



# ACADEMIC STUDIES ABROAD

## Tier 4 General Student Visa - UK

### General Info

- ▶ **If you are going to be studying in the UK for more than six months, you must apply for your Tier 4 General Student Visa 60-90 days prior to your departure.** Your Student Visa will be a sticker placed inside your passport that allows you to study in the UK for the full Academic Year.
- ▶ **You will have to send your passport to the Consulate, and they will keep it while they process your visa. DO NOT PLAN ANY INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL DURING THE 3-4 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR DEPARTURE TO THE UK.**
- ▶ **Please read this document in full AT LEAST 4 WEEKS BEFORE the date you wish to apply for your visa.** This will help you understand the process and enable you to collect all your supporting documents in time.
- ▶ **Check your passport to make sure it does NOT expire within 3 months of your proposed return date from the UK.** If it expires within that time frame or anytime during your stay in the UK, you must have it renewed immediately and *receive* your new passport BEFORE you can apply for your Student Visa.
- ▶ **ASA cannot apply for your Student Visa for you. It is your responsibility to obtain it before you depart. We have written this guide in an effort to assist you.**
- ▶ Semester students who are considering staying for more than 1 semester are strongly advised to apply for a Student Visa, because without it, you will be limited to 1 semester of study *without* the option to extend your stay.
- ▶ **UKBA VISA RULES AND REGULATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. (UKBA = UK Border Agency. The UKBA issues visas for the UK.)**

- ▶ **The most updated information about how to apply for your Student Visa can always be found here:**

**[www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/](http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/)**

After visiting the website above, **click the following links on the left** in order to find the “How to Apply – a Step by Step Guide”:

*-Frequently Asked Questions*

*-How to Apply – a Step by Step Guide* (Click here and several sub-categories will appear. You need to read the information under each sub-category.)

*-You also need to read these Guidance notes:*

**<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/Tier4migrantguidance1.pdf>**

## **GENERAL TIMELINE - Applying for a Tier 4 General Student Visa**

### Step 1 *at least 90 days prior to departure...*

Very important: **READ THIS DOCUMENT IN ITS ENTIRETY**, then read the “How to Apply – a Step by Step Guide” as described in the previous paragraph.

- Take note of the required **supporting documentation** (such as Financial Evidence) which you must send in to support your online application.
- **You cannot apply for your visa until you have your CAS** from your UK host institution (CAS = Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies).
- **It may take several weeks to obtain your CAS and gather your supporting documentation!**
- **Do NOT begin the online application form until you understand all of the steps and requirements.**

### Step 2 *at least 90 days prior to departure...*

**Make a mental timeline for obtaining your CAS and supporting documentation, and ensure everything will be ready to go 60 days prior to departure.** Examples: Ask ASA how long it will take to get your CAS. Think about the required financial evidence and how you will provide it. Make sure you can provide all the supporting documentation in the correct format. (Gathering your financial evidence may involve your parents and take several weeks.)

### Step 3 *at least 60, but no more than 90 days prior to departure...*

Submit your visa application and payment online at [www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/](http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/). As of June 2010, the fee for a Tier 4 Student Visa is **£199.00**. For the current exchange rate, go to [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com). **YOU SHOULD AIM TO APPLY FOR YOUR VISA AT LEAST 60 DAYS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE.** The earliest you can apply is 90 days prior. **At a bare minimum, you must apply 45 days prior to departure.**

### Step 4 *immediately after you submit the online application and payment...*

You will make a Biometrics Appointment where you will submit **fingerprint scans**, in person.

### Step 5 *within **2 weeks** after your Biometrics Appointment...*

**Mail the required supporting documents to the Consulate that represents your home state’s jurisdiction.** During the online visa application process, you will find out which Consulate you should send your documents to. **Use a service with tracking** (FedEx or UPS) and see if the Consulate has a preferred carrier.

### Step 6 *after completing Step 5...*

Wait for the Consulate to return your passport. Your visa will be affixed to the inside of your passport. Visa processing can take as little as 5 business days, or as long as 30 business days. *It’s important to apply 60 days prior to departure because in the unlikely case your visa is refused, this should give you time to make an appeal before departure.*

*~~A detailed timeline is on the following pages!~~*

## **Common Mistakes!**

The UKBA has a refusal rate of about 20% of student visas.

