



Working on a Tier 4/Student Visa – October 2020

This guidance is based on frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be used on its own and you should always refer to the guidance on the [ISVAT](#) web pages and the Student Guidance which can be found on www.gov.uk.

How many hours can I work during term-time?

If you are on a degree programme, you can work a maximum of 20 hours per week (paid or unpaid) during term-time. This is in total and not per employer.

If you are on a Tier 4 visa for a Language Centre programme you are only able to work a maximum of 10 hours per week (paid or unpaid).

Please note that if your BRP has the incorrect working conditions stated on it, you are bound by that unless you get it corrected. Check your BRP carefully!

How can I find out what the term dates are?

You can find the LSE term dates [here](#). Don't forget if you are a 12 month Masters student, you do not have a summer vacation. The summer period is considered term-time for you

PhD students should check with the PhD Academy for information on when they can take vacations.

Is there any work I cannot do whilst on Tier 4?

- You cannot be self-employed; this means that you cannot set up your own business or work freelance or as a consultant on a self-employed basis e.g. as a freelance tutor
- You are not permitted to work as a professional sports person/sports coach, entertainer or doctor or dentist in training.
- You should be very careful if you are offered freelance or consulting work that you are not self-employed as this is breaking the immigration rules.
- You cannot take a permanent (open-ended) contract.

Are there any exceptions to the self-employment condition whilst on a Tier 4 visa? Yes, but only for:

- PhD students who have successfully completed their studies and hold a Tier 4 (Doctorate Extension Scheme) visa; and
- Those who have received an endorsement for a Start-up visa and have submitted their visa application (with a visa issued after 1 October 2019). It is very important that you do not register your business or start working until your application has been submitted.

Am I allowed to have multiple contracts?

There is no limit on the number of contracts you can have in place but you must not exceed your working permission. However, it is your responsibility to ensure:

- The amount of work you do in a single week does not total to more than your permitted hours. This includes unpaid work, such as assisting with research in your department.
- If you think there is a risk that you may be expected to work more than 20 hours across your positions, you must speak to your employers. Working too many hours can put them at risk as well as yourself.
- Plan ahead to avoid overworking.

What is my "official programme end date" so I know when I can start working full time at the end of my studies?

Your official programme end date is the sponsorship end date that was given on your CAS. This is the date that the Home Office have on record for you completing your studies **NOT** the end of your exams or your dissertation submission date.

I'm a PhD student. I've submitted my thesis and I'm waiting for my viva. Can I work full-time?

If you have been issued with a new CAS number to attend your viva, you will be unable to work full-time after submitting your thesis. By issuing you with a new CAS, your official programme end date has been extended and you are restricted to working 20 hours per week maximum until after your viva date has passed. The same applies if you are issued with a new CAS number to complete corrections on your thesis.

What does "unpaid work" mean?

Unpaid work means exactly that. You cannot work 20 hours for an employer and then work an extra two hours which you do not receive payment for. If there is a record that you have worked more than your permitted hours, even if you are only paid for the permitted hours, this is still a breach of the immigration rules.

What about "Gig Economy" work?

Check this [UKCISA blog](#) for more information on gig economy work.

What about voluntary work?

You can do voluntary work, but this and any other work that you do must not exceed the number of hours you are permitted to do per week.

There is a difference between voluntary work and volunteering. Voluntary work counts towards the number of hours you work but volunteering does not. If you are unsure whether your opportunity would be classed as voluntary work and volunteering please [contact us](#)

Some things to consider are:

- Voluntary workers have contractual obligations and are usually remunerated in kind.
- Volunteers usually:
 - Do not have a contract;
 - Must not take the place of an employee
 - Must not receive payment in kind
 - Usually help a charity or public sector organisation.

Do I need a National Insurance number?

You do not need a National Insurance number until you begin working. However, you must apply for one when you start your job. You can find more information on [National Insurance and tax on the UKCISA website](#).

I've submitted a Tier 4/Student extension application before my current visa expires. How will this affect my right to work in the UK?

If you have applied for a new Tier 4 (General) visa before your current visa expires, you will be covered by Section 3C leave, even if your visa expires whilst you are waiting for the decision. The conditions of your previous visa will continue, which means you will be able to work subject to the Tier 4/Student work conditions.

You can show them evidence of your application in progress, but you will need to show your employer your new visa once it is successfully granted.

If you did not apply for your new visa before your current visa expired and you became an "overstayer", you lose the right to work. [Contact us](#) immediately for advice as you may be unable to continue your studies.

My visa doesn't show that I have the right to work/the number of hours I am permitted to work is incorrect. Can I just work 20 hours without doing anything about it?

If your visa does not show you have the right to work or has the incorrect number of hours, you will need to get it corrected before you can work your permitted hours during term time. You can find out more about getting your visa corrected [here](#).

I am working in the UK for an employer who is based outside the UK. How does this affect my working permission?

[UKCISA advise](#) that even if your employer is outside the UK, any work you undertake in the UK for them still counts towards your permitted hours per week during term time.

My employer has asked LSE to provide a letter confirming the number of hours I am able to work. Can you provide this to me?

Your visa is your evidence of the number of hours you are permitted to work. However, employers are required to do checks for illegal working. The documents we can provide are listed in the working during your studies information [online](#). You may also find our [guide for employers](#) helpful.

Your department will be unable to provide this type of letter for you.

What are the consequences of illegal working in the UK?

Think about whether the potential outcomes of a short-term risk are worth the impact in the long-term. There are consequences for both you and your employer if you are found to be working illegally in the UK.

- You can be:
 - Taken to court;
 - Fined up to £5,000
 - Sent to prison for up to six months;
 - Liable for deportation from the UK;
 - Banned from the UK from between 1 – 10 years. You would need to declare this ban on visa applications for other countries.

You should also note that as part of our sponsor licence agreement, LSE is required to and will report any breaches of the immigration rules to the UKVI that we are aware of. This includes if the School becomes aware that any of our students are working illegally. We have a responsibility not only to the individual student but to the School.

What if I am working for an overseas company during term-time?

If your employment is for an overseas company and you are doing it off-shore, you are still restricted by the conditions of your Tier 4/Student visa. This is the case even if the salary is paid into an overseas bank account.

You are restricted in the type of work you can do because of your immigration permission to be in the UK. These restrictions do not apply if you are doing the work whilst overseas.

Further guidance

For information on finding jobs in the UK and overseas contact [LSE Careers](#).

External employment law and immigration law special specialists:

- www.oisc.gov.uk
- www.ilpa.org.uk
- www.lawsociety.org.uk

Who do I contact for help? For further immigration advice [contact the ISVAT team online](#). If you have questions about your CAS, contact the team who issued your CAS.