

# Welfare and International Support

Information for International Students

**Tier 4 Visa Responsibilities and Sponsorship Duties**



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# Welcome to Northumbria University

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**Northumbria University is pleased to sponsor you as a Tier 4 General Student. Together we can work to ensure that we both comply with the rules and regulations set out by the Home Office under Tier 4 of the United Kingdom's Points Based System of immigration. We hope that you enjoy your time with us.**

## Disclaimer

### IMPORTANT:

This document is intended to provide Northumbria University students with an overview of visa responsibilities and is a guide for general information only. It does not represent a full statement of legal requirements and is so not intended to be relied upon in any specific student's case. As a Tier 4 student, you should ensure that you are aware of the immigration guidelines that are relevant to you and that you keep up to date with changes to legislation or rules during your stay in the UK in order to protect your immigration status. If you are unclear about any aspect of the above or have a query regarding your immigration status, you should contact Student Support and Wellbeing to speak with a Welfare and International Adviser – see details for how to do this throughout this document.

The Home Office may revise its policies at any time and the law is subject to change. Whilst Northumbria University has used reasonable endeavours to ensure that this guide is accurate at the time of preparation, it accepts no responsibility for any omission or for any loss or damage arising from its use.

For the most up to date information please refer to the Home Office website:

[ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/](https://ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/)

## Statement of Student Responsibilities under Tier 4 for Northumbria University

This document explains the reporting and record-keeping duties of Northumbria University. It outlines Home Office Rules and Regulations and your responsibilities to the University as your immigration sponsor. By enrolling with the University you agree to meet these responsibilities. If you do not, it may affect your stay in the UK.

Please remember that your visa has been granted subject to the conditions stated in Immigration Rules, Part 6A para. 245ZW:

[ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/part6a](https://ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/part6a)

Please refer to the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) for useful tips to protect your Tier 4 immigration status:

[ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Immigration-/Protecting-your-Tier-4-status/](https://ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Immigration-/Protecting-your-Tier-4-status/)

## Pre-Enrolment – Submission of Documents and Declaration of Previous Study

**Home Office rule:** Northumbria University must keep a copy of all documents showing that a Tier 4 student has permission to study

### The University's Responsibility

The Home Office requires that Northumbria University keeps a copy of the personal details section of your passport and any documents used to make you an offer.

This can include, but is not limited to; proof of English Language ability, all previous visas issued for the purpose of study in the UK and certificates or transcripts of previous study. We will keep a copy of these in your student file or upload them to your student record.

### Your Responsibility

You will be required to submit any requested documents before the University will issue you a CAS; you will need a CAS in order to apply for your Tier 4 student visa.

You are required to declare any previous study in the UK as the Home Office have a cap on the number of years you are entitled to study. See [ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Immigration-/Making-a-Tier-4-General-application-in-the-UK/Time-limit-cap-on-study/](https://ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Immigration-/Making-a-Tier-4-General-application-in-the-UK/Time-limit-cap-on-study/) for details.

## Enrolment – Submission of current visa

**Home Office rule:** Northumbria University must keep a copy of all visas showing that a Tier 4 student has permission to study

### The University's Responsibility

At enrolment sessions we will take a copy of your current visa or any other documents relating to your visa application; these will be stored

electronically on your student record. If you renew your visa via Student Support and Wellbeing we will take a copy of the new visa, but you should still take it with you to the enrolment session.

If we are missing any visa or passport details we will contact you. You must respond to the email by the deadline given. If you do not respond we may block your access to University facilities and can withdraw you from your course and report this to the Home Office, as we will assume you do not have permission to study in the UK.

### Your Responsibility

You must enrol or re-enrol at the start of each academic year that you study on your course, and should provide a copy of your current visa on each occasion.

