

# Immigration advice regarding the recent coronavirus outbreak

## Frequently asked questions

### Visa applications and extensions

#### **What do I need to do if my visa is expiring soon and I can't leave the UK?**

The Home Office have now released updated guidance for visa holders who cannot return home due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Please read the full statement on the [gov.uk webpage](#).

If you have already had your visa extended to 31 May 2020 your visa will be extended automatically to 31 July 2020.

If your visa expires between 24 January 2020 and 31 July 2020 and you cannot leave the UK due to either travel restrictions or self-isolation, you must contact the Coronavirus Immigration Team to update your immigration record (contact information can be found on the link above).

You will need to provide:

- Your full name (including any middle names)
- Date of birth (dd/mm/yyyy)
- Nationality
- Your previous visa reference number – this is your BRP number found in the top right corner of your BRP card, or if you do not have a BRP, the number on the top right corner of your visa in your passport
- Why you can't go back to your country, for example if the border has closed

We recommend that you contact the Coronavirus Immigration Team as soon as possible with the above information.

If you need any support from the Student Immigration Service with the above, please [contact us by email](#).

#### **I need to make a new visa application but the nearest visa application centre is still closed – what should I do?**

As most UK Visa and Citizenship Application Centres (UKVCAS) and Service and Support Centres (SSCs) are temporarily closed because of coronavirus (COVID-19), your immigration status will not be negatively affected as a result of you not being able to attend an appointment.

If you have already made a visa application appointment, you will be contacted and told what to do next. Your immigration status will not be negatively affected as a result of you not being able to attend your appointment.

Once you have submitted your application online, the terms of your leave will remain the same as they were at the point of application. You will be in the UK lawfully and you will not be subject to immigration action if you are unable to attend a biometric appointment or if there are delays in processing your application.

#### **I am waiting on a decision on my Tier 4 visa application – can I still study?**

We may allow you to start your studies before your visa application has been decided if:

- we have assigned you a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)
- you submitted your application before your current visa expired and has shown us evidence of this
- the course you start is the same as the one listed on your CAS
- you have a valid [Academic Technology Approval Scheme \(ATAS\) certificate if required](#).

**I need to repeat a year, retake a module, or resit an exam – may I apply for an extension from the UK?**

UKVI have confirmed that students unable to complete their course of study within the current period of leave due to Covid-19, will be able to apply in country to complete that course. Students who need to repeat a year, retake a module, or resit an exam are exempt from demonstrating academic progression as would normally be the case for those applying in the UK.

Further to this exemption, students who otherwise need more time to complete a course as a result of Covid-19 will be exempt from demonstrating academic progression, e.g. where a sponsor suspends studies for the duration of any social distancing measures.

**I have not been able to use my 30-day vignette due to Covid-19 to collect my BRP and it has now expired. What do I need to do?**

- If your 30-day visa to travel to the UK for work, study or to join family has expired, or is about to expire, you can request a replacement visa with revised validity dates free of charge until the end of this year
- To make a request, you should contact the [Coronavirus Immigration Team](#) and include your name, nationality, date of birth and your GWF reference number with 'REPLACEMENT 30 DAY VISA' in the subject line. If you have already contacted the team about this, please let the team know in the email
- You will be contacted when the Visa Application Centres (VACs) re-open to arrange for a replacement visa in your passport
- You will not be penalised for being unable collect your BRP while coronavirus measures are in place.

This process will remain in place until the end of 2020.

**I am currently in the UK on a different visa – may I switch into Tier 4 from the UK?**

Switching into Tier 4 from short-term routes including Visit and Short-term Study will be allowed on an exceptional basis.

Applicants must still meet the other requirements of the route such as maintenance. This will be allowed until 31 July, at which point the concession will be reviewed.

Students applying to switch from Short-term study into Tier 4 will be able to commence the new course of study from the date of the application rather than the date the decision is made, subject to obtaining an ATAS certificate for their proposed course of studies if required. The sponsor must end their sponsorship and teaching of the student if the Home Office ultimately refuses the application.

## **Visa conditions**

### **May I undertake a distance-learning course if I am an international student?**

Tier 4 students are not normally permitted to undertake distance learning courses. However, due to the current exceptional circumstances, UKVI will not consider it a breach of sponsor duties to offer distance learning to existing Tier 4 students in the UK or who have chosen to return overseas but wish to continue their current studies.

New international students who have been issued a Tier 4 visa but have been unable to travel to the UK are permitted to undertake distance learning and sponsorship does not need to be withdrawn.

