

## **English Language Course: Which immigration route should I use to come to the UK: Tier 4 General Student or Short- Term Student Visitor**

Those coming to the UK for an English language course lasting up to 11 months have 2 options for the type of immigration permission (visa) they can apply for: **Tier 4 Student** or **Short Term Student visitor**.

Each route has advantages and disadvantages and the following list may help you decide which one is best for you.

### **Tier 4 Student Advantages**

- Student can extend the visa in the UK if they change their study plans and wish to stay longer
- Travelling in and out of the UK is straightforward for the duration of the visa
- Student can take part time work in UK subject to certain restrictions
- If eligible for a work-based immigration categories, the student can usually switch to a different type of visa from within the UK
- Dependants can apply for dependant visas if they are government sponsored and studying a course that is over 6 months in duration.

### **Tier 4 Student Disadvantages**

- Student **MUST** have a valid UKVI IELTS with minimum 4.0 in each component and overall
- Entry Clearance/Visa **MUST** be obtained from a British Embassy or High Commission in your home country before travelling to the UK
- Applicant must have a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies) from the University of Manchester
- The visa application fee is £322.00 (£328 for applications made from April 2016)
- Very strict rules must be followed
- Student must have a set amount of funds to cover living costs and tuition fees in a bank account for 28 days before applying
- The University is required to monitor the holder of the visa throughout their studies and report non-attendance or other changes in circumstance to UK Visas and Immigration UKVI
- If applying for a subsequent Tier 4 visa the student must show progression via a new SELT with improved scores in at least 2 components

More information about applying under the Tier 4 route can be found on the University's Crucial Guide website here:

<http://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/immigration-and-visas/>

And on the UK Government websites here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

### **Short Term Student Visitor Advantages**

- Student needs a visa invitation letter confirming their unconditional place on the course; no CAS required
- No set amount of money needed in bank account; instead must show 'sufficient funds' to cover fees and living costs
- Quicker to obtain
- No requirement to assess or give details about English Language ability
- Can be obtained at port of entry to the UK by non-visa nationals\* – free of charge

- For visa nationals the visa application fee is £85.00 for a 6 month visa (£89 for applications made from April 2016) and £162 for a 6-11 month visa (£170 for applications made from April 2016)
- Course can be any number of hours per week and any duration up to 11 months

### **Short Term Student Disadvantages**

- Maximum duration 11 months
- Cannot be extended. Student must return to their home country
- Holder cannot switch to any other type of visa
- Holder cannot work during their stay
- Travel in and out of UK and entry to other European countries more difficult
- If changing to a Tier 4 visa the student must return to their home country
- Cannot bring dependants
- Some sponsors do not allow students to study English language on a Short Term Student Visa

More information about coming to the UK under the student visitor route can be found on the University's Crucial Guide website here:

<http://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/immigration-and-visas/>

And on the UK Government's UK Visas website

here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

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\*Please note that if you are a citizen of a country which is on the UK government's visa national list, you will need to apply for a visa BEFORE leaving your home country, whichever route you choose. The list of visa national countries can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor-rules>

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We hope this information is useful. If you decide you wish to come to the UK as a Tier 4 Student, you will need to request a CAS reference number from the ULC: [englishlanguage@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:englishlanguage@manchester.ac.uk)

Further useful information on all the above is available from the independent organisation the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) here: <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/>