If you do not have your visa because you are in the process of applying for additional leave to remain, you are able to use other documents in place of a current visa:

- If you have submitted a visa application via Student Support & Wellbeing, you can use your visa extension receipt (the carbon copy)
- If you have applied by yourself or via an agency/solicitor we need either your biometrics letter or written confirmation of an in-time application (from the solicitor or agency). We will also accept a printed application form cover sheet.

If you apply for a new visa yourself you must supply us with a copy of proof that you have applied, any appeal documents if your application was refused, and your new visa, as soon as possible. You can do this by emailing: [as.visateam@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:as.visateam@northumbria.ac.uk)

We strongly encourage all students applying in the UK to apply via the University. We offer workshops and one-to-one appointments as part of this service. Please go to the website below for further details:

[Northumbria.ac.uk/visa](https://Northumbria.ac.uk/visa)

## Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) Clearance

**Home Office rule:** Northumbria University must keep a copy of all ATAS certificates

### What is an ATAS certificate?

Some students may need a certificate from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office which allows them to study certain subjects at Masters level and above. For further information about the scheme please refer to the website below:

[gov.uk/academic-technology-approval-scheme](http://gov.uk/academic-technology-approval-scheme)

### The University's Responsibility

The Home Office requires that Northumbria University keeps a copy of your ATAS certificate. We will keep this in your student file.

### Your Responsibility

You will be required to submit a copy of your ATAS certificate when you apply for your course and you will need to supply a new certificate if you subsequently need a new visa. It will take at least one month to receive your ATAS certificate so you must ensure that you apply in plenty of time.

## Updating Contact Details

**Home Office rule:** Northumbria University must ensure that student contact details are up to date

### The University's Responsibility

We will send you regular emails reminding you to check that your contact details are up to date and will contact you individually if your address is not local to your place of study.

### Your Responsibility

You must ensure that you update your contact details via MyNorthumbria. You can do this by following the steps below:  
MyNorthumbria > My Records (under the MyInfo

tab) > Your Details > View/Edit Your Contact Details.

**Home Address** refers to the address of residence in your home country; a permanent address should not be a UK address if you are a Tier 4 student.

**Contact Address** refers to your actual and current address where you live in the UK. During term time this should generally be in or near to Newcastle upon Tyne, unless you are on a placement.

You must also update the Home Office with your current address details. This can be done by clicking on the link below:

[gov.uk/change-circumstances-visa-brp](http://gov.uk/change-circumstances-visa-brp)

If you were required to register with the police as part of your visa requirements (see page 18) you should update them when you move by emailing:

[ovro@northumbria.pnn.police.uk](mailto:ovro@northumbria.pnn.police.uk)

## Failing to Enrol

**Home Office rule:** Report students who fail to enrol on their course

### The University's Responsibility

If you do not enrol within the given time we must inform the Home Office that you will not be studying on your course and they will curtail (cancel) your visa. If you have not used your CAS before the enrolment deadline, we will withdraw it; you will no longer be able to use it as part of a visa application and if you have already submitted the application, it will be refused.

### Your Responsibility

If you are enrolling on a new course or are returning to study after a break, your CAS will have an enrolment deadline on it. You must enrol on your course before this deadline.

If you are unable to travel to the UK before your enrolment deadline you must inform the University. Please contact the individual who sent you your CAS. If you choose to defer your studies we will still report that you have not enrolled and you must get a new visa for the next intake.

## Withdrawing, Interrupting and Repeating

**Home Office rule:** Cease sponsorship of students who are no longer studying on the course, except where they have completed on time

### The University's Responsibility

You will be referred to a Welfare and International Adviser to fill out relevant paperwork and receive immigration advice.

If you will no longer be studying at the University we will inform the Home Office of this within 10 days of the date that your student record is updated; the Home Office will curtail your leave to remain, normally to 60 days from the date you are reported. This means that you should not continue to use your visa and will not be permitted to remain in the UK unless you obtain a new Tier 4 visa or switch to a different immigration category.

