



# **Tier 4 Student Visa Regulations – Taught Admissions**

## **Guide & FAQ**

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to provide the Admissions Service with the following information:

- An overview of the Tier 4 visa route of the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Points Based System (PBS) and what it means for non-UK/EEA applicants wanting to enter the UK for their studies
- How PBS relates to University of Leeds applicants for taught programmes (UG, PGT, Language Centre, Study Abroad and IFY)
- An overview of the University's responsibility and the links to admissions policy and processes
- The most up to date information on PBS requirements and the CAS assigning process
- General queries that may arise regarding PBS for Admissions within the University
- Guidance on who to contact for further advice

# **1. Points Based System (PBS)**

## **Background & Overview**

The Points Based System (PBS) is the current immigration system for work and study implemented by the British Government and administered by United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI). An applicant's right to enter the UK is dependent on attaining a set number of points. These points are gained from the applicant's Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) and from their ability to fund themselves.

An applicant under tier 4, the main study route, is required to gain a total of 40 points, of these points 30 are attained from the University offer and CAS, and the remaining 10 points are gained through the applicant providing evidence that they meet the financial requirements.

Under PBS, when applying for a visa to study in the UK, non-UK/EEA applicants will need to provide their CAS which is issued by the University of Leeds (the Sponsoring Institution). The CAS is a code that identifies a unique record for that applicant or student in the UKVI Sponsor Management System (SMS). This code, or CAS number is used in support of their Visa application. The information and supporting evidence supplied under the unique CAS number is entered by the University. Our Tier 4 sponsor licence permits us to assign CASs, and manage the information kept on those CAS records.

Once the information has been uploaded by the University, the CAS number is generated by the UKVI which is then communicated back to the University via a downloadable file. A summary is then provided to the applicant (and agent where applicable) known as the [CAS statement](#). This is an automated process which occurs on the same evening as the CAS information is loaded into Banner/CRM.

Each CAS costs the University £21, and we also pay an annual sponsorship licence fee.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1.1 What is the purpose of the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies?

The Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) is a record on the UKVI's Sponsor Management System (SMS) which is submitted by the University to confirm the details we hold for an applicant and that we are sponsoring their study in the UK.

### 1.2 What requirements need to be met for a CAS to be issued?

A CAS will only be generated and issued to an applicant who has:

- Provided valid passport details, including:
  - Passport number
  - Expiry date
  - Nationality
  - Country of birth
- Met the English requirements for UKVI and the University (see [Chapter 2](#))
- Confirmed if they have studied in the UK before and academic progression has been declared as appropriate (see [Chapter 3](#))
- Not exceeded the time limits for study on a Tier 4 visa (this is typically 5 years for taught programmes)<sup>1</sup>. Additional information may be found at:  
<https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Tier-4-eligibility-and-requirements#layer-3002>
- Successfully completed all study in the UK on a Tier 4 Visa (see [Chapter 3](#))
  - **Taught Postgraduate:** Accepted an unconditional offer and is at the end of their route through the deposits process i.e. the most recent decision code on their record is a **14**.
  - **UCAS:** The applicant has the status 'Unconditional Firm' on SKAUMAD
  - **IFY & Study Abroad:** The applicant has a decision code of 14 on SAADCRV

### 1.3 When are CASs issued to applicants?

A CAS can be assigned up to six months before the course start date, provided the applicant has met all of the requirements detailed above. The CAS can be used in an immigration application for six months from the date it is assigned.

### 1.4 When will the University start generating CASs?

UG, IFY and PGT CASs – including CASs for combined Language Centre pre-sessional and Masters offers – are not assigned until after the UKVI have published any changes to the PBS guidance or systems. Depending on whether there are any UKVI changes, and whether these require updates to our systems, PGT and UG aim to begin assigning CASs between April and May. The University issues CASs for Language Centre programmes and Study Abroad throughout the year.

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<sup>1</sup> There are a number of exceptions to this rule; for example, if the applicant has studied an undergraduate level course of 4 or 5 years by design, the maximum length of stay may be increased to six years; if the applicant is studying for a PhD or; if the applicant is studying any of the following courses: architecture, medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and surgery, law and music as a conservatoire these are completely exempt from the time limit.

### **1.5 When can applicants apply for their visa?**

Applicants can apply for their visa a maximum of three months before their course start date.

### **1.6 How can an applicant accept their offer?**

#### **UG (UCAS)**

Applicants need to confirm their Firm decision on UCAS Track.

#### **IFY and Study Abroad**

Applicants need to accept their offer using the 'Accept Online' facility:

<http://acceptonline.leeds.ac.uk>.

If applicants encounter any problems while using this service they should contact [admissions@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@leeds.ac.uk)

#### **Taught Postgraduate**

Applicants need to accept their offer using through the Applicant Portal facility:

<https://application.leeds.ac.uk>.