**The most common reasons for refusal are:**

- ✓ Failing to send your actual passport to the Consulate.
  - ✓ Failing to **APPLY BETWEEN 60-90 DAYS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE.**
  - ✓ Failing to fill in ALL the boxes on the online visa application form.
  - ✓ Failing to provide your CAS number on the application form (stands for “Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies.” This is issued by your UK host university. *(More on this below.)*)
  - ✓ Failing to send in **original** supporting documents (do NOT send photocopies, PDFs, faxes, etc.) Supporting documents must be **submitted in the exact format requested by the UKBA.**
  - ✓ Failing to submit your Financial Evidence in the requested format.
  - ✓ Failing to send your official transcript, or other documents named on your CAS as being used to obtain your place of offer at your host university.
  - ✓ Failing to pay correct fee amount AND return postage.
- 

## **DETAILED TIMELINE: How to Apply**

- *Steps 1-4 are preparatory steps that must be completed in the given timeframe BEFORE you can actually apply for your visa.*
  - *Steps 5-7 are the steps for actually applying for your visa.*

- 1) **You cannot begin applying for your visa until you have your CAS.** *(Even if you don't have your CAS yet, keep reading so you'll know what to do as soon as you get your CAS.)*

A **CAS** is a **unique reference number** that has replaced Visa Letters for all Tier 4 applications. Sponsors will provide students with a CAS number to quote on their application form. Sponsors must also provide applicants with a list of documents that the Sponsor used to evaluate your admissibility, and you must send the same original documents to the Consulate after your Biometrics appointment. (Your Sponsor is your UK host university.) **It may take 3-4 weeks to get your CAS once you have completed the necessary enrollment steps. Check with ASA to make sure you've completed the proper steps to get your CAS and to find out approximately when your CAS will be ready!** Your CAS is valid for 6 months. If you don't apply for your visa within 6 months of issuance, you'll need to start the enrollment process over to get a new CAS.

- 2) **90 days prior to departure:** Complete the online Self-Assessment Points Calculator at <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/pointscalculator>
- 3) **90 days prior to departure:** Complete **Appendix 8** and the **VAF 9 application form ON PAPER** as a “practice run.” (Later, you will have to complete a good PAPER copy of each form in blue or black ink and send them to the Consulate with your supporting documents. You will also submit an online application form and visa fee payment – the day you complete the online application form and payment is considered your date of application.)  
**Jump to ANNEX A in this document for specifics on how to fill out these forms!**

- 4) **60-90 days prior to departure:** **Compile your supporting documents.** By completing the previous step, you will find out what supporting documents you need. *It may take you several weeks to compile your supporting documents, which is why you should start working on them between 60 and 90 days prior to departure.*
- 5) **60 days prior to departure:** **BEGIN THE VISA APPLICATION PROCESS** by completing the **online application form** and **fee payment ONLINE** at [www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk](http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk).

**You will need the following items on hand in order to complete the online application form:**

- a. Make sure you have access to a **working printer**. Once finished, you must print your online Visa Application form and biometrics appointment confirmation (*with bar code*)! **In the U.S., the date you pay for your visa and schedule your biometrics appointment is deemed the date of your application.**
  - b. An active email address (check your junk mail folder for messages from the Consulate)
  - c. Your CAS
  - d. Your valid passport
  - e. Your address in the UK (Please confirm this with ASA.)
  - f. Your travel itinerary. (Your date of intended arrival in the UK is particularly important.)
  - g. A valid credit/debit card to pay the application fee and return postage. **As of June 2010, the application fee for a Tier 4 (General) Student visa is £199.00. This fee is non-refundable, regardless of the outcome of your application.**
  - h. RETURN POSTAGE: *Be sure to check the “by mail” box so the Consulate can return your passport by UPS overnight delivery.* Do NOT use the “travel agent use only” box unless you are using a visa agency service or travel agent to expedite your application (any agency you use must be on the Consulate’s approved list of agencies.) **If you don’t pay the return postage at the time of your online payment, the processing of your visa application will be delayed!**
- 6) **Immediately after submitting the online visa application form and payment:** You will be instructed to make a **Biometrics Appointment at one of the 126 Department of Homeland Security Application Support Centres in the U.S.** “Biometrics” is a digital photograph and electronic scan of your **fingerprints** and is NOT painful or invasive in any way. **You will need to make arrangements to travel to the Application Support Centre nearest you.** Submitting your fingerprints and photo should take 5 minutes or less.
- a. To locate your nearest Application Support Centre, visit [https://egov.uscis.gov/crisgwi/go?action=offices.type&OfficeLocator.office\\_type=ASC](https://egov.uscis.gov/crisgwi/go?action=offices.type&OfficeLocator.office_type=ASC)
  - b. **After completing your online visa application, you must print your visa application form AND Biometrics appointment confirmation sheet (with bar code). You must take both of these forms to your Biometrics appointment, along with your ORIGINAL passport. Finally, you must have your Biometrics confirmation sheet stamped by the centre employee who processed your biometrics and send it in with your supporting documents, as described below.**
- 7) **Within 2 weeks of completing your Biometrics appointment** **Mail the following ORIGINAL documents to the UKBA Visa Section at the relevant British Consulate.**