### Your Responsibility

If you decide to **withdraw** from your course, or take a **break in study**, you should speak to the University before you take any action. You can do this by speaking to your tutor who can offer you academic guidance so that you may be sure that whatever decision you take is the best decision for you. You must then speak to a Welfare and International Adviser so that you know how your decision will affect your stay in the UK.

If you are **withdrawn** from your course due to poor attendance the conditions detailed under 'The University's Responsibility' above will apply.

If you take a break in study you will be able to return to your course at an appropriate time and once you have successfully obtained a new visa. To request a new CAS for your application please email: [as.visateam@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:as.visateam@northumbria.ac.uk)

If you have not passed the year but have been permitted to **repeat with attendance** you may be able to remain in the UK; you should discuss

this with a Welfare and International Adviser who will be able to let you know whether or not this is the case. As a general rule, if you can continue to study without a break in attendance you may remain in the UK but if you only need repeat Semester 2 modules you may need to return home for Semester 1. In the latter case you should apply for a new visa when you need to return to the UK, as above.

If you have not passed the year but have been permitted to **repeat without attendance** we may not be able to continue sponsoring you as a student and we may need to report this to the Home Office. You should speak with a Welfare and International Adviser to be sure of what action we may take.

If you choose to complete your dissertation, project or PhD work at home and you still have a current visa you must inform the Visa Compliance Team as soon as possible via email [as.visateam@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:as.visateam@northumbria.ac.uk), as well as discussing this with your Faculty Office. We will then make a decision about whether we are required to inform the Home Office of this change.

You will receive an email when the Home Office are informed of your new situation. When you receive the email you must make arrangements, where appropriate, to leave the UK or apply for a different visa.

If you need a new CAS we will first need to ensure that your total time studying in the UK will not exceed the maximum time permitted by the Home Office (this is usually 5 years but there are some exceptions, please see [ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Immigration-/Making-a-Tier-4-General-application-in-the-UK/Time-limit-cap-on-study/](https://ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Immigration-/Making-a-Tier-4-General-application-in-the-UK/Time-limit-cap-on-study/)).

If you are experiencing any difficulties please do speak, in confidence, with a Welfare and International Adviser. They are there to ensure that you get the most out of everything that university life has to offer and can provide advice on any issue raised in this section.

## Changes in Circumstance

**Home Office rule:** Report significant changes in a student's circumstance

### The University's Responsibility

Northumbria University will inform the Home Office of any significant change to your circumstances within 10 days of the date that your student record is updated. These changes include; moving to a different study location (e.g. from Newcastle to London), changing courses at Northumbria, completing your course early, or starting a work placement.

The Visa Compliance Team will be automatically notified when your student record is updated and they will then report the change to the Home Office via their Sponsor Management System.

### Your Responsibility

If any of the below changes in circumstance apply to you, you should first speak to your tutor for academic guidance. Please see below for details of how certain changes may affect you.

#### Study Location

If you move to a different campus we will inform the Home Office of the new address. This also applies if you participate in an exchange programme where you are studying abroad. In both circumstances your attendance will still be monitored so that we can continue sponsoring you. As long as you have time remaining on your visa you will not need to apply for a new one when you return to the UK to complete your course.

#### Work Placement

Your work placement must not exceed more than 50% of the entire length of your course. If you choose, or are required, to complete a work placement as part of your course we will inform the Home Office of the location and duration of the placement as soon as it is known.

Your attendance will be monitored during your placement. If you believe that you are being asked to undertake activities that breach your visa (including working too many hours) you need to inform your Faculty Office, who will investigate the matter for you.

### Change of Course

If you are considering changing courses you should first speak to your tutor for academic guidance. Once the change has been approved you should speak with a Welfare and International Adviser to check whether your immigration status will be affected or not; for example, you may need to apply for a new visa.