If applicants encounter any problems while using this service they should contact [tp\\_applications@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:tp_applications@leeds.ac.uk)

### **1.7 Can applicants hold multiple unconditional acceptances?**

All applicants can only hold **ONE** unconditional accepted place with the University. We are then able to generate a CAS for the applicant for their chosen programme of study.

If an applicant holds more than one offer they must choose which programme they want to accept before a CAS can be generated.

If an applicant wants to change or withdraw their acceptance of a particular programme of study then the Taught Admissions team must be informed as soon as possible.

### **1.8 How will the applicant know if further action is needed from them before a CAS can be generated?**

#### **Undergraduate**

UCAS applicants who have an overseas fee status and unconditional firm (IFY and Study Abroad who have an overseas fee status and code 14 in SAADCRV) will appear on a report run in the Taught Admissions team. If further information is required before the CAS can be issued, the Taught Admissions team will identify this and contact the relevant Admissions Office within the Faculty.

#### **Taught Postgraduate**

Applicants will receive automated communication to their portal from us on a regular basis, reminding them to accept their offer and/or supply their passport details, pay the tuition fee deposit or provide sponsorship evidence. Any additional information required in order to assign a CAS should be requested by the department prior to issuing the Unconditional offer via an Information Request – these are published to the applicant portal.

### **1.9 How do I check if we are still missing mandatory CAS information for an applicant?**

#### **Taught Postgraduate and Summer pre-sessionals**

The CRM will indicate if anything mandatory is missing, and won't allow you to issue an offer until relevant checking fields have been completed in the system, e.g. the Academic Progression check field.

#### **Undergraduate**

Please contact the Taught Admissions team who can run a report to check if an applicant is ready to have a CAS generated or, if not, what information we are still waiting for.

### **1.10 How is a CAS generated?**

Taught Postgraduate and Summer pre-sessional applicant data will be sent to Banner. All applicant's details are then pulled from Banner using a report function.

This information is then uploaded to UKVI, via the SMS, by staff in the Taught Admissions team. Once this information is successfully uploaded and the CAS has been assigned and paid for, we download the new CAS information back into Banner and CRM.

Once downloaded, the CAS number will populate the Banner screen SWAACAS for all applicants, and will also populate the CAS record for Taught Postgraduate applications in CRM. A copy of the CAS statement will then be provided to the applicant and agent where applicable. This is an automated process which happens immediately for Taught Postgraduate applications in CRM and goes to the applicant portal, and for Undergraduate, around 11pm on the day the CAS information was downloaded back to Banner and goes via email.

### **1.11 Who uploads the information to UKVI?**

Staff in the Taught Admissions team upload new CAS information to UKVI via the SMS, as well as amendments to previously assigned and unused CASs. All applicants who have met the mandatory criteria on the day of upload will have their details submitted.

### **1.12 Will schools be sent copies of the CAS statement?**

No. Although schools will not be sent a copy of the CAS statement, the CAS number will automatically populate back into the Banner screen SWAACAS for all applications, and will also be displayed on the CAS record for taught postgraduate applications. A report is available for schools to run in Argos (CAS status report) which informs them which of their applicants have successfully been issued a CAS. For Taught Postgraduate and Summer pre-sessional applicants there also exists a View which can be accessed in the CAS section of CRM – Faculty CAS View.

### **1.13 What about deferred applicants?**

If an applicant does not use their CAS within the 6 month lifespan then it will expire. If an applicant defers to the following academic year, they will need a new CAS.

They will receive their new CAS within 6 months of their new course start date.

Taught Postgraduate applicants will not be expected to pay the tuition fee deposit again if they defer their offer, it will be transferred to the following year's record (as long as it was not previously refunded).

### **1.14 Who provides immigration information and advice to applicants?**

The International Student Advice team is the only department able to provide specific immigration advice to applicants. Any applicants requiring immigration advice must be referred to the International Student Advice team. Please **do not** attempt to provide immigration advice to applicants. This must be done by the **International Student Advice team only**. Please forward any applicant queries of this nature to the following email address:  
[internationalstudents@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:internationalstudents@leeds.ac.uk).

If, however, you require advice relating to academic progression, and whether we are able to sponsor an applicant under Tier 4, please contact the Taught Admissions team.

### **1.15 Will we know when an applicant has used their CAS to apply for a visa?**

Yes. If an applicant uses their CAS to apply for their visa, then the CAS status in the SMS will be updated to **Used**. Unfortunately, this does not notify us whether the applicant's visa application was successful.

When an applicant uses a CAS to apply for their visa, any other CAS they might have will be marked as **Obsolete**. If this happens, this informs us that the applicant has applied for their visa for an alternative institution.