► *Be sure to use a **delivery service with tracking** (i.e. FedEx, UPS) and find out what your Consulate’s preferred carrier is before mailing.*

► **ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS MUST BE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS AND NOT PHOTOCOPIES, FAXES OR SCANNED COPIES!**

► **Include one photocopy of each document, and keep a set of photocopies for yourself.**

► **FIRST CHECKLIST of supporting documents (there are 2):**

<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/resources/en/docs/1903073/PBSappendix8generalstudent>

- a. **PAPER copy of Appendix 8, completed by you in blue or black ink** (+1 photocopy)
- b. **PAPER copy of the VAF 9 form, completed by you in blue or black ink** (+1 photocopy)  
Please refer to **ANNEX A** for instructions on how to fill out Appendix 8 and VAF 9.
- c. **Copy of your online visa application form** which you printed out after completing it online and paying the visa fee (+1 photocopy)
- d. **ORIGINAL documents you used to obtain your CAS, as listed in your CAS.** (+1 photocopy)  
*For example, if your CAS states that a transcript and letter of recommendation were used to obtain your CAS, then you must provide an official, original transcript AND the original letter of recommendation to the UKBA. (You will need to request a new transcript from your school, as we cannot get yours back from your UK host institution. If your CAS lists another document such as a letter of recommendation, check with ASA to see how long it will take to get the original letter back from your UK host institution.) If you are not sure of which documents were used to obtain your CAS, contact ASA or the Brookes International Office directly to find out.*
- e. **ORIGINAL documentary Evidence of Funds (Proof that you possess your full Course Fees and necessary Maintenance Funds, as dictated by the UKBA).** (+1 photocopy)  
**Jump to ANNEX B in this document for what constitutes Evidence of Funds!** *This is a very important step in earning enough points to be granted a visa, and it's one of the most common reasons for refusal!*

► **SECOND CHECKLIST of supporting documents (there are 2):**

<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/resources/en/docs/1903073/vaf9docchecklist>

- f. **ORIGINAL passport** You must send your actual passport to the Consulate; they will keep it while they process your visa. (+1 photocopy)
- g. **ORIGINAL Biometrics confirmation sheet**, stamped by an employee at the Application Support Centre. (+1 photocopy)
- h. **2 official passport sized photographs.** Please read the attached “UKBA Photograph Guidance” to make sure your photos meet their specifications. Have these taken professionally at CVS, Walgreens, etc – do NOT print them from your computer! **Your passport photos must:**
  - o measure 45mm high x 35mm wide
  - o be in color, taken against a light grey or cream background
  - o be clear and of good quality and not framed or backed
  - o be printed on normal photographic paper
  - o show your full face and without sunglasses, hat or head covering (unless it is worn for cultural or religious reasons, the face must not be covered).
- i. **Unless you are single, provide evidence of your marital status** i.e. marriage or civil partnership certificate (+1 photocopy).
- j. **Official record of any criminal conviction(s)**, detailing the crime(s) you were convicted of and the sentence(s) you received (+1 photocopy)

---

## **ANNEX A: How to complete Appendix 8 and VAF 9 forms**

90 days prior to departure, complete the online Self-Assessment Points Calculator AND one PAPER copy of Appendix 8 and VAF 9, by hand, as a “practice run.” **This will help you immensely by telling you which supporting documents you need, so don’t skip this step!** You will also need to send in a “good” paper copy of each form (in blue or black ink) along with your supporting documents, AFTER completing the online visa application form.

