Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme FAQs

(Updated in Sep 2016)

The Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme is a scheme introduced from 6 April 2013 designed to give students on Tier 4 visas who have almost finished their UK PhD or other doctorate qualification an additional 12 months of Tier 4 (General) immigration permission in which to look for and start work in the UK.

Tier 4 sponsor

City is eligible to sponsor its completing doctoral students under Tier 4.

Can I apply for this visa?

If you have almost finished studying for a PhD qualification or for an equivalent doctorate qualification eg DPsych then you may be eligible to apply for this scheme.

What do I need from the University to apply for this visa?

In order to apply, the University must assign a Tier 4 confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) for you.

A CAS can only be assigned when you are within 60 days of the expected end date of your course. A CAS cannot be assigned after the doctorate has been awarded.

How do I know what the expected end date of my course is?

The UKVI define the "expected end date" as

"the date the PhD is expected to be formally confirmed, by the sponsor, as completed to the standard required for the award of a PhD".

For the purposes of this application, the 'expected end date' will be calculated as the date you have been given to submit any corrections, plus two months OR in the case you pass your PhD straight away, the date of the viva plus two months. You may need to meet with your supervisor to discuss your expected end date in more detail.

If your current Tier 4 visa is due to expire before the expected end date (as calculated above) then you should seek advice from the International Student Advice team (visaadvice@city.ac.uk).
When can I apply for this visa?

You can apply under the Doctorate Extension Scheme as soon as you have been assigned a CAS. You have to apply before the expected course end date as stated on the CAS.

You must also apply before your current immigration permission expires.

What other requirements do I need to meet?

You must also meet the usual financial requirements of Tier 4 i.e. they you must have held a minimum balance of £2530 (£1265 per month X 2 months) in your personal bank account for a consecutive 28 day period before the date you apply.

If you have been financially supported by a government or international scholarship agency during your studies, or within 12 months of making this application if the sponsorship has now stopped, you will need the unconditional written consent of your financial sponsor to your application under this scheme. The Tier 4 policy guidance states that this requirement applies to students if the sponsorship you had received covers all your tuition fees and living costs.

Work under the doctorate extension scheme

If your application is successful, you will be granted Tier 4 immigration permission for a period of 12 months from the expected course end date on the CAS.

You can start work full-time or commence self-employment after you have submitted your application for a Tier 4 extension under the Scheme provided you have received confirmation of the award of your PhD from the University (this can be before or after the expected course end date on the CAS).

Am I required to have contact with the University during my time under this scheme?

Doctoral Graduates are not required to stay in London and can move anywhere in the UK. However, City in sponsoring your application is obliged to ensure that we are in contact with you on at least two occasions during this 12-month period. This can be a meeting in person or using Skype, telephone contact or by email.

If you miss a scheduled contact without providing an explanation, we are obliged to report this to the Home Office. The Home Office can take action to cut short your Tier 4 visa in this instance.

You also need to tell us:

- if you leave the UK and do not intend to return before your doctorate extension scheme visa permission expires or
- if you apply and are granted immigration permission under a different category.

For additional guidance and help with the application process please contact the International Advice Team in the Student Centre.