course/programme** or studying below degree level **at least 15 hours per week**. There are no exceptions, and concessions for compassionate reasons are unlikely
- Students with Tier 4 visas must be aware that there are UKBA restrictions on the number of times they can re-sit an exam or module or repeat a period of study. They are only permitted a total of three attempts at any one exam/period of study (ie a first attempt and two re-sit opportunities). After this, the University is not permitted to continue sponsoring a student’s visa
- Students with a Tier 4 visa are allowed to interrupt their studies, but it is imperative that they leave the UK for the whole period of their interruption. If Tier 4 students remain in the UK while interrupting their studies, they are in breach of their immigration permission. Under the Points Based System, Canterbury Christ Church University is obliged to report any interruptions of study to the UKBA within 10 working days
- Students with Tier 4 visas must not change course/programme, or university, without first talking to the International Student Adviser about the implications this might have for their immigration status. Students wishing to withdraw from their course/programme face the same problems as interrupting students if they do not return home immediately. Even Tier 4 students withdrawing from Canterbury Christ Church University to transfer directly to another institution need to be aware of the steps that they must take in order to obtain prior permission from the UKBA
- The University reserves the right to withdraw students from their studies (with immediate effect) if they fail to maintain valid immigration status whilst enrolled. Any withdrawal will then be reported to the UKBA. In such circumstances, students are advised to refer to the Student Financial Arrangements

Can a Tier 4 student remain in the UK after their studies?

A Tier 4 student studying at degree level (or above), for twelve months or more, should be issued with a visa covering the duration of their course/programme plus four months. The UKBA awards this additional period in order that students may attend their graduation ceremony, tidy their affairs and/or switch into an appropriate immigration category.

If the course/programme is between six and twelve months in duration, a student should be issued with a visa covering the entire length of their course/programme plus two months.

If a student is receiving official financial sponsorship, and their financial sponsor places a limit on the time that they can stay in the UK, the UKBA will limit their permission to study here in line with the financial sponsor's requirements.

Please note that if you require even more time in the UK in order to wait for your graduation ceremony, and do not intend to switch into Tier 1 (Post Study Work), you **cannot** apply for an extension as a student and you are no longer permitted to switch in-country from Tier 4 into the visitor visa category. In these circumstances, one option is to leave the UK and apply for fresh entry clearance as a visitor. However, you should remember that you **cannot** switch from a visitor visa into Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 4 whilst you are in the UK. This means that you cannot, for example, switch in-country from visitor into the Tier 1 (Post Study work) category.

Sources of information:

You are able to book appointments with the International Student Adviser via the i-zone to discuss any immigration related query. The [International Student Advice](#) web pages will also be of use.

The [UK Council for International Student Affairs](#) (UKICSA) publishes a range of information for international students and offers immigration advice.

For up to date information about completing your visa application and the Points Based System please check the [UK Border Agency](#) website.