**Link to Self-Assessment Points Calculator**

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/pointscalculator>

**Link to Appendix 8:**

<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/resources/en/docs/1903073/PBSappendix8generalstudent>

**Link to VAF 9 form:**

<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/resources/en/docs/1903073/vaf9>

**Link to Tier 4 Policy Guidance:**

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/Tier4migrantguidance1.pdf>

### **Appendix 8 Answers – any questions not addressed below are ones you can answer on your own.**

- ❖ Question 2.9. Ask ASA for the correct address
- ❖ 2.10. If you are 18 years or older, you do not have to provide a letter of consent to your application. (However, if you plan to use your parents’ money as Evidence of Funds, you will need to submit a letter of consent from them, confirming that you have their permission to use their funds while studying in the UK.)
- ❖ 3.1. your Tier 4 Sponsor is your UK host institution
- ❖ 3.2 & 3.3. the answers should be listed on your CAS
- ❖ 4.1. study abroad programme
- ❖ 4.2. credits to be transferred to my U.S. educational institution to be included as part of my bachelor’s degree in (insert your major here)
- ❖ 4.3. From: put the first day of classes. To: put the last day of exams at the very end of your semester/academic year
- ❖ 4.4. answer same as 3.3
- ❖ 5.5. check Yes. In the blank space provided, write “as part of a study abroad programme”
- ❖ 5.6. No
- ❖ 5.8. No
- ❖ 6.1. Copy your course fees amount *exactly* as it is listed on your CAS
- ❖ 6.2- 6.3. CALL ASA FOR GUIDANCE, as the answer will depend on whether or not you have paid your ASA program fees at the time of your visa application
- ❖ 6.4. put an X in the box
- ❖ 6.5. Initial application
- ❖ 6.6. Regent’s College and London South Bank University are “Inside the Inner London Boroughs.” Oxford Brookes University is “Outside the Inner London Boroughs.”
- ❖ 6.7-6.8. Multiply the required maintenance funds (also called living costs) by the number of months of your course, as follows. Academic year students, your course is 9 months long. The required amount is £800 per month for Inner London or £600 per month for Outside London. Inner London students must show they have £7,200.00 in maintenance funds (Regent’s College &

LSBU). Outer London students must show they have £5,400.00 in maintenance funds (Oxford Brookes).

- ❖ Skip to question 6.12, since you are not applying for an extension
- ❖ 6.12-6:13. CALL ASA FOR GUIDANCE, as the answer will depend on whether or not you have paid your ASA program fees at the time of your visa application
- ❖ 6.14. Students NOT receiving financial aid toward their study abroad program should mark NO and skip to question 6.17. Students receiving financial aid through their U.S. university's financial aid office should be able to count this amount toward their course fees/maintenance funds. **The UKBA defines "Financial Sponsor" as:** "Financial sponsorship is where a student is given money to cover some or all his/her course fees and/or living costs. This financial sponsorship can be used as evidence of money you have. A student can receive official financial sponsor from Her Majesty's Government, the student's home government, the British Council or any international organisation, international company, university or an Independent School. If the student's financial sponsor is only covering some of his/her course fees and/or living costs, he/she must show that he/she has the rest of the money needed."
- ❖ 6.15. (this question applies only to students receiving financial aid) Students who intend to use their financial aid to count toward their course fees/ maintenance fees will need to get an original letter from their financial aid office. *Your financial aid letter must exactly follow the guidelines found in the Tier 4 Policy Guidance at:*

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/Tier4migrantguidance1.pdf>

- ❖ 6.16. (this question applies only to students receiving financial aid) Write the amount exactly as it is listed on your financial aid letter.
- ❖ 6.17. Mark yes and fill in the totals as follows. Fill in your course fees amount exactly as it is listed on your CAS. Fill in your maintenance funds amount according to your location, as you did in question 6.7.
- ❖ 6.18-6.20. Fill these in according to the Evidence of Funds that you possess. *Please contact ASA to confirm that you have answered everything correctly BEFORE submitting your application!*
- ❖ *Note the reminder at the bottom of Appendix 8 to submit a paper copy of Appendix 8 with your supporting documents. The "Personal Details Form" they are referring to is the VAF 9.*

**VAF 9 Answers – any questions not addressed below  
are ones you can answer on your own.**

- ❖ Question 1.1: You should have completed Appendix 8. Copy the title of the form from the top right hand corner of the Appendix 8 form to make sure it's correct.
- ❖ 1.2. Attributes = look at Part 5 of Appendix 8 and copy down the number of points you earned from having a valid CAS. Leave the box for "English" blank. Fill in your Maintenance points in the given box. (You will know your maintenance points after completing Part 6 of Appendix 8.)
- ❖ 4.1. Put your permanent (parents') address and NOT your school address
- ❖ Read the declaration and sign/date the bottom. You do NOT need a parent's signature as long as you are over the age of 18.

