



Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) - June 2016

This guidance is based on frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be used on its own and you should use it in combination with the detailed guidance available on applying for a Tier 4 visa.

What is the IHS?

The IHS is a contribution paid by migrants toward the UK's National Health Service (NHS). It will allow those with an IHS reference number attached to their immigration record to have free access to the NHS for the visa validity period. See the [UKCISA website](#) for further information about access to NHS healthcare.

How much does it cost?

Tier 4 visa applicants and their dependants must pay £150 per year of leave granted; the surcharge is based on length of visa rather than course duration.

For example:

- If you will be doing a 12 month Masters course, you will need to pay £225 because your visa should be valid for an additional month before the course start date and four months after the course completion date.
- If you will be doing a 9 month Masters or studying on the General course, you will need to pay £150.
- If you will be doing a 3 year undergraduate degree, you will need to pay £525.

The surcharge increases to £200 per year of leave for working routes such as Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) and Tier 2 (General).

There is a calculator at on the [Home Office website](#) which you can use to calculate how much you will need to pay based on the course dates stated on your CAS.

What happens if I don't obtain an IHS number?

After applying for your visa, you should be contacted by UK Visas & Immigration who will ask you to make the payment and provide instructions. If you fail to pay the charge within the specified timeframe, your visa application will be refused.

I already have my own private health insurance; do I still need an IHS reference number?

Yes, you still need to obtain an IHS reference number (unless you are exempt). The IHS gives you access to the NHS but it does not cover all eventualities. For further information about private medical insurance, please read this [UKCISA webpage](#).

Do I apply for IHS in the visa application form?

The IHS payment portal is included in the Tier 4 application form. It calculates the amount of IHS you are required to pay based on the CAS sponsorship dates you have included on your application.

The IHS payment portal will calculate the surcharge correctly if you are applying for a visa at the start of your programme or you are returning from an interruption/for re-take examinations. However, it does not recognise that not all periods of study are standard and there are some inconsistencies if you need to re-apply mid-programme with a valid Tier 4 visa.

The advice on completing the sponsorship dates on the in-country application form and in the Tier 4 sponsor guidance on creating CASs, causes issues for paying the IHS portal.

We recommend that you contact us for advice if you are applying for your Tier 4 visa in the following circumstances:

- You are applying for an extension of your Tier 4 visa because you have repeat teaching;
- You are applying to extend your Tier 4 visa for an extension of your thesis submission date/viva/corrections.
- You are applying for the Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme.

What happens if I do not pay the correct amount?

If you think the amount you are being charged is not correct, contact us for advice before applying.

If you continue with your application, you should be contacted by the UKVI and be told how to make a further payment. If you do not make the payment within the specified timeframe, your application will be refused. If you overpay the IHS, you should be automatically refunded for the excess.

What happens if my visa is refused?

You must [contact us](#) immediately. If your visa application is rejected or refused, you should receive a refund of the IHS (but you will not receive a refund of the visa application fee for a refused application).



Who is exempt from paying the charge?

British Overseas Territories Citizens who are resident in the Falkland Islands are exempt from paying the charge but will still need to obtain an IHS reference number as part of the visa application. If you are exempt from payment, the fee payable should show as zero within the online visa application form. See the [Home Office website](#) for further information about this and other exemptions.

We have been informed that UK Government Scholarship holders (such as Chevening, Commonwealth and Marshall) may be exempt from paying the charge but please contact your Programme Officer at the scholarship provider for advice.

Who is not eligible for an IHS reference number?

If you are applying for entry clearance (applying for your visa from outside the UK) for less than 6 months in any visa category, you will not be required to pay the IHS.

However, you should be aware that if you apply for a visa extension from within the UK for a period of 6 months or less, you will be charged £75 IHS.

Short-Term Student visas of 6 months will not be charged. However you will not have free access to the UK's National Health Service so you should ensure that you purchase your own medical insurance to cover your trip.

EEA nationals and their family members who are exercising rights of residence in the UK are exempt from paying the surcharge; however they should ensure that they have a valid European Health Insurance Card ([EHIC](#)) and/or comprehensive medical insurance.

I am not eligible for an IHS number; can I choose to pay the fee so that I may access the NHS?

No. If you are not eligible, you cannot pay the fee. You should obtain your own medical insurance. If you receive medical treatment in the UK, you will be charged for it.

I have paid for the IHS twice, can I get a refund?

If you have made an overpayment (e.g. because you withdrew your initial visa application before it was processed or if you paid twice due to a technical error), the [Home Office advise](#) that you should receive an automatic refund. If you have not been refunded automatically and have been unable to resolve this with the visa application centre directly, you can [contact us](#) for advice.

After arrival in the UK, do I need to show proof that I paid for the IHS in order to see a doctor or receive medical treatment?

Your visa will be sufficient as evidence of your right to access the NHS; you will not be given a separate document about the IHS. You will need to show your passport and visa (most will be in the form of a BRP) in order to register with a doctor in the UK. If you receive medical treatment in a UK hospital, it is likely that you will be asked to show your visa. NHS staff have access to a database where they can check IHS payments based on the information on your visa.

If you refuse to show your visa after receiving medical treatment on the NHS, you may be charged and NHS debt can affect your immigration status.

If I defer my studies/withdraw from the course/ fail to progress/ interrupt my studies after receiving my visa, will I be refunded?

No. Once the visa application has been processed you will not be able to obtain a refund. If you interrupt your studies, you will need to pay the IHS (and visa application fee) again when you apply for a new visa to return to your studies.



Quick links

- [Home Office information about IHS](#)
- [UKCISA guidance on free hospital treatment in the UK after 6th April](#)
- [Tier 4 Policy Guidance](#)
- [ISIS guidance on applying for Tier 4](#)
- [UKCISA guidance about health and Healthcare](#)

Who do I contact for help? For further immigration advice [contact the ISVAT team online](#).