The CAS status will be visible alongside the CAS number in the Banner screen SWAACAS, and on the CAS record in CRM for Taught Postgraduate applications and Summer pre-sessionals. Any CAS status changes are downloaded from the UKVI SMS by the Taught Admissions team on a daily basis.

### **1.16 What do I do if I receive a query from an applicant who has had their visa application refused?**

We ask that you forward any visa refusal queries immediately to [visas@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:visas@leeds.ac.uk), where a representative from the International Student Advice team will review the case. In order to do so, a copy of the official visa refusal notification should also be sent with this email – you may need to request this from the applicant before referring to ISA.

**1.17 What do I do if I receive a query from an applicant who has incorrect information on their CAS?**

If an applicant reports the details on his/her CAS being incorrect, or needing to be updated, the email should be forwarded to [ug\\_enquiry@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ug_enquiry@leeds.ac.uk) or [tp\\_enquiry@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:tp_enquiry@leeds.ac.uk) as appropriate. If the request is received via CRM, please refer this onto the Taught Admissions team via CRM. The applicant should be advised **not** to use the CAS until contacted by the Taught Admissions team to confirm whether the CAS has been updated or re-issued.

Depending on which sections of the CAS need amending or updating, the applicant may either have his/her CAS record altered or a new CAS issued. It is not possible to say which of these options will be used without assessing the CAS record itself, as each situation needs to be considered individually.

**1.18 What if an applicant says they need an original CAS statement on letter-headed paper?**

An applicant will **NOT** need an original CAS statement on letter headed paper, just the CAS number itself. The CAS statement is intended to be for the applicant's information only. If the applicant has lost/misplaced the CAS statement provided by us, or it was never received, then please contact the Taught Admissions team.

## 2. English Language Requirements

Sponsors have to ensure that they have assessed the English language ability of applicants, and are confident that they have reached CEFR Level B2 in all four component skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). This is equivalent of an IELTS score with no component score of less than 5.5. B2 is the UKVI's minimum requirement for English language to study at degree level (NQF Level 6) or above.

### Qualifications at NQF Level 6 or above

When assigning a CAS to an applicant at **NQF Level 6 or above** the following categories can be used to describe the English evidence used:

#### 1. Migrant from majority English speaking country

If an applicant is from a majority English speaking country as identified by UKVI we are exempt from providing any further evidence of their English language ability. Please use the following tool to determine which applicants fall into this category: [How to record English Language correctly](#)

#### 2. Higher Education Institution (HEI) sponsor has made assessment

For applicant who do not come under 1. the UKVI have confirmed that HEIs are allowed to assess an applicant's English language through other means which, by the sponsoring institution, are considered to be equivalent to CEFR level B2 or higher. A full list of University of Leeds approved majority English speaking countries and commonly presented English Language Qualifications can be found in the relevant Admissions Policy.

For more guidance on how to assess the way in which English evidence should be declared on the CAS, please refer to the '[How to record English language](#)' page within the Admissions section of the SES website.

## Qualifications below NQF Level 6

Applicants attending a pre-sessional or International Foundation Year course (below NQF level 6), are required to meet the UKVI minimum level for entry, which is **CEFR level B1**.

Below NQF Level 6, the level of English can **only** be evidenced through a **Secure English Language Test** which is equivalent to this CEFR B1 level:

Name of SELT	Overall	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
IELTS for UKVI	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0

The UKVI has an approved list of SELTs, which identifies both the test types and test centres that are accepted. A test needs to have been taken at a UKVI approved IELTS test centre to be considered a SELT. The most up-to-date list of approved SELTs and test centres can be found on the Visas and Immigration section of the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website. There is currently only one SELT accepted by the University of Leeds – this is the UKVI IELTS.

## Combined offers for pre-sessionals and Masters programmes

The University issues a combined CAS for summer pre-sessional and masters programmes, allowing us to sponsor the students at NQF level 7. This means we can assign one CAS for both the pre-sessional and the masters programme and use our Higher Education Institute (HEI) discretion to avoid the need to have a Secure English Language Test (SELT). The Language Centre has created nine 6-week and nine 10-week pre-sessional courses with targeted academic content, each one mapping to a related Masters programme. The programmes remain as two separate records in CRM and Banner to avoid any complications beyond Admissions. More information about the discipline-specific pre-sessionals can be found on the Language Centre website at: [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/125008/english\\_language/1768/courses/4](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/125008/english_language/1768/courses/4)

When applicants submit English language evidence which makes them eligible for the 6/10 week pre-sessional, the Language Centre will be alerted to these applicants by Admissions staff in faculty when assessing the English language evidence against the Master requirements. The Language Centre will then automatically give an offer letter for a pre-sessional alongside their original Masters offer (although the English condition is removed). Applicants who have outstanding conditions will have to meet these by the relevant deadline to be able to attend the pre-sessional. If these conditions are not met by the deadline then the combined offer is no longer valid, at which time the English language condition is reinstated to their standalone masters offers.