## **ANNEX B: How to Submit Correct Evidence of Funds**

### **Q: HOW MUCH MONEY DO I HAVE TO SHOW THAT I POSSESS?**

- ✓ In order to earn the necessary 10 points for Evidence of Funds, you must provide the proper documentation showing that you possess funding that is equal to or greater than your course fees (tuition) PLUS living expenses (called maintenance funds). The amount of maintenance funds you have to show is dictated by the UKBA (more on this below).
- ✓ **When a CAS is issued, the UK host institution indicates the amount of course fees (tuition) the student owes, and THIS is the amount of course fees you have to show that you possess.** (If any of your course fees have been already paid, that will also be noted on the CAS.) *Please be aware that your CAS will NOT show that any course fees have been paid because your CAS will be issued several months before the start of the semester.* Therefore, YOU have to show that you possess your full course fees in a bank account OR that they are covered by university-issued financial aid (more on this below).
- ✓ The amount of **maintenance funds** you need to demonstrate depends on where you plan to study and the length of your course. Students going abroad for one academic year (September to May) have a course length of **9 months**.
  - If your term of study is 9 months or less and you will be studying **inside London**, you must show that you possess: 1) full course fees (as listed on your CAS), plus 2) £800 per month for your 9 months of study (total **£7,200**). *Note: Regent's College and London South Bank University are INSIDE London.*
  - If your term of study is 9 months or less and you will be studying **outside London**, you must show that you possess: 1) full course fees (as listed on your CAS), plus 2) £600 per month for your 9 months of study (total **£5,400**). *Note: Oxford Brookes University is OUTSIDE London.*
  - To convert pounds (£) to U.S. dollars, go to <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>
  - If the length of a student's course includes a part of a month, the UKBA will round the time up to the next month. For example, if your course is seven months and two weeks, you must show that you have enough money for eight months.

### **Q: WHAT FINANCIAL DOCUMENTATION IS ACCEPTED BY THE UKBA?**

#### **► FINANCIAL DOCUMENTATION, TYPE 1: Money (cash) held by student or his/her parent(s)**

- ✓ A student can use money held in *an account in their own name*. A joint account bearing the student's name can also be used.
- ✓ A student can use money held in *an account owned by his/her parents*. The student will need to provide evidence that he/she is related to his/her parent(s)/legal guardian and that the student has his/her parent(s)/legal guardian's permission to use this money. (*continue reading to find out what exactly what evidence you have to provide to fulfill this requirement*)
- ✓ **The evidence of money held by student/parents must be of cash funds in the bank** (this includes savings accounts and current accounts even when notice must be given). **Other accounts or financial instruments such as shares, bonds, overdrafts, credit cards and pension funds**

are **NOT** acceptable, regardless of notice period. (This means that college funds through Charles Schwab and the like are **NOT** accepted.)

- ✓ If a student is using overseas currency (i.e. an account holding U.S. dollars), he/she must show (write it on your application form) the **closing balance in pounds sterling**. You will need to calculate the amount of pounds sterling using the official exchange rate on the OANDA website: [www.oanda.com/convert/classic](http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic) (You may not use any other currency converter!) Using the OANDA website, simply convert your closing balance(s) from dollars to pounds *using the exchange rate on your account's given closing date*. Be sure to calculate the conversion **BEFORE** writing the amount in dollars on your application form.)
- ✓ When assessing your documents, the **UKBA will check the value of your money in pounds sterling** by using the OANDA exchange rate *on the date of the closing balance* of the student's account.
- ✓ The UKBA will not consider money earned during a time when the student or their parent(s)/ Legal Guardian was in breach of the United Kingdom's immigration laws as evidence of maintenance funds. *For example:* Earnings made from United Kingdom employment will only be considered if the applicant had leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom at the time they were earned, and in a category which permitted the applicant to take that employment.
- ✓ **Your documentation must show that you have held the cash funds for a consecutive 28-day period (finishing on the date of the closing balance), ending no more than 1 month before the date of your visa application.**
- ✓ **ALL EVIDENCE OF FUNDS MUST BE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS AND NOT PHOTOCOPIES, FAXES OR SCANNED COPIES!**
- ✓ **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR TYPE 1 (cash funds):**
  - The UKBA's guidelines for documenting cash funds are lengthy, so instead of including them in this document, you need to read the UKBA Tier 4 Policy Guidance. **The section that addresses documenting cash funds is called "Documents needed to show money available to the student" and begins at line item #127 and ends at #135.**

