



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Visas for staying in the UK for work or business: The Graduate Route and other options

Student Immigration Team

We have tried to make this information accurate as at today's date, 14 February 2023 – always check for updates.

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Student Immigration Team

The Graduate Route

A work route to stay on for two years after your degree or 3 years for DPhils – opened 1 July 2021.

Key points

- You must have successfully completed your degree (undergraduate, masters, DPhil or PGCE)
- Oxford must have reported your successful completion to the Home Office before you apply for the visa
- You must be in the UK to apply
- Study must have been in the UK on a Student/T4 visa
- You must have time left on that visa when you apply
- Don't need Oxford or employer sponsorship
- You can do almost any work, or be self-employed

Qualification requirement

Before you apply you must have successfully completed an undergraduate degree, a masters or a DPhil, or a PGCE

(A law conversion course, or vocational course to qualify as a solicitor or barrister, or Foundation Programme in Medicine all qualify too)

- Oxford must have reported your successful completion to the Home Office by the time you apply*
- Completion must have been during your most recent Student/Tier 4 visa (except SU sabbatical officers)
- Normally needs to be the course named on your CAS

*** Oxford's report of your successful completion to the Home Office**

- The Student Visa Compliance Team will make the report
- They submit the reports weekly, on Friday afternoons
- All students whose student record shows they have officially successfully completed are included in the report
- You receive an email from the SVC Team telling you your successful completion has been reported, and reminding you of your most recent CAS number

Your visa status when you apply

- When you apply you must have permission as a Student (meaning a still-current Tier 4 or Student visa as shown by your BRP or your eVisa)
- In very exceptional circumstances you could apply as an overstayer up to 14 days after this has expired- do not rely on this.
- You can't apply if you hold any other type of visa
- You can only hold a Graduate Route visa once.

Study in the UK with a Student/T4 visa requirement:

- 12 months or shorter course length: you must have been in the UK studying on your visa for full duration of course
- Longer than 12 months course length: you must have been in the UK studying on your visa for at least 12 months
- There are concessions for periods of distance learning because of covid- contact us if covid prevented you meeting the basic requirement
- Going away for short periods for example study trips or holidays or going home during vacations when there are no lectures or seminars doesn't count against you
- If you start study on a different visa, you may be able to switch, but will only become eligible if you can fulfill the requirement above

When and how to apply

- Apply in UK
- Only apply after you have successfully completed and your results are official
- Deadline for applying is expiry date of your Student/T4 (BRP) – you are covered to remain if visa end date passes before application outcome
- Fully online application
- No requirement to show any savings
- No additional English language requirement

Finishing earlier or later than expected

- Early completion, for example receiving Leave to Supplicate on your DPhil in February when your visa expires in August, or leaving after 3 years BA instead of 4yr undergraduate masters. Be aware your visa may be shortened by UKVI. You will need to apply before new end date and be very careful about travelling as you may not be able to return.
- Getting course extension for example for dissertation. Work out when you are likely to receive your results and apply for further student visa if necessary **before** you complete your course.

Costs

- Application fee £715, for you and each dependant
- IHS - £624 per person per year: total £1248 for 2 years or DPhil £1872 (3 years)



If you were funded for your study, permission may be required for your Graduate Route application

- Permission required in form of a letter if both tuition fees and living costs have been paid by a government or international scholarship agency (eg. Marshall or Chevening) within 12-month period before application. Chevening will not give consent.
- No consent required if you were sponsored for fees alone or living costs alone
- No consent required if you were sponsored by a University (including Oxford or college scholarships) or an international company or any other funder.