The Language Centre will contact the Taught Admissions team, to request a combined CAS for any applicants that have already met the Masters English language requirement who still wish to attend a pre-sessional.

For more details, visit [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/123100/admissions/264/pre-sessional\\_programmes](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/123100/admissions/264/pre-sessional_programmes)

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **2.1 What English language information is required for the CAS?**

In order to use an English language qualification for proof of English language ability on a CAS, we must hold details of

- the qualification type
- the overall score, and where appropriate the component scores
- the date the test was taken (IELTS, ibtTOEFL and Pearson only have a two year validity)
- where a verification tool is available (IELTS, ibtTOEFL, Pearson), that the test results have been verified

Not all of this information is included on the CAS. The information needs to be kept on the applicant's record for UKVI audit purposes.

### **2.2 How is English language information recorded in Banner/CRM?**

#### **Undergraduate**

If an applicant meets the English requirement by nationality, no further information needs to be input into Banner. Their nationality information in GOAINTL in Banner is sufficient.

If an applicant meets the English requirement via their degree from a **University** recognised majority English language country OR with any other University approved English language test, this information will be stored in Banner in the Comments field of SAAADMS against a LANG code and in SOATEST for component scores - this is completed by the Taught Admissions team.

#### **Taught Postgraduate**

Please use the '[Preparing records for international offer and CAS – including academic progression](#)' CRM guide for further information.

### **2.3 How is English language information shown on the CAS for degree level and above?**

If the applicant is from a majority English speaking country, this will be stated on the CAS.

For all other instances, specific English language information is not shown on either the CAS statement sent to the applicant or the CAS record held on the UKVI system.

Instead, the CAS will state that we, the HEI, have assessed the applicant's English language ability as meeting CEFR Level B2 under our Higher Education Institution discretion.

We are still required to have accurate and up to date records of the means we have used to assess this as this information will be requested during an audit.

**2.4 How is English language information shown on the CAS for below degree level (IFY and Pre-sessionals)?**

If an applicant has taken a UKVI approved IELTS (this is the only SELT we accept), we record as such on the CAS. The IELTS will then pull onto the CAS statement, along with each component score. This is necessary for CASs assigned for courses below NQF 6.

**2.5 Is there an expiry date for English language qualifications?**

IELTS, Pearson and TOEFL tests are only valid for two years. The test needs to be in date at the start date of the course to be acceptable. If the test expires before the start date of the course, the applicant will need to submit further evidence of their English language ability.

**2.6 How can we tell if an applicant has met CEFR B2?**

An IELTS score of 5.5 (not just as an overall score but in all components) is the CEFR B2 minimum. For a list of equivalent scores for ibtTOEFL and Pearson, please refer to the following page on the [SES website](#).

### 3. Academic Progression

UKVI requires that a CAS issued by a Tier 4 sponsor to a student to **undertake a second or subsequent course of study in the UK (on a Tier 4) must confirm that it represents academic progression from the previous course of study.**

**Sponsors DO NOT need to show academic progression if the student is undertaking their first course of study in the UK on a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa.**

To show Academic Progression the National Qualifications Framework (NQF/RQF) level of the new course that the student is to undertake should normally be above the level of the course of their previous study. For example a student who has previously undertaken a Bachelor degree (at RQF/NQF level 6) would normally undertake their next course at Masters Level (at level RQF/NQF level 7). In exceptional circumstances, it is possible to continue studies at the same level.

It is the University's responsibility to state academic progression accurately. The information we provide in an applicant's CAS may be cross-checked by the UKVI against their migrant data. Failure to check and record this accurately could lead to immigration refusals, which represent a risk to our sponsor licence.

- 1. It is not possible to sponsor a student for study at a lower level than any previous study in the UK under Tier 4 or equivalent.**

For instance, if an applicant has previously studied at PhD level (NQF8), we are not able to accept them for study at Masters level (NQF7) under any circumstances.

- 2. It is not possible to sponsor students who have previously started a programme under Tier 4 sponsorship and failed to complete the programme they were sponsored for.**

The UKVI state that in such cases, applicants would need to submit their Tier 4 visa application from overseas. However, due to the complexity and risk involved, the University's PBS Steering Group have agreed that this option should only be used in exceptional circumstances.