### Completing Early

If your course becomes shorter because you complete the programme early (you have submitted your dissertation or thesis early, you did not take a work placement, you finished Pre-Sessional English early or because you have switched to a shorter course) the Home Office will be informed. As a result your visa may be curtailed so that your new course end date is reflected in the amount of time you have remaining on your visa. This will mean that the printed end date on your visa or BRP card will no longer be correct. It is therefore important that you speak to a Welfare and International Adviser so that you know exactly when your visa will expire.

If you complete early and want to progress to a course at a higher level you must apply for a new visa as soon as possible. You should also come in to Student Support and Wellbeing so that an Adviser can let you know what you need to do. Please be aware that if there is more than one month between the end date of your visa and the start date of the next course, you will normally have to return home to apply for a new visa.

## Visa Refusals and Appeals

**Home Office rule:** Report if a student has received a visa refusal

### The University's Responsibility

The University must report when a student's visa application has been refused by the Home Office within 10 days of receiving this information.

### Your Responsibility (and what to do next)

The University will not report the visa refusal if you prove that you have the opportunity to appeal the decision and intend to exercise this right with the Home Office. If you did not submit the original application via Student Support & Wellbeing you must provide us with proof of the on-going appeal. You can either bring this in to Student Support & Wellbeing or email it to [as.visateam@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:as.visateam@northumbria.ac.uk) If you decide not to appeal the Home Office decision on your application or you do not have any right of appeal and your leave has expired, you have 'overstayed' in the UK. 'Overstayed' means that you have stayed beyond the time limit of your visa.

You normally cannot remain enrolled on your course if you are an overstayer, unless there are exceptional circumstances as determined by us. Please note that if you have submitted an appeal and subsequently withdraw the appeal you will be classed as an overstayer even if you have submitted a new visa application, and will continue to be an overstayer until you make a successful application for a new visa. Please come and speak to Welfare an International Adviser who will explain your options to you.

If you decide to go home and apply for a new visa from your home country, we will issue you with a new CAS only once you have returned home.

An Adviser can help you to submit an appeal against your refusal or you can seek independent legal advice. If you submit an appeal via a solicitor,

we need to see proof that an 'in time appeal' has been submitted. You must update us on a monthly basis with any progress on your appeal by emailing [as.visateam@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:as.visateam@northumbria.ac.uk) You should email us even if there is nothing new to report.

If your appeal is successful, your documents will be returned to you. If your appeal is unsuccessful, you have the right to take your case to Upper Tribunal. The University would refer you to an individual solicitor to take on your appeal at Upper Tribunal.

If you choose not to appeal, you have 28 days in which to submit a new application from within the UK, but you may be required to step off your course (take a break) whilst you wait for your PEO appointment (face-to-face appointment at the Home Office). Your visa expires on the date your appeal deadline (3C leave) finishes.

## Unauthorised Absences and Attendance Monitoring

**Home Office rule:** Report students who are withdrawn from their course as a result of poor attendance

### The University's Responsibility

The Home Office requires that we inform them when we withdraw a student from their course due to poor attendance. Your attendance will be monitored throughout your course and if it becomes a concern you will be contacted by your Faculty. Section 8 of the Handbook of Student Regulations for Taught Programmes explains what will happen if your attendance is so poor that you are to be withdrawn from your course.

[northumbria.ac.uk/vc/leservteam/stud\\_reg\\_handbk/taught/?view=Standard](http://northumbria.ac.uk/vc/leservteam/stud_reg_handbk/taught/?view=Standard)

Once we inform the Home Office that you are no longer studying at the University they will curtail your leave to remain and your visa will no longer be valid.



## Your Responsibility

If you are studying on a taught programme your attendance will be monitored by either paper attendance registers, signing in at your Faculty Office, or by swiping your student card on an electronic reader. It is your responsibility to ensure that your attendance is taken. You must not pass your card to someone else to swipe and you must not ask them to sign on your behalf. Research students are monitored via regular meetings with their supervisor as well as adhering to submission deadlines. It is your responsibility to ensure that you attend these meetings on a regular basis.

