



As an overseas student, you are receiving this month's **Visa Special** newsletter.

If you hold an EU, EEA, or Swiss passport (and will be travelling to the UK on this passport), you **will not** require a visa, and may disregard this bulletin.

## TIER 4 VISAS

If you do not hold an EU/EEA/Swiss passport, you will require immigration permission to allow you to study in the UK. For the majority of our graduate offer holders the visa required will be a Tier 4 student visa.

### Tier 4 Visas

The Tier 4 student visa is designed for full-time programmes of study, longer than 6 months.

To be able to apply for a visa to study at LSE you must have a **Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS)** issued by LSE.

### Students already in the UK

If you are currently in the UK on a Visitor visa, a Short-term study visa or in some other immigration categories, you cannot apply for your Tier 4 student visa from within the UK.

If you are already in the UK, please contact the [LSE International Student Visa Advice Team \(ISVAT\)](#), and [check the Immigration Rules](#) to find out if you are able to apply from inside the UK.

If you are already in the UK as a student studying at a different institution, you must apply for a Tier 4 Student visa to study at LSE before you can register and start your programme – [check the guidance](#) from ISVAT on applying inside the UK.

### Where to seek advice

Your academic department will not be able to provide you with immigration advice. Our International Student Visa Advice Team (ISVAT) are legally qualified to advise you on the immigration rules. Visit the [ISVAT web pages](#) for information and contact details.

### Quick links

**Graduate Admissions**

**Access earlier editions of the newsletter**

**Offer Pack [PDF]**

**Department contacts**

**Term dates 2016/7**

**LSE for You**

**FAQs**

**Careers**

**Graduate Destinations**

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## RECEIVING YOUR CAS

We can only issue a CAS to students who:

- hold an **unconditional** offer,
- have [accepted](#) their offer,
- have returned the [Financial Undertaking Form](#), and
- have provided **official proof of their English results** (if required).

You will receive your CAS number via email. The CAS itself is a unique reference number which confirms that LSE will be your Tier 4 Sponsor. You will need to use this number in the Tier 4 student visa application form.

We will start the process of issuing CASs in batches this month. Before we issue you with your CAS, we will send you an email which lists the information that we will send to UK Visas and Immigration to generate your CAS. **Please read through this carefully and respond to the email if any changes need to be made.** It is quicker to make changes before the CAS is issued.

Please be patient; the best way for you to get your CAS is to make sure that your documents have all been sent, you can also check our [current processing times](#) for an idea of how long it may take.

## After receiving your Pre-CAS

Once you receive your CAS statement, please check these details carefully as errors could lead to your visa application being refused:

❑ **Personal details:** Please check that these match your passport exactly. If you get a new passport after you have been issued with your CAS statement, please update Graduate Admissions with the details of your new passport before submitting your visa application.

❑ **Information regarding your LSE offer:** Please check your offer letter to confirm that the full title of your programme is correct. You should always use the course start date quoted in your CAS statement when completing your visa application (the offer letter may show a slightly different date due to the way we organise registration).

❑ **Sponsor Licence Number (SLN):** LSE's SLN is 1RRV3MMEX

❑ **Evidence reviewed:** At the visa application stage you will need to provide evidence of the qualification listed in your CAS statement. Please ensure that the institution name and qualification on your CAS statement match those stated on your official transcript / degree certificate.



## FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

You should read the information on the International Student Visa Advice Team (ISVAT) [web page](#) very carefully. It is not difficult to apply for a Tier 4 visa, but it is easy to make simple mistakes which can lead to your visa being refused. In our experience, **the majority of refusals occur because of avoidable mistakes with financial documents.**

At the visa application stage you will need to provide evidence (in the form of official bank statements, scholarship letters and/or receipts) that you have the finances in place to cover your tuition and maintenance costs.

You will need to hold the finances in place for a consecutive 28 day period finishing on the date of the closing balance. There must be no more than 31 days between your date of application and the closing balance of your bank statement. Details of money paid by you or your home institution towards your LSE tuition fees will be listed on your CAS.

Please make sure that you read the [online guidance](#) in detail, and make you meet all the criteria for this section of your visa application.

**Please click here to suggest topics for future newsletters**

### Time limit on degree level studies

UKVI has introduced a limit on the time that a student can spend studying in the UK on a Tier 4 student visa.

For the majority of postgraduate students the limit is 5 years at degree level or above. We check that you are not affected by this limit before issuing you with a CAS, but if you believe that this will affect you, [please let us know immediately](#).

Further information on the time limit, and exemptions, can be found on the [UKVI website](#).

### Credibility interviews

For many students, a credibility interview will be part of the Tier 4 application process. More information on this can be found [here](#) (you will need to scroll down to the header 'Do I have to go for an interview as part of my application?')

Students who are required to attend an interview may experience delays to their visa application. We therefore advise students to submit their visa application as soon as possible (but no more than three months before your programme starts), taking into consideration the UKVI's financial requirements.

If you have had problems with your UK immigration history in the past, please contact ISVAT for advice before submitting your application (use the form on our [website](#)).

### Immigration Health surcharge

The UK Government has introduced an additional charge for many temporary visitors, including students, to cover potential costs incurred by the National Health Service (NHS).

You must pay a set amount for each year that you may be in the UK. It is not an optional charge and failure to pay or pay the correct amount can lead to your visa being refused.

If you're making an immigration application online you pay the healthcare surcharge as part of the application process. If you're making an immigration application at a premium service centre, you pay the surcharge when you book an appointment.

Details on the immigration health charge and how to calculate it can be found on the [Home Office website](#).

For full guidance on how to make your visa application, please see the [relevant pages of the ISVAT website](#).

### English Language tests

We are permitted to use our own methods to assess a student's English ability. Not all students require an IELTS or TOEFL. If we have set you an English condition, you must meet this before you will get your CAS.

If you are coming to LSE to study a degree level programme, we will accept the tests stated on our [entry requirements page](#).

### Who to contact for help

For advice on the immigration rules and the visa application:

- [Check the ISXCE/ guidance online](#)
- [Contact the ISXCE/ team online](#)

For queries relating to your CAS:

- Contact the Graduate Admissions CAS team on [admissions.visa.queries@lse.ac.uk](mailto:admissions.visa.queries@lse.ac.uk)

Resources:

- [UKCISA](#)
- [ISVAT](#)
- [British Council](#)
- [UKVI](#)

## PLAN AHEAD

**Please remember that visa processing times can vary greatly depending on where you make your application, and it is important to give yourself enough time for your visa application.**

To check recent visa processing times in your country, you can use this online tool: [visa-processing-times.homeoffice.gov.uk/](https://visa-processing-times.homeoffice.gov.uk/)

Bear in mind that this tool does not provide a guaranteed processing time, just a general indication of how long the average waiting time currently is, and these times may increase over the summer period.