The New ‘Graduate Route’ Visa – What we know so far – 24 January 2020

This info sheet is intended to tell you what we currently know about the Government’s intention to introduce a new ‘Graduate route’ post study work visa. No policy or legislation about this route has yet been published and lots of things remain unknown. We will update our web pages and resources as and when we get further information.

What is the new ‘Graduate Route’ visa?

The Graduate Route will allow students who have successfully completed a programme at degree level or above will be eligible to apply for a two-year visa. Applicants will not require a job or sponsor to be able to apply for the visa.

When is it likely to be introduced?

We understand that the route is expected to be introduced from summer 2021 and will be open to those graduating from summer 2021 onwards. However, no immigration rules or formal policy have been produced and we do not expect these to published until spring 2021.

What if my Tier 4 visa expires before it is introduced?

You will only be able to apply for the Graduate visa in the UK and with a valid Tier 4/ new ‘Study’ route visa. If your visa expires before the scheme is launched, you will not be eligible.

Will I be able to extend my Tier 4 visa if I have completed my studies just so I can be eligible?

You will only be able to extend your Tier 4 visa so long as you have genuine studies to complete. We would be unable to extend your visa solely for the purpose of you becoming eligible for the scheme.

Will I have to submit a new visa application for a Graduate Route visa?

Yes, you will have to submit a new visa application. Applicants will be required to go through identity, criminality and security checks. Further details about the process will be published in due course although we understand that you will require documentation from LSE and that you may not need to show any maintenance requirements.

Are there going to be any restrictions on eligibility?

We understand that the UKVI are considering that applicants will need to have spent a minimum amount of time studying on their programme in the UK to be eligible, but this is to prevent applicants coming for a single module just to benefit from the scheme. Once further details are provided, we will let students know.

Will I have to pay for the ‘Graduate’ visa?

Yes, there will be a fee for the visa but the amount has not yet been set.

Will I have to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge again?

Applicants will need to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge for the 2 years of the visa. As yet we do not know how much this will be, but it is likely to be higher than the rate for students.

Will I be able to extend the visa after the 2 year period?

No, the visa will be granted for a non-extendable two-year period.

Will I be able to work in any job with a ‘Graduate’ visa?

Yes, students will be able to work or look for work with any employer. You can be self-employed, but you will not be able to be a professional sportsperson or Doctor/Dentist in training.

Will this visa count towards settlement in the UK?

No, the UKVI have confirmed that the 2 years on this visa will not count towards settlement

Will I be able to switch to a Skilled Worker visa from the Graduate visa?

Yes, if students find a job for which they can be sponsored as a skilled worker, they will be able to switch from the Graduate visa to a Skilled Worker visa. The UKVI have confirmed that the time spent on a skilled worker visa can count towards settlement. We also understand that you may be able to switch into the Innovator route. However, if you have already started a business you are unlikely to be able to benefit from the Start-up visa,

How can I find out more?

We will update our web pages once we have further information, so please do check these regularly:

https://info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/immigration-advice/when-you-have-your-visa

Who do I contact for help? For further immigration advice contact ISVAT online.