If you are studying on a reduced diet or completing your project / dissertation please be aware that this is still considered to be term time and you must not be employed to work more than the maximum number of hours permitted. If you are unsure of how many hours to work please speak to a Welfare and International Adviser.

If you are unable to attend for any reason you must provide a suitable explanation and evidence, where appropriate, to your Faculty Office.

If the Home Office is informed that you have been withdrawn from your course due to poor attendance, we will send you an email to confirm this. You should arrange to leave the UK or make a new application with the Home Office within 60 days.

## Changing Immigration Category

**Home Office rule:** Report when a student moves into a different immigration category

### The University's Responsibility

The University will inform the Home Office when a student's immigration category has changed and will also update their student record on the University's record keeping system.

## Your Responsibility

If your immigration category has changed, e.g. you have moved to the Tier 2 category, you must provide proof of this change i.e. a copy of your new visa to the Visa Compliance Team.

Please be aware that switching to a different category will automatically cancel your Tier 4 Student visa, even if it has not yet expired. You will no longer be able to use your Tier 4 visa for travel or to study at the University.

## Tier 4 Extension of Student Visas

**Home Office rule:** CAS Sponsorship Policy for existing students wishing to extend a student visa under Tier 4

If you need to apply for a new visa to start a new course and wish to do so in the UK, please note that you can only do so if there are fewer than 28 days between your visa expiry date and the date when your proposed new course of study will start. If your visa expires more than 28 days before the start date of your proposed course of study, you will be expected to return home to make new visa application. If you need to extend your visa to continue on the same course, the 28 day rule is irrelevant as long as you submit your application before your visa expires.

You must apply to renew or extend your visa before it expires. If you do not do this, you will become an 'overstayer' in the UK. This means that you have stayed beyond the time limit of your permission to be in UK. Although the immigration rules permit you to apply under Tier 4 as an overstayer, you would not have a right of appeal against a refusal of that application and you normally cannot be enrolled on your course pending the decision from the Home Office.

A CAS is issued to a continuing student by the Visa Compliance Team, and will generally only be made available to you when you attend a visa appointment with a Welfare and International Adviser. However, if you are returning from a break in study we will be able to email you your CAS.

All students renewing their visas in the UK should attend a visa workshop and then a visa appointment with a Welfare and International Adviser. Students who are currently studying on the pre-sessional English Language Summer School with a visa that expires in September will be informed of which workshop to attend and will have a visa appointment made for them. All other students should sign up for a workshop at least 1 month before their visa expires by going to the address below:

[northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/stud\\_serv/sws/int\\_adviser/visa\\_info/visaform](http://northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/stud_serv/sws/int_adviser/visa_info/visaform)

### **A CAS will not be issued:**

1. If you are unable to provide any necessary documents such as bank statements or qualifications, or if any of the documents you have provided do not meet the requirements which could lead to a refusal of your application
2. If you do not have time left to extend in the Tier 4 (General) student route (if your study exceeds the maximum time permitted by the Home Office).
3. If you have overdue payments owing to the University (tuition or accommodation).
4. If your visa has expired or you received a visa refusal and become an overstayer. You will be referred to a Welfare and International Adviser to discuss your personal situation and get immigration advice. They will assess if you meet all the Home Office requirements to successfully extend your visa and, if so, you may need to return to your home country. You may have to suspend your studies or take an authorised absence depending on your individual circumstances and country of residence.

5. If the University cannot vouch for academic progression through your attendance and course work submissions.
6. If you are repeating your course **without** attendance.
7. If you intend to complete an exchange or work placement abroad. If you need to return to the University after your placement we will issue you with a CAS no more than 3 months before you are due to return to the UK.
8. To attend the University's Graduation Ceremony.
9. If you are a sponsored student and your sponsor letter is not deemed suitable for any reason.

Northumbria University reserves the right to withdraw any CAS it has assigned. This includes if we believe you have made 'false declarations', if you are circumventing the immigration rules, or if you do not fully disclose your past immigration history.

