



Working in the UK

A Guide for Student Visa Holders

The main purpose of your Student (formerly Tier 4) visa is for you to study a course on a full-time basis in the UK. However, your Student visa does still allow you to work whilst you are in the UK under certain conditions.

You should read this guide carefully if you plan to work in the UK to ensure that you continue to meet the conditions and responsibilities of your visa during your stay. If you have any questions about this then please [contact us](#).

This guide will cover the following areas:

- ❖ 1. Hours of work
- ❖ 2. Type of work & Prohibited activities
- ❖ 3. Volunteering & Voluntary work
- ❖ 4. Work placements
- ❖ 5. National Insurance number
- ❖ 6. Proving your right to work
- ❖ 7. Working after studies
- ❖ 8. Breaching your work conditions

It is important to check your visa to confirm if you can work during your studies. Your work condition includes any paid work, unpaid work, voluntary work and internships. The University of Manchester is a sponsor with a track record of compliance which means:-

- ❖ If your course of study is at degree level or above you are allowed to work up to a maximum of 20 hours per week during term time, and full-time during vacations.
- ❖ If your course of study is below degree level you will be able to work a maximum of 10 hours per week during term time, and full-time during vacations.

You can have multiple jobs but you must not work over your weekly hour limit. You must add all your work hours together and ensure that the total is below the limit each week.

What are the vacation periods?

You must check the specific vacations for your level of course before working full-time during these periods, and you must ensure that you do not engage in prohibited types of work. UKVI includes the period after you have completed your course as vacation time. You can work full-time during vacation periods, but you cannot pursue a career by filling a permanent vacancy.

Please note that reading week is considered term-time so you **cannot** work full-time during that week.

Undergraduate students: You can work full-time during vacation periods at Christmas, Easter and during the summer. Please see the [University term dates](#) here to check when you are permitted to work full-time. You can also work full-time for four months after you have completed your course.

Postgraduate Taught students (Masters): You can work full-time during the Christmas and Easter vacation periods only. You cannot work beyond your 20-hour-a-week limit during the summer as you are still classed as being in full-time study while you work on your dissertation. You can work full-time once you have finished all of your taught components and you have submitted all assessed work including your final dissertation.

Postgraduate Research students (PhD): You are entitled to a total of 8 weeks' vacation per academic year. You can work full-time only during these 8 weeks of vacation and any vacation periods must be agreed in writing with your supervisor and School before you work full-time. Other than this, you can only work full-time once you have submitted your final corrected thesis via eScholar following the approval of any corrections. You are still restricted to 20-hours-a-week whilst you are writing up and during the period after you submit your initial thesis submission and are awaiting your VIVA.

How to calculate a working week

UKVI's definition of 'a week' in terms of working under the Student route is "a period of 7 days beginning with a Monday". This means that you must ensure that in any week beginning Monday and ending Sunday you do not work more than your permitted limit.

You cannot balance your hours over the course of a month and work more in one week and then less for another week. You must calculate your total hours on a weekly basis.

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Types of work & prohibited activities

As a Student visa holder you are restricted from engaging in certain types of employment. You are not permitted to:

- ❖ be employed as a doctor in training (except on a recognised foundation programme);
- ❖ be employed as a professional sportsperson (including a sports coach);
- ❖ be employed as an entertainer (including actors, musicians, dancers etc);
- ❖ be self-employed or engage in business activity; or
- ❖ fill a full-time, permanent vacancy (except on a recognised foundation programme or as a students' union sabbatical officer).

If you are not sure about any of these definitions, please contact us and we can advise in more detail.

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Volunteering & Voluntary work

You can both volunteer and carry out voluntary work in the UK. However, voluntary work still contributes to your work allowance and so any hours you do must not exceed your term-time limit, either on its own or combined with other types of paid or unpaid work.

You should be aware of the difference between volunteering and voluntary work.