Dependants

- Partner or child under 18 can apply as your Graduate Route dependant
- They need to be in the UK to apply
- They need to already have a visa as your Student/T4 dependant
- Dependants do not have to apply at the same time as you, they could continue to use their Tier 4 /student dependant visa while it is still valid
- Family members not already here need to apply as student dependants before your Student visa expires, then they can apply as your Graduate route dependants
- Dependants can do any work except professional sports person or coach
- No study restriction for dependants

While you wait for decision

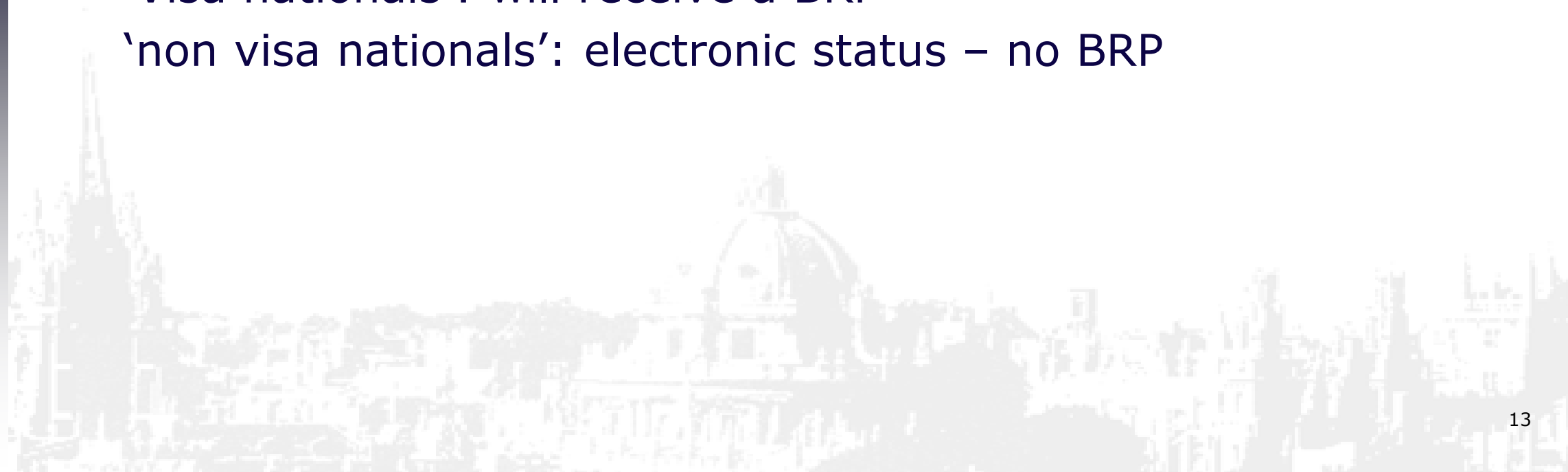
- Doesn't matter if previous visa expiry date passes while you wait ('3c' leave)
- You have Student work permission (and restrictions) until Graduate route permission is granted.
- You can work full time while you wait, as your student visa gives you permission to work full time following course completion, but unless you applied for your student visa after 5 April 2022 you cannot take a permanent full-time job until your GR visa is granted.
- You cannot be self-employed or engage in business until your GR visa is granted as this is prohibited on a Student visa

Permission granted

- Either 2 years or 3 years (applicants with a DPhil) starting from date of decision

'Visa nationals': will receive a BRP

'non visa nationals': electronic status – no BRP



Work permission

- Any work except professional sports person
- Self-employment and business allowed
- Warning: if you are interested in applying for Start-up this is restricted to new business, might be a problem if you've established the business while on Graduate route.

Study restriction:

Basically – not allowed to do any study you could get a Student route visa for!

Afterwards and alternatives

- Can switch into most other work routes or back to student
- Skilled worker
- Start-up/innovator
- Other options



Skilled Worker route

- Skilled Worker replaced Tier 2 on 1 December 2020
- For employment in a specific skilled job
- At an appropriate salary (how much depends on the type of work you do)
- Requires sponsorship from 'approved UK employer'
- <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa>
- [Applicant's guide to applying for a Skilled Worker visa \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Skilled Worker requirement overview

- Employer must have a [Skilled Worker license](#)
- Certificate of sponsorship (COS)
- Job must be at RQF skill level 3 and have eligible code,
- Must be paid appropriate wage for job – ‘going rate’
- Salary must not be less than £20,480 depending on the job (‘new entrant’ minimum)
- Resident labour market test and caps on numbers discontinued
- English requirements
- Maintenance requirements

Immigration Skills Charge

- The good news-

An Immigration Skills Charge is levied on Skilled worker employers but **employer exempted when applicant is switching in-UK from Tier 4/ Student visa or Graduate route to Skilled Worker**

- Applying outside UK: employer pays £1000 for each year of the job, or reduced rate of £364 for small or charity employers.