If you have less than 6 months left on your course or are required to attend final exams only, you might be advised to apply for a Student Visitor Visa instead of under the Tier 4 (General) route. If you are only required to submit course work, you could be required to submit this electronically.

## **Employment**

**Home Office rule:** Notification about employment during term time and vacations

### **Undergraduate, pre-sessional and foundation courses**

The maximum amount of part-time work you can do during term time is 20 hours per week, if you are studying a course at or above UK degree level for example BA or MA. You are limited to 10 hours per week if you are studying a course that is below UK degree level, for example pre-sessional English language study skills or a foundation course. You

can work full-time during vacations and when you have completed your course. It should state on your visa the hours you are permitted to work. University term dates are available here:

[northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/spa/dates/](http://northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/spa/dates/)

### Postgraduate courses

If you are completing a Postgraduate taught course (MA, MSc or PhD) at the University the term dates may not apply to you. For example, during the summer and autumn term while you are collecting data and writing up your dissertation you are considered to be studying full time. You must only work 20 hours per week until you have submitted your dissertation and do not have any further academic commitments.

## Police Registration

**Home Office rule:** Register with the police when you arrive in the UK and then again if and when there are any changes to your circumstance

### The University's Responsibility

If you attend the International Induction event, you will have the opportunity to submit your 'Foreign student registration form' on the day and we will be able to assist you with any queries.

If you renew your visa via Student Support & Wellbeing we will provide you with a leaflet that explains how to re-register.

### The University's Responsibility

If your visa states that you are required to register with the police, you must do so within 7 days of your arrival in the UK.

To register for the first time you should go to the website below and complete the 'Foreign student registration form'. You will need to send the completed form to:

[northumbria.police.uk/ovro](http://northumbria.police.uk/ovro)

Once the police receive your form you will be allocated an appointment time.

If you are already registered with the Newcastle Ovro (Overseas Visitors Registration Office) office you must inform them of any subsequent change to your circumstances.

You must report, within 7 days:

- Change of address
- Change of course
- Change of marital status
- Each time you receive a new visa for the UK
- New passport details
- Any children born whilst you are in the UK

In order to do this you should send an email to [ovro@northumbria.pnn.police.uk](mailto:ovro@northumbria.pnn.police.uk) stating your name, the name of your university, police certificate number and the reason you need an appointment.

## Glossary of Terms

**Entry Clearance:** Permission to travel to the UK. This is granted from overseas and not in the UK.

**Leave to Enter:** Permission to enter the UK.

**Leave to Remain:** Permission to stay in the UK, either temporarily ('limited leave to remain') or permanently ('indefinite leave to remain').

**Vignette:** Stamped visa on a passport when leave is issued from outside of the UK, stating the start and end dates of the leave.

**BRP / Biometric Residence Permit:** A visa card issued when leave is granted in the UK, stating the start and end dates of the leave.

**Visa:** This can be your BRP or Vignette.

**Curtailing:** This is when the Home Office cut short leave, usually because we have reported that we are no longer sponsoring you as a student. If this happens, you would be then required to leave the UK or obtain a new visa.

**Overstayer:** You are classed as an overstayer if you have stayed beyond the time limit of your leave.

# Contacts

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If you are a prospective student and have already made an application to study here you should contact the International Office in the first instance, and you will be referred if necessary:

**[er.internationaladmissions@unn.ac.uk](mailto:er.internationaladmissions@unn.ac.uk)**

or by calling on: 0191 243 7906

For immigration and welfare support, you can contact a Welfare and International Adviser to discuss your personal situation and get advice by emailing:

**[sv.welfareandinternational@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:sv.welfareandinternational@northumbria.ac.uk)**

or by calling on: 0191 227 4127

For information on CASs, visa workshops and visa appointments please email:

**[as.visateam@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:as.visateam@northumbria.ac.uk)**

or by calling on: 0191 227 4127