Common scenarios to look out for as a result of this change to policy include:

Scenario	Solution
Any "false starts" or cases where the applicant has changed their mind about programme or location	If this is due to an exceptional circumstance, e.g. the student is performing well, but has to go home for a family emergency and when they are ready to return the programme is no longer running, we would allow the student to make a Tier 4 visa application from overseas.
Students who choose to exit a programme (such as a UG programme with integrated Masters) early with a lower level qualification than that they set out to achieve.	Please see <a href="#">Appendix 1</a> for details of the options available to students already studying on an integrated Masters programme.  Please note, these options do not apply to students that were awarded a fall back award (e.g. awarded a PGDip due to failing credits so

	could not achieve the Masters programme they were sponsored for).
<b>Any consecutive programmes where both are studied in the UK and the first will not be awarded prior to the start of the next programme.</b>	Please see <a href="#">Appendix 2</a> for details of the options available to students studying on programme in the UK which will not be awarded prior to the start of the next programme.

3. It is still possible to sponsor a student for a course at the same level as previous study in the UK, but this is now considered to be exceptional and the two courses together must support a clear career path.

If the student's new course is at the same level as the previous course, it may exceptionally be considered to represent academic progression if the sponsor is a HEI with Tier 4 Sponsor status which is teaching the course and:

- a. the new course is related to the previous course for which the student was given Tier 4 leave (meaning that it is either connected to the previous course, part of the same subject group or involves deeper specialisation); or*
- b. the student's previous and new course combined, support the student's genuine career aspirations.*

*UKVI Tier 4 Sponsor Guidance*

When a CAS is assigned for a programme at the same level as previous UK study, we need to submit an academic progression statement, giving the reason for the applicant continuing their study in the UK, despite not progressing to a higher level course.

**A set of academic progression statements have been created to support these rules. Please see the [SES website](#) for a full list of academic progression statements that should be used if you wish to accept an applicant for same level study.**

When the most appropriate academic progression statement is... **1. Academic Progression confirmed: programme is intended to provide enhanced specialist knowledge to support career development**

and the Masters programme they are moving onto is in an entirely different subject area, i.e. they have an MSc Food Science and have applied for MSc Mathematics, faculty admissions staff will need to send applicants an email ([Appendix 3](#)) to investigate if the combined qualifications (i.e. previous programme studied and Leeds programme applied for) will support a genuine career aspiration. Please note that if the degrees are both in the same subject area and the second qualification represents a further specialism, for example two Masters from the School of Law, there is no need to collect additional information.

## Academic Progression Workflow

An [Academic Progression Workflow](#) has been created to support decision making in Admissions and highlight where further consideration needs to be taken. This workflow should be circulated and considered as a supporting document to this guide. Although the academic progression rules do apply to all cohorts, complex cases are more commonly seen in Taught Postgraduate.

### Please note:

**We need to ask applicants that have previously studied in the UK on a Tier 4 visa to provide all CAS, entry clearance (in passports) and Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)/visa documents, so that we can be confident in their immigration history. Schools are encouraged to request this information before sending enquiries to the Taught Admissions team, in order to minimise delays in issuing offers.**

**When an applicant is not able to comply with the rules outlined above, we may not be able to issue an offer. If you think you may have an applicant in this situation, please contact the Taught Admissions team for guidance.**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 3.1 How do we identify Academic Progression'?

It is the schools' responsibility to identify Academic Progression. Progression needs to be stated regardless of whether we are basing the offer on the applicant's UK qualification or not.

If an applicant has studied in the UK they have an obligation to provide this information as part of their application to the University of Leeds. There is a number of ways of spotting previous UK study, including:

- The applicant has stated a previous qualification in their application form which is from a UK institution.
- The applicant has provided details in their UCAS Application form.
- They have provided a qualification e.g. IELTS certificate which has been stamped by a UK-based office.
- They have provided a contact address in the UK.
- Their CV/personal statement mentions study in the UK.
- The applicant has provided documents with their application that indicate the applicant has taken a UK course of study.
- The applicant's references are from UK institutions, or mention UK study.
- Also, there are two additional fields on the UCAS application: 'Student visa required' and 'Student Visa Study UK'. The former indicates whether the applicant will require a visa in order to study the course they have applied to. The latter indicates whether the applicant has previously been granted a visa to study in the UK. These fields are completed by the applicant and can be seen via UCAS Weblink. Please note that they do not appear on the paper copy of the form.

### **3.2 What visa types does academic progression apply to?**

Academic progression must be investigated when an applicant has previously studied in the UK on a Tier 4 student visa (or previous visa arrangement). Academic progression does not apply to previous study under any other visa type, for example Tier 2, dependent visas, short-term study visa. Academic progression also does not apply when an applicant has informed us that they do not require a Tier 4 visa to study with us at Leeds. If you are unsure of the visa type provided by an applicant please contact the Taught Admissions team.