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/Tier4migrantguidance1.pdf>

#### ► **FINANCIAL DOCUMENTATION, TYPE 2: Money already paid to ASA**

- ✓ If the student can show that he/she has already paid all or some of his/her course fees to ASA before making his/her Tier 4 visa application, this amount can be taken away from the total amount of money he/she will need to show.
- ✓ If the student can show that he/she has already paid all or some of his/her accommodation fees to ASA before making his/her Tier 4 visa application, this amount also can be taken away from the total amount of money he/she will need to show for living costs. (This only applies if the student will be staying in university or college arranged accommodation.)

- ✓ **ASA will provide you with a receipt showing any payments you have made, but you still have to show the UKBA that you possess any course fees that have not been paid, plus your maintenance funds (the required amount of maintenance funds is described above).**

- ✓ **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR TYPE 2 (money already paid to ASA):**

- **Official, original receipt from ASA accompanied by photocopies of your check(s) or e-check(s).** ASA can provide you with this documentation as long as you contact us at least 2 weeks before you need it.
- **ALL EVIDENCE OF FUNDS MUST BE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS AND NOT PHOTOCOPIES, FAXES OR SCANNED COPIES!**

► **FINANCIAL DOCUMENTATION, TYPE 3: Financial Sponsorship (financial aid):**

- ✓ **The UKBA defines “Financial Sponsor” as:** “Financial sponsorship is where a student is given money to cover some or all his/her course fees and/or living costs. This financial sponsorship can be used as evidence of money you have. A student can receive official financial sponsor from Her Majesty’s Government, the student’s home government, the British Council or any international organisation, international company, university or an Independent School. If the student’s financial sponsor is only covering some of his/her course fees and/or living costs, he/she must show that he/she has the rest of the money needed.”
- ✓ **Your U.S. university would be your “Official Financial Sponsor” IF:** you are receiving financial aid that is administered by your university’s financial aid office, such as Pell Grant, Stafford loan, Parent Plus Loan, or any other funding that is being processed and disbursed by your university’s financial aid office. Any other fin aid funding you are receiving separately (such as a scholarship from an outside organization) must be documented separately, as follows:
- ✓ **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR TYPE 3 (financial aid):**

- **Letter from a financial institution regulated by either the Financial Services Authority or, in the case of overseas accounts, the home regulator (official regulatory body for the country the institution is in and where the money is held) confirming the loan.** (*In other words, a letter from your university’s financial aid office.*)
  - The loan letter must be dated no more than 6 months before the date of your visa application. The student’s letter from the financial institution regulated by the Financial Services Authority or home regulator **must contain the following 4 pieces of information:** 1) the student’s name; 2) the date of the letter; 3) the financial institution’s name and logo; 4) the money (or funds) available as a loan.
  - To fulfill this requirement, we strongly recommend you have your university financial aid counselor complete the “Student loan Template letter” issued by the UKBA *in lieu of* the financial aid office creating their own letter. **All spaces on the template must be filled out completely, by hand, by your university financial aid counselor.** They must also apply your university’s official stamp/seal to the bottom of the letter. **Don’t forget, you will need to make arrangements to get the ORIGINAL, completed document from your financial**

**aid office.** *If you don't already have a copy of this Template letter, please email [Chelsea@academicstudies.com](mailto:Chelsea@academicstudies.com).*

