

International Services – Immigration FAQ's

What will happen to my Tier 4 visa if I'm studying remotely?

The University is required to monitor the attendance of all our Tier 4 sponsored students. However, in light of the alternative arrangements being made for teaching/assessment/supervision in response to COVID-19 please be advised as follows:

Current Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught students

If you wish to leave your campus and continue your studies remotely, you should check with your Department/School that you do not need to be here for educational reasons. Providing you continue to engage and progress academically, the University will not need to take any action to withdraw our Tier 4 sponsorship and your Tier 4 immigration status will remain valid.

If you are finishing your course this year and wish to leave the UK permanently to complete your course remotely from overseas, please check with your Department/School via email to ask if you can do so and copy in international@essex.ac.uk so that we can ensure you obtain further guidance regarding your Tier 4 visa.

Current PhD students

Provided that you continue to engage and progress academically and remain in contact with your Supervisor monthly via Zoom/Skype, the University will not need to take any action to withdraw our Tier 4 sponsorship and your Tier 4 immigration status will remain valid. If you are intending to leave the UK permanently and will submit your thesis remotely, please check with your Department/School via email to ask if you can do so and copy in international@essex.ac.uk so that we can ensure you obtain further guidance regarding your Tier 4 visa.

Please look out for further updates from the University in the coming days and weeks via email and check our [COVID-19 page](#) regularly for guidance. Don't forget to update your contact details we hold for you via your myEssex portal if they change.

Current students who will need to extend their Tier 4 visa

Our International Services team will be in touch with you soon if your Tier 4 visa expires before your course is due to finish.

I would like immigration advice about travelling to another country

We're sorry but we are only authorised to provide immigration advice to our students about the UK's student Immigration rules. You can check the official government website for the country you would like to go to.

I've finished my studies but can't leave the UK before my current visa expires, what will happen?

The UK government have updated their guidance for those nationals who have or will be unable to leave the UK by the date their current visa expires.

If your immigration permission expired, or will expire, between 24 January and 31 July 2020 the Home Office will extend it for you up to 31 July 2020 without your having to make an immigration application or pay a fee.

If your immigration permission has already been extended to 31 May under the previous version of this guidance, the Home Office will automatically extend your permission to 31 July. If you have not yet applied under this scheme, you must [submit a form to its Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre](#). Until 6 April, you had to send an email including specified information.

Read the [government website](#) for further information and contact the coronavirus immigration helpline if you have any other immigration queries relating to coronavirus.

I have a Tier 4 visa, what will happen if the situation continues and I can't get back to the UK for the start of the next academic year?

We very much hope that the situation will improve and that you will be able to travel back to the UK in time for the start of term in October 2020. We will continue to update our published information as the situation progresses and our Registration team will be in touch with you later in the summer regarding registering for 2020/2021.

I'm starting a new Essex course, can I apply in the UK for my new Tier 4 visa

This depends on a number of factors not limited to but including, the date your current Tier 4 visa expires and your current sponsor.

If your Tier 4 visa expires more than 28 days before your new course start date and/or you are studying at the International College, the Tier 4 rules require you to make your Tier 4 visa application overseas in a country where you legally live (you can't be a visitor in that country). Tier 4 rules do not enable institutions to sponsor students for a Tier 4 visa if the course will be studied online/remotely. The Home Office haven't made any concessions to these Tier 4 rules and requirements at the time of writing. Please check the [UKCISA](#) website for up to date information and guidance about applying for Tier 4.

Our [Admissions team](#) will be able to advise you further. If you are going to another institution to study your new course you'll need to contact their advice services.

I've lost my BRP (Biometric Residence Permit) what should I do?

What you need to do will depend if you are in the UK or overseas and when your Tier 4 leave expires. Check our [immigration pages](#) for more information and contact us if you need to via the 'ask us a question' section.

Can I work full time?

Tier 4 students can only work part-time during term-time, including during the time that teaching is to be delivered remotely due to the COVID-19. It's important that you know what term-time applies to you as this varies for different courses/levels of study. Those students who have Short-term student visas can't work at all in the UK. To find out more about your work conditions please check our [immigration pages](#).

Under the Home Office concession, Tier 4 students who are employed by an NHS trust or volunteer for the NHS are not restricted to the number of hours they can work per week in term time.

PhD students – if it has been agreed that you can take a leave of absence/intermit because of COVID-19 and we have not withdrawn our Tier 4 sponsorship, you should seek [immigration advice](#) from our International Services team regarding working during this period.

Can I apply for the University's hardship fund?

Many students have had their funds disrupted or incurred additional, unexpected costs because of the current COVID-19 situation. The University's [Hardship Fund](#) is open to all University of Essex registered students.

You will need to demonstrate that an unexpected and significant financial situation outside of your control has led to you needing financial assistance.

Please be aware that as a Tier 4 student, you will have confirmed to the Home Office that you had sufficient finances in place to pay for tuition fees and living expenses whilst studying in the UK. Tier 4 Essex degree students are allowed to supplement their income by [working](#) part-time in term time but should not need to work in the UK to afford living expenses and tuition fees.