### **3.3 How is the data for academic progression collected?**

It is highly likely that an applicant will not provide all the information we need to fully assess academic progression at the point of application, so we may need to request additional information before issuing an unconditional offer to complete this assessment.

### **3.4 Why do we need proof of the exact level of the previous qualification studied by the applicant?**

This is a mandatory field for the CAS when we state that the applicant has previously studied in the UK. This is so that we can show whether the intended course of study is higher or the same level as the previous UK study. It is very important that we do this accurately, as this information may be cross checked by UKVI when considering immigration applications and at audit. This proof also assists us with checking whether an applicant has completed the programme for which they were granted Tier 4 leave.

### **3.5 What happens if we know the applicant has studied in the UK but we do not know at what level or on what visa type?**

In most cases it will be relatively easy to identify if an applicant has studied in the UK, as they usually provide some information as part of their application to the University.

Where it is not clear, the applicant should be asked for more information. You may wish to ask questions relating to:

- Whether the study was undertaken on a Tier 4 visa
- Providing a copy of the CAS statement used to obtain the previous visa
- Providing a copy of the completion or award certificate of the previous study

If it is still unclear, you may wish to contact the Taught Admissions team for advice.

### **3.6 What does this mean for non UK/EEA applicants who are currently studying in the UK and moving onto a course at a higher level?**

If an applicant is progressing to a course at a higher level, we do not need to provide a statement to justify academic progression. The CAS will show that the applicant has previously studied in the UK, will give the level of their previous study, confirming that it was at a lower level than the new course.

However, as outlined above, the applicant must have successfully completed any previous study in the UK prior to being assigned a CAS and registering for their programme at Leeds. For more details see the [Academic Progression](#) section above.

### **3.7 Will special circumstances be considered?**

As stated earlier in this section, it has been agreed that the University, as a rule, will treat all academic progression cases consistently, regardless of whether the Tier 4 visa application is being made inside or outside of the UK. This decision was reached as there is no accurate means of knowing where an applicant will submit their application. In addition to this, although a visa application made outside the UK cannot be refused on the grounds of academic progression, the applicant could be invited to a credibility interview, where there is the chance that the application will be refused.

However, it has been agreed that in exceptional circumstances, we will consider allowing applicants to make their application outside of the UK. This will only be considered where the applicant is academically exceptional and/or have compelling mitigating circumstances. We would not consider an applicant that has failed a previous programme in the UK as exceptional.

If you are unsure of whether an applicant can be sponsored, please contact the Taught Admissions team.

### **3.8 How will the Academic Progression statement be recorded?**

If an applicant has not previously studied in the UK on a Tier 4 student visa (or previous visa arrangement) then the University must declare on the CAS that academic progression is not relevant in this case – this is currently recorded in the application for Taught Postgraduate applications in CRM, and in the Banner screen SAAADMS with NPRO for Undergraduate applications. For those applicants where we have identified Academic Progression, the Academic Progression statements are also recorded within the relevant CRM or Banner system. This will then be uploaded into the SMS when the applicant is assigned a CAS.

### **3.9 How will the level of previous studies be recorded?**

This is also recorded in CRM or Banner. A level code e.g. NQF6 is recorded. This will then be uploaded into the SMS when the applicant is assigned a CAS.

## **4. Contacts for PBS queries**

### **Taught Admissions**

TP applications

- Contact address for applicants [tp\\_applications@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:tp_applications@leeds.ac.uk)
- Internal enquiries [tp\\_enquiry@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:tp_enquiry@leeds.ac.uk)

UG applications

- Contact address for applicants [admissions@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@leeds.ac.uk)
- Internal enquiries [ug\\_enquiry@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ug_enquiry@leeds.ac.uk)

Or you can reach us by telephone on 0113 343 3920

### **International Foundation Year**

- Email [intfyear@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:intfyear@leeds.ac.uk)
- Telephone 0113 343 3209

### **Study Abroad Office**

- Email [studyabroad@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:studyabroad@leeds.ac.uk)
- Telephone 0113 343 7900

### **Language Centre**

- Email [langc@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:langc@leeds.ac.uk)
- Telephone 0113 343 3251

### **International Student Advice**

- General Enquiries [internationalstudents@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:internationalstudents@leeds.ac.uk)
- Visa refusals [visa@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:visa@leeds.ac.uk)

### **PBS Policy and Support Manager**

- Natalie Stevenson [n.stevenson@adm.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:n.stevenson@adm.leeds.ac.uk)
- Currently being covered by Ros Harrison [r.harrison1@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:r.harrison1@leeds.ac.uk)

### **Post-registration**

- General Enquiries [csa@adm.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:csa@adm.leeds.ac.uk)

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 Summary of Options for Students on a Tier 4 MEng Visa

### Background

There have been a number of changes to the Home Office policy regarding academic progression and we need to make you aware of these and the impact they will have on any decision to change your programme if you are on an MEng and wish to graduate with a BEng.