### **PLEASE NOTE!!**

- For U.S. students, the loan funds must be available to the student **before** he/she travels to the United Kingdom, **unless** that loan will be an academic/student loan from his/her country's national government and the loan will be released to the student by his/her national government or via his/her Tier 4 sponsor on arrival in the UK.
- There must be no conditions placed upon the release of the loan funds to the student, other than the student making a successful Tier 4 application.
- **If you are receiving financial sponsorship from another source**, such as a **private scholarship or grant that is NOT administered by your university's financial aid office**, then you will need an official letter from **each** organization from which you are receiving a scholarship/grant, and the letter must follow the above guidelines.
- **ALL EVIDENCE OF FUNDS MUST BE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS AND NOT PHOTOCOPIES, FAXES OR SCANNED COPIES!**

---

## **HELPFUL TIPS**

▶ **UKBA VISA RULES AND REGULATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.** The UKBA website always has the most updated information: [www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/](http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/)

▶ The Points Based System was put into effect March 31, 2009, in an effort to make the visa process more understandable to students. It requires applicants to meet 40 points from submitting a valid CAS from a licensed sponsor (30 points) and possessing your course fees and maintenance funds (10 points).

▶ If your visa application is rejected for *any* reason, you will have to re-apply and pay all applicable fees again. **The visa fee is non-refundable, regardless of the outcome of your application.**

▶ You must provide ALL of the required supporting documents *in the exact format required* and mail them in all at once. **Separate mailings will not be accepted. The Consulate will not contact you to tell you if you're missing any documents. Your application will simply be refused if incomplete or incorrectly supported.**

▶ Be sure to keep photocopies of all the documents you submit to the Consulate.

▶ If, for any reason, there is doubt about the authenticity of the documents you send, UKBA reserves the right to undertake document verification or other checks. The document(s) will either be confirmed as genuine and the application will be processed as genuine, or confirmed as false and rejected.

▶ **You MUST READ the GUIDANCE NOTES at [www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk](http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/), AND the Tier 4 Policy Guidance before you submit your visa application.** They will help you fill out the application form correctly and explain the format of the required supporting documents. Link to Tier 4 Policy Guidance: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/Tier4migrantguidance1.pdf>

▶ The Consulates aim to *open* your visa application within 10 days of receiving it. The Consulates aim to *process* visa application within 15 days of *opening* it, *however, you should expect your visa to take at least twice as long to process, especially during busy times such as the summer.* Please note that the Consulate may not open your mail immediately upon receiving it, and you may not receive confirmation of receipt of your package until up to 5 days after receipt. Don't forget, you need to apply for your visa at least 60 days prior to departure to allow ample processing time!

▶ Your visa will be granted for the entire length of your course. As a courtesy, you will get additional time on your visa both before and after the course dates, as follows. This extra time allows you to enter the UK early or stay in the UK after your course (but your stay is limited to the exact dates on your visa):

- Short-term courses (less than 6 months): 7 days before and 7 days after your official course dates
- Stays of more than 6 months but less than 12 months: One month before and two months after your official course dates
- Stays of more than 12 months: One month before and four months after your official course date

▶ As an adult student, you are allowed to work

- Part-time during term-time (no more than 20 hours per week)
- Full-time during vacations
- Course related work placement (such as internship) as part of your studies, other than part-time work during term time as long as it is no more than 50% of your time spent in the UK. *(ASA neither arranges internships nor has information about them.)*

▶ You may only apply for an extension as a General Student in order to:

- Complete your course
- Complete extra exams
- Undertake further courses (i.e. should you decide to pursue your degree in the UK)

---

## **BRITISH CONSULATES AND THEIR JURISDICTIONS**

Only three of the British Consulates in the U.S. process visa applications: Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. The Consulate to which you will send your supporting documents will depend on your home state; each Consulate has a jurisdiction or several states. **During the visa application process, you will find out which Consulate you should send your supporting documents to. Be sure to verify their address and preferred method of delivery before mailing your documents (i.e. UPS, FedEx, etc.)**

---

## **OUTSIDE AGENCIES THAT ASSIST WITH VISA APPLICATIONS:**

▶ **WorldBridge is an official partner of the UKBA** and can provide visa application assistance for a fee. Website: <https://www.visainfoservices.com/Pages/Welcome.aspx>

▶ **Students applying to the Chicago Consulate:** may wish to submit their visa application via American Visa Services (AVS), for a fee. They provide several benefits. AVS can provide guidance during the application process, and they will submit your application on your behalf and check your documents before submitting them. If you wish, you may also purchase expedited service through AVS. For more information, visit <http://avschicago.com/>.

▶ **Please note that using an outside agency does NOT guarantee you a visa, but it may make the application process easier and/or faster.**