English language requirement

- Already met because one or more of these will apply to you:
 - ✓ National of majority English speaking country (passport)
 - ✓ Degree level qualification from UK institution (degree certificate, final academic transcript)
 - ✓ Satisfied for previous visa application eg Tier 4 or Student visa

Money to support yourself

- The financial requirement is automatically met if you apply in UK and have been here on a visa for 12 months. Otherwise, £1270 held for 28 days
- <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa/how-much-it-costs>



Financial sponsor permission

- Same as for Graduate route- see slide 10



Cost of applying for Skilled worker visa

- Visa up to 3 years:
In-UK £719
outside UK £625
- More than 3 years:
In-UK £1423
outside UK £1235
- IHS - £624 per year

When can I start working?

- You can normally start work in the role you have been sponsored for as soon as you have applied if you have completed your course or are within 3 months of completion. If you are on Tier 4 granted before 1 October 2019 you may need to start work on a temporary basis.
- Employer may prefer that you wait until the outcome of your Skilled worker application/confirmation of your graduation before starting work
- Always check with your employer about when they expect you to start and on what basis

Family

- Who is your dependant? Partner, and children under 18 (or over 18 if already have a visa as your dependant)
- Dependants can apply in UK at the same time as you if here either as dependant (or on any other visa type except visitor), or they can apply later if they have time left on their own visas
- Dependants can apply to join you from outside UK once you have been granted your Skilled Worker visa
- Don't need CoS to apply as dependant and the dependants can work

Extensions and settlement

- You can extend Skilled Worker permission providing your sponsorship is extended
- Eligible to apply for settlement (ILR) after 5 years on Skilled Worker route, must still be required for job
- Time on Skilled worker route would also go towards settlement (ILR) under 10 year rule

Visas for starting a business

- Start-up route: aimed at those with an endorsed plan for establishing a business in the UK. Endorsement and advice run by University's Careers Service. 2-year visa. Not yet clear whether you could apply on the basis of a business established while you are on Graduate Route. Possible to switch from Graduate Route.
- Innovator: aimed at more experienced businesspeople seeking to establish an innovative business in the UK
- Future development – start-up will be discontinued and Innovator modified from Spring 2023 (details tbc)

Other visa options – see UKCISA’s information [UKCISA - international student advice and guidance - Working after studies:](#)

- **Global talent:** those internationally recognized or likely to become world leaders in certain fields. Must receive endorsement
- **High Potential Individual** degree from top global university
- **Youth mobility:** under 31 at date of application. 2 years. Related scheme for Indian nationals.
- **Government Authorised Exchange:** previously used for internships, some research posts
- **Ancestry visa:** commonwealth citizen, UK born grandparent – 5 years
- EU connection – **settlement scheme for EU nationals** and family members who started living in UK by 31 December 2020
- **Dependant visa:** work almost without restriction

Employers and job applications

- Getting past 'do you have permission to work in the UK, yes or no'
- Employers who aren't aware that Resident Labour Market test has gone or that they might not need to pay Immigration Skills Charge for Skilled Worker
- Employers who aren't licensed for Skilled worker
- lack of familiarity amongst employers with Graduate route

Helpful resources for employers:

[Recruiting International Graduates, an employer's guide - International Student Employability Group](#)

[The UK's points-based immigration system: introduction for employers - UKVI](#)

Information, resources and help

- UK Council for International Student Affairs: up-to-date information and resources on visa options for working after studies fully linked through to relevant gov.uk webpages:
[UKCISA - international student advice and guidance - Working after studies](#)
- Gov.uk website – search on UKVI (name of route)
- Our webpages: [After your studies | University of Oxford](#)
- OU Careers service – work seeker skills and info and Start-up

Email advice from Student Immigration

- Student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk –
- detailed advice on Graduate route and Start-up (visa application)
- general information on other routes, and signposting