If you were sponsored for and received a Visa for a 4 year integrated Masters level (NQF 7) qualification, but choose to exit after 3 years with a BEng qualification (NQF 6) then the University has to report your course completion to the Home Office.

Under the new Home Office policy guidelines this means that you have completed your course at a lower level than your visa was granted for which means your leave in the UK would be curtailed, and you are classified as not completing your original programme of study.

### Your Options

Your Options	Things to Consider	Need a new Visa?
1. Stay on the 4 year MEng programme your visa was initially granted for	No visa implications.  If you do not meet the criteria at the end of year 3 to progress onto an MSc at Leeds, then you will enter one of the categories below.	NO
2. Exit with a BEng and finish your studies in the UK. Return home	You will be classified by the Home Office as not completing your original programme of study	N/A
3. Exit with a BEng and go elsewhere in the UK for masters study	The University will inform the Home Office that you have completed your study with us. Your leave is likely to be curtailed and you will be classified as not completing your original programme of study. The Home Office guidelines say:  <i>If a student has failed to successfully complete a previous course for which they were granted Tier 4 leave by achieving the qualification for which they were studying, they will not be able to demonstrate academic progress and will have to apply from overseas if they wish to make a Tier 4 application to study a new course.</i>  This means that you <b>have to return home and apply for a new Visa for the MSc programme at another UK Institution.</b>  You may be asked to justify your reasons for finishing your original course at BEng instead of MEng if you are invited to a	YES

	credibility interview as part of the visa application process – the outcome of your application is not guaranteed.	
4. <b>Accept a BEng and apply for an MSc programme at University of Leeds staying on current visa</b>	<p>You will need to indicate that you would like to take this route by a set deadline, apply for the MSc by a set deadline, and Register at the University by a set deadline. We can then inform the Home Office of your change of programme. If you graduate, have applied to UoL for an MSc and do not register by the deadline, then you enter category 3 above.</p> <p>Please note that with this option <b>no further leave application is possible in the UK</b>. If extra time is needed for resits for example, a visa application must be made from overseas. Current immigration permission will expire before the MSc graduation in Dec 2017 so you will need to return home when your MSc studies finish. <b>Should you wish to attend MSc graduation you will need to apply for an alternative visa</b> e.g. visitor visa</p>	<b>NO</b>
5. <b>Accept a BEng and apply for an MSc programme at Leeds with new CAS, making an immigration application from overseas over the summer.</b>	<p>This option may be suitable if you intend to return home for the summer after BEng graduation.</p> <p>Please note you that will be classified by the Home Office as not completing your original programme of study.</p> <p>You may be asked to justify your reasons for finishing your original course at BEng instead of MEng if you are invited to a credibility interview as part of the visa application process – the outcome of your application is not guaranteed.</p>	<b>YES</b>

If you want to find further information on the Home Office Policy guidelines relating to Academic Progression that we have referred to, the full Policy can be found here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/453000/Tier\\_4\\_Sponsor\\_Guidance\\_-\\_Document\\_2\\_-\\_Sponsorship\\_Duties.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/453000/Tier_4_Sponsor_Guidance_-_Document_2_-_Sponsorship_Duties.pdf)

### **Next Steps**

We understand that these new immigration guidelines can be confusing, so it is very important that you think through the information above and the associated implications before you make a decision about your programme of study. The deadline by which you need to return your form to tell us your decision is **XXXXXX**.

If you need any further immigration support or advice, please contact the International Student Office via [internationalstudents@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:internationalstudents@leeds.ac.uk) or go to their daily drop in service at 10:30 am every weekday at Level 11, Marjorie & Arnold Ziff building.

## Appendix 2 Options for applicants on consecutive programmes in the UK

Applicants that require a Tier 4 visa, and that are currently studying in the UK on a Tier 4 visa, on a programme that is not needed to meet their academic requirements, should be made an offer for the cycle they applied for (in current cases 2016 entry). The offer should be conditional, and a specific 'sponsorship condition' will be used (see wording below). In cases where they won't have the official results in time to start a Masters with us, we will accept the following:

- Evidence that the applicant has successfully completed all assessed components of their [insert qualification and institution, e.g. Masters from the University of Manchester].
- Confirmation that they have submitted your dissertation.

We should accept this information on formal letter headed paper from the current institution. We're also stating that we may contact the institution to verify the authenticity of the document provided. We'll only do this in cases where we have any doubt over what has been provided, not as standard.

In all cases, the offer should remain conditional until this letter (plus any other outstanding conditions) has been received. We won't need to see the original copy of this letter at registration.