New international students who have not yet applied for a visa but wish to commence a course by distance learning do not need to travel to the UK to do so and therefore do not require sponsorship under Tier 4.

### **What do I do if I need to update my police registration certificate?**

Due to the ongoing coronavirus situation, Avon and Somerset Police have suspended all face to face police registration appointments until further notice.

As such, Tier 4 students who would normally be subject to police registration who are extending their leave in the UK during the period in which the Government advises not to leave home unless it is essential to do so, are not required to register with their local police force after leave is granted, or if any other change of circumstances that normally requires police to be notified applies.

This policy is applicable to students applying from 21 March 2020 whilst social distancing restrictions are in place. Such students must register with the police or update their information once social distancing measures are lifted.

### **Do I need to provide my Police Registration Certificate as part of my new visa application in the UK?**

Students who have already registered with the police and are making a new application in the UK should submit their Police Registration Certificate along with any other documents in support of their application as normal.

## **Work related**

### **What do I need to do if I'm on placement but can't go to work?**

If you cannot attend your placement due to the evolving situation with Covid-19, please could you request an authorised absence through SAMIS on the web. You can request the absence for up to 60 days. This will not negatively affect your attendance record with regards to your Tier 4 visa. Please be aware we are currently receiving a high volume of absence requests and these may take longer than usual for us to process.

To log an authorised absence, go to [SAMIS on the web](#), Student Home>Student tasks>Request/View authorised absences. Once received, we will pass your request on to your Director of Studies for approval. You will receive an email to let you know the outcome of your request.

Please make sure you also keep your employer informed.

If you are still working for your employer remotely, please ensure that you update your contact details on Samis on the web and submit an authorised absence as mentioned above.

**I have a part-time job and would like to work more hours now that teaching is online. Can I do this?**

Unfortunately, the 20 hours per week work limit in term time still applies if you are a Tier 4 visa holder. You are still expected to be studying full-time even though face to face teaching has stopped. The Home Office have introduced an exception for Tier 4 visa holders if you are working or volunteering for the NHS as a doctor, nurse or paramedic. In these cases (and only in these cases), you can work more than the 20 hours per week even in semester time.

**I usually have a job but have been furloughed. Is this considered claiming public funds which would be prohibited by my Tier 4 visa?**

If your employer furloughs you, they will let you know whether you are eligible for payment under the coronavirus job retention scheme for furloughed workers. At the moment, this scheme has not been added to the definition of “public funds” and therefore receiving funds as part of this scheme is not a breach of your Tier 4 visa conditions. Any hours for which you are furloughed do not count towards the 20 hours per week work limit.

**Leaving the UK**

**What do I need to do if I’m leaving or have left the UK to go home?**

If you have decided to leave the UK for a period of time due to the evolving situation with Covid-19, please could you request an authorised absence through SAMIS on the web. You can request the absence for up to 60 days. This will not negatively affect your attendance record with regards to your Tier 4 visa. Please be aware we are currently receiving a high volume of absence requests and these may take longer than usual for us to process.

To log an authorised absence, go to [SAMIS on the web](#), Student Home>Student tasks>Request/View authorised absences. Once received, we will pass your request on to your Director of Studies for approval. You will receive an email to let you know the outcome of your request.

Please also make sure that you update your address and contact details on SAMIS.

We recommend that you contact your Director of Studies and/or personal tutor with regards to any study time you may miss to ensure you are able to stay on top of your academic work.

**What do I do about my belongings in my accommodation?**

If you will be leaving the UK for a period of time and are not sure when you will be returning, you will need to check with the [accommodation team](#) on campus what you will need to do with regards to your belongings.

If you are renting privately and will be leaving the UK for a period of time and are not sure when you will be returning, you will need to check with your landlord what you will need to do with regards to your belongings.

## **Other**

### **What will likely happen with travel/the University moving forward?**

Unfortunately, we are not able to advise future travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 outbreak – we can only advise on the current situation.

As the situation is evolving rapidly, we advise you to refer to [University guidance](#) and [government guidance](#) as these are both being updated regularly.

### **Where is the published UKVI Guidance on Tier 4 students and the Covid-19 situation?**

The new guidance was updated on 01 June 2020 and is available on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-tier-4-sponsors-migrants-and-short-term-students>

### **What should I do if I'm self-isolating?**

If you have been advised to self-isolate, please read the [NHS guidance](#) and [government guidance](#) regarding this.

### **Where can I get more information?**

UKVI has a dedicated team for customers with immigration queries related to coronavirus. This includes questions about urgent, compelling and compassionate cases. Customers should visit [Gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents](#) for further help and support.