Voluntary workers:

- ❖ often have a contract with their employer e.g. you must attend at particular times and carry out specific tasks
- ❖ voluntary workers are usually paid in some way

Volunteers:

- ❖ do not have a contract of employment
- ❖ must not take the place of an employee
- ❖ must not receive payment (but travel or maintenance expenses are allowed)
- ❖ usually help a charity or voluntary or public sector organisation e.g. a registered charity

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Work placements

Student visa holders are permitted to undertake a work placement provided that is an integral and assessed part of your main course of study. An example of this would be if your course includes an industrial/professional placement year and this was stated on your CAS.

If you are enrolled on a course at an overseas University and you are coming to the UK to do part of your course, you may also do a work placement as part of your course as long as it is no more than 50% of your study in the UK.

During your work placement you are able to work full-time and be paid as such. The University is still your Student visa sponsor and so it is important that you stay in contact with your School and keep your contact details up to date.

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National Insurance Number

You will need a National Insurance (NI) number to work in the UK. This unique number is used to record your National Insurance contributions.

You can start working without an NI number and your employer may be able to create a temporary number for you, but you should apply for one as soon as possible to make sure you don't pay too much tax. If you are looking for paid work in the UK it is advisable to apply for an NI number as soon as possible as the application can take time.

It is free to apply and applications should be made by phone to the National Insurance Number application line. You may be required to attend an appointment at your local Jobcentre Plus.

Please see the [Careers website](#) for more information about how to apply for an NI number.

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Proving your right to work

Your employer will need to check your right to work in the UK. You should be able to prove your right to work by generating a [share code online](#) which employers can use to verify your status and work conditions.

If you are unable to generate a share code then your employer can instead contact the [Employer Checking Service](#) to get confirmation that you are permitted to work.

If your visa is expiring, as long as you submit a new visa application before your current visa expires then your status will be protected whilst your new application is pending and you can continue to work according to the conditions of your Student visa.

You may also need to show your employer evidence of the [University term dates](#). You are allowed to use a printout of the University website as evidence of this.

The University cannot provide a letter to confirm your right to work in the UK. This should not be necessary and your employer should accept the evidence above according to the [guidance for employers](#).

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Working after studies

If you want to work in the UK after your Student visa expires or carry out work that is restricted under the Student route (e.g. a permanent full-time post) then you will need to apply for a new visa. Below are some examples of the visa categories students choose to switch to:

The [Graduate Visa Route](#) is intended to enable international students who have successfully completed an undergraduate or master's degree to remain in the UK for work for two years after graduation. Students who complete their PhD will be able to stay for up to three years.

[Skilled Worker \(formerly Tier 2\)](#): This is the main category for employment in the UK. It requires you to find a job with an employer who has a skilled worker sponsor licence. The advertised position must meet certain criteria, such as a minimum salary, for sponsorship to be possible.

[Innovator Founder visa](#): This allows graduates from the University, who have a viable, innovative and scalable business idea, to be supported to develop a business in the UK. Although The University of Manchester does not directly sponsor this type of visa, our [Masood Enterprise Centre](#) has close links with an endorsing body and can provide business start-up advice and support to interested students.

[Temporary Worker - Government Authorised Exchange Visa](#): This visa allows you to undertake paid work experience or an internship in the UK for a period of one or two years. There are a number of organisations who can act as visa sponsors as part of various government-approved schemes.

[Youth Mobility](#): The Youth Mobility visa is valid for two years and allows you to work or study. Only students with certain types of British nationality or from certain countries are eligible to apply, and you must apply from your home country.

[The Careers website](#) and the [Student Immigration Team website](#) include more information about these visa categories and other visa types that permit work.

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Breaching your work conditions

There are serious consequences for breaking the conditions of your Student visa. The University is obligated to report any breach to UK Visas & Immigration, including if you work more hours than you are permitted, or engage in a type of work that is not allowed.

You should check that your type of work is permitted and keep a record of how many hours you work per week to ensure that you are keeping within your conditions.

You must stop working immediately if you withdraw from your studies early or take an interruption. This is because your right to work relies on you being in full-time study .

Please see [our website](#) for more information about Student visas during your stay in the UK.

The [Student route casework guidance](#) includes more information about your work conditions and your responsibilities whilst on a Student visa.

The [UKCISA website](#) also contains useful information and guidance about working in the UK during and after studies.

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