Scenario	Wording
Applicant <b>won't have official results</b> before start of Leeds programme and <b>has other outstanding conditions</b> .	<p><b>Additional information required for Tier 4 sponsorship</b></p> <p>In addition to satisfying all of the academic requirements for this course, you are required to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that you have successfully completed all assessed components of your [insert qualification and institution, e.g. Masters from the University of Manchester].</li> <li>• Confirmation that you have submitted your dissertation.</li> </ul> <p>We will accept this information on formal letter headed paper from your current institution. We may contact your institution to verify the authenticity of the document provided.</p> <p>This information is required to demonstrate academic progression to satisfy the UKVI regulations, and enable us to assign you a CAS. If you no longer require a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa please inform us at <a href="mailto:tp_applications@leeds.ac.uk">tp_applications@leeds.ac.uk</a></p>
Applicant <b>won't have official results</b> before start of Leeds programme <b>and has no other outstanding conditions</b> .	<p>All academic requirements for this course have been satisfied.</p> <p><b>Additional information required for Tier 4 sponsorship</b></p> <p>In addition to satisfying all of the academic requirements for this course, you are required to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that you have successfully completed all assessed components of your [insert qualification and institution, e.g. Masters from the University of Manchester].</li> <li>• Confirmation that you have submitted your dissertation.</li> </ul> <p>We will accept this information on formal letter headed paper from your current institution. We may contact your institution to verify the authenticity of the document provided.</p> <p>This information is required to demonstrate academic progression to satisfy the UKVI regulations, and enable us to assign you a CAS. If you no longer require a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa please inform us at <a href="mailto:tp_applications@leeds.ac.uk">tp_applications@leeds.ac.uk</a></p>

<p>Applicant <b>will have official results</b> before start of Leeds programme and <b>has other outstanding conditions</b>.</p>	<p><b>Additional information required for Tier 4 sponsorship</b></p> <p>In addition to satisfying all of the academic requirements for this course, you are required to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that you have successfully completed your [insert qualification and institution, e.g. Masters from the University of Manchester]</li> </ul> <p>We will accept this information on formal letter headed paper from your current institution. We may contact your institution verify the authenticity of the document provided.</p> <p>This information is required to demonstrate academic progression to satisfy the UKVI regulations, and enable us to assign you a CAS. If you no longer require a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa please inform us at <a href="mailto:tp_applications@leeds.ac.uk">tp_applications@leeds.ac.uk</a></p>
<p>Applicant <b>will have official results</b> before start of Leeds programme and <b>has no other outstanding conditions</b>.</p>	<p>All academic requirements for this course have been satisfied.</p> <p><b>Additional information required for Tier 4 sponsorship</b></p> <p>In addition to satisfying all of the academic requirements for this course, you are required to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that you have successfully completed your [insert qualification and institution, e.g. Masters from the University of Manchester]</li> </ul> <p>We will accept this information on formal letter headed paper from your current institution. We may contact your institution verify the authenticity of the document provided.</p> <p>This information is required to demonstrate academic progression to satisfy the UKVI regulations, and enable us to assign you a CAS. If you no longer require a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa please inform us at <a href="mailto:tp_applications@leeds.ac.uk">tp_applications@leeds.ac.uk</a></p>

## Appendix 3 Career Aspiration Email Template

Dear <Name>

Thank you for your application to the University of Leeds to study <programme a>. We have identified as part of your application that you have previously studied <NQF Level 7 programme b> at <Institution>. As you may be aware, the UKVI have recently changed the rules regarding progression to same level study. This is detailed as follows:

*74. If your new course is at the same level as the previous course, it may exceptionally be considered to represent academic progression if the course is at degree level or above and your sponsor teaching the course is an HEI with Tier 4 Sponsor status and:*

*a. the new course is related to the previous course for which you were given Tier 4 leave (meaning that it is either connected to the previous course, part of the same subject group or involves deeper specialisation); or*

*b. your previous and new course combined, support your career aspirations.*

*([Tier 4 Policy Guidance](#) version 03/2018 page 23 of 98)*

We have identified that in your situation, we may be able to sponsor you under category b.

**Please respond to this email detailing how the combination of <programme a> and <programme b> will support your career aspirations? Please include any evidence which supports your response, this could include:**

- **A job description for the type of role/organisation you are interested in**
- **Careers advice from a website or publication**
- **Correspondence from a professional in the industry**

If your previous study was not under a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa, or equivalent, please inform us, including evidence of your alternative UK clearance, as these rules will not apply to you.

If you do not require sponsorship under a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa in order to study at the University of Leeds, please inform us as these rules do not apply to you.

Once we have received your response, we will review, based on the Tier 4 Policy, whether we are able to make you an offer.

We look forward to hearing from you.  
University of Leeds