

The Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES) enables PhD students who are nearing the completion of the course to apply for an additional 12 months under Tier 4 (General) to look for and start work in the UK. The University will continue to sponsor your visa during this time, and therefore you will be required to regularly update the University on your status throughout the 12 month period.

Can you apply?

In order to apply you must fulfil all of the following criteria:

- You must be studying towards a Doctorate qualification
- You must currently hold a valid Tier 4 student visa
- You must apply from within the UK
- You must meet the requirements to obtain a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) from LSBU (see below)
- You must make your application no earlier than 60 days before the course end date (award date) stated on your new CAS
- You must agree to regularly keep in contact with LSBU during the 12 months you are on the scheme.

How do I apply?

If you meet the above requirements and are interested in applying for the Doctorate Extension Scheme:

1. Contact [Immigration and International Student Advice team](#) to register your interest in the DES. You should do this before you submit your thesis and attend your viva so you have time to discuss the timeframe of your application and familiarise yourself with the Home Office requirements.
2. Apply for your ATAS certificate (if applicable). You will be advised during the meeting with the International Student Advice if you need to apply for ATAS.
3. Once you have submitted your thesis and attended your viva contact International Student Advice to proceed with your application for DES.
 - You will need to read the current Tier 4 Policy Guidance: www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student
 - Read our guidance on extending your Tier 4 student visa as given on My LSBU: my.lsbu.ac.uk/page/international-students-extending-visa
 - Complete the Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) request form and return it to us with all the specified documents.
4. Book an appointment to see an Adviser to have your documents checked and to receive your CAS. The award date of your Doctorate will be agreed with the Research Office and is needed for the CAS to be issued. Your CAS can only be issued within 60 days of your agreed award date.
5. Submit your application to the Home Office within 60 days of being awarded your Doctorate.

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Immigration and International Student Advice

Admissions & Recruitment Centre (ARC), Southwark Campus

T: +44 (0)20 7815 7037 / 6156

E: international.advice@lsbu.ac.uk

W: www.lsbu.ac.uk/international/visas-and-immigration/advice-team



What documents are needed?

- Your passports and visas
- Evidence of your money:
You need to show you have enough money to cover living costs in the UK. If you are eligible to apply to extend your Tier 4 visa under the Doctorate Extension Scheme you are eligible to show just two months' worth of living costs amounting to £2530. This amount of money must be available for a period of at least 28 consecutive days with the closing balance ending no more than one month prior to the application date.
- If you have been fully sponsored by an international scholarship agency or organisation or Government you must obtain a letter of consent from them which confirms they are happy for you to stay in the UK under this scheme.
- Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS). See above on how to request this
- Police Registration Certificate (if applicable)
- A new ATAS certificate if applicable (see below)
- Completed Tier 4 General [online application form](#).
- Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) reference number:
- If you make a visa application to enter or remain in the UK for a period of more than 6 months, you will now be required to pay an immigration health surcharge to the National Health Service (NHS). If you are studying for more than 6 months you will be charged £300 a year. The amount you are required to pay will be calculated automatically according to the amount of time your visa will be valid for. You must pay this when you make your visa application. See the [Home Office website](#) for further guidance.

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

www.gov.uk/academic-technology-approval-scheme

If your course requires ATAS clearance and you currently have a certificate as a requirement of your current Tier 4 General visa, you may need to apply for another ATAS certificate to support your application for DES. You are only required to apply for ATAS if your course end date on the CAS is postponed for a period of more than 3 calendar months.

If you do need to apply for ATAS clearance it is important that:

- You state on your application that you will be making a Tier 4 application under the Doctorate Extension Scheme and that all of your research has been completed. You should provide details of the research you have already completed.
- You will need to obtain ATAS clearance before your current visa expires, before the expected end date (award date) on the new CAS (if this has already been assigned), and before your Doctorate has been awarded.
- Please see our How to Guide on applying for ATAS for more information on the scheme:
my.lsbu.ac.uk/my/applicant/Current-Applicants/International-students/How-to-Guides

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Frequently asked questions

- **Can I apply for the Doctorate Extension Scheme after I have completed my course?**
No. You must make your application before you complete your course otherwise your application may be refused.
- **Can I apply from outside the UK?**
No. This scheme is designed to allow PhD/doctorate students who are studying full-time in the UK to stay here for an additional 12 months. Only those who are currently a full-time student may apply and applications must be made from within the UK.
- **Can I apply if I have completed a PhD/Doctorate overseas?**
No. Only those completing a course within the UK on a Tier 4 visa can apply.
- **Can I apply if I currently hold a Student Visitor Visa?**
No, only those with valid Tier 4 leave who have not yet completed their PhD/doctorate are eligible to apply.
- **I have applied for the Doctorate Extension Scheme and have been granted my visa for 12 months however my course end date has subsequently changed since I made my application. Can I re-apply?**
No. You can only apply once for the Doctorate Extension Scheme, and your 12 months' leave will run from the expected course end date (award date) specified on the CAS that supported your application.
- **Are my working conditions restricted?**
Working conditions under the Doctorate Extension Scheme are much more generous than for full-time students holding a standard Tier 4 visa. The DES is intended to give time for students to gain work experience in their field of work, to look for employment under Tier 2, or to develop plans as an entrepreneur. However there are no restrictions on the type of work you can do during this period (except for work as a doctor or dentist in training, or as a professional sportsperson or coach).
If you have been issued your visa under the DES but you have not yet completed your course, your work restrictions will remain the same as any student on a Tier 4 General visa until you have completed your studies (work up to 20 hours a week during term time and unlimited work during vacations).
- **How can I prove to employers that I am eligible to work full-time?**
Your Biometric Residence Permit will confirm that you are a Tier 4 General student on the Doctorate Extension Scheme and that you are permitted to work full-time. You will also have the supporting letter of approval from the Home Office. If your application is still being considered, your prospective employer can ask the Employer Checking Service for confirmation that you made an in-time application.

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- **Can I bring my dependants to the UK?**

Yes. If your dependents are currently overseas they can apply for entry clearance as Tier 4 dependents. If your dependents are already in the UK, they can extend their leave providing they can meet the requirements. For more information about your dependents application you can see our How to Guide here: my.lsbu.ac.uk/my/applicant/Current-Applicants/International-students/How-to-Guides

Further questions?

- Contact the [Immigration and International Student Advice team](#)
- See the guidance on the [UKCISA website](#)
- See the [Home Office's Tier 4 Policy Guidance](#)

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