

## Student Visas

## Changing your course

**If you are changing your course, you may require a new Student visa before you can do so.** A course change includes if you are changing your level of study as part of an integrated course, or where you are adding a placement or study abroad year. **If you require a new visa to change your studies, then you will need to request a continuer CAS from your department or school. They will issue you with a Continuer CAS Request Form that you will need to complete and return to them for a new CAS to be created and issued out to you.**

Some students will be able to apply for the new visa they need from within the UK. If you need to return home to make your application though then you should contact your school/department administrator to confirm the dates you can do this to minimise the impact on your studies.

As visa application fees usually increase each year and the immigration rules are also subject to change in the future, we would advise you apply for a new visa to change programmes as soon as you are able to.

### ATAS Requirement

You must check with your School whether your new course requires ATAS clearance. This is required for certain science or engineering postgraduate-level courses, or for integrated master's courses (e.g. MEng). If you do require ATAS clearance you must apply for an ATAS certificate and have received this **before** you can start studying your new course. If you are making a new Student application, you will need a valid ATAS clearance certificate **before** you can apply.

**If ATAS is required, you must have received it before you can change course** regardless of what visa you have and when this was issued. For more information read our [ATAS guidance](#).

### Changing to a longer course:

- ❖ Under UKVI rules, you **cannot** change to a longer course and continue to study with your current visa.
- ❖ If you are changing to a longer course because you are adding an assessed industrial or professional placement or an integrated master's year to your programme then you should be eligible to submit a Student visa extension from within the UK.
- ❖ Students changing to a new course which they are unable to complete before their current Student visa expires are required to reapply for a new Student visa before they can change programmes and will need to do so from outside of the UK.
- ❖ MPhil students transferring to a PhD are also not eligible to apply from the UK and must return home to submit a Student visa application from overseas before they can be transferred.
- ❖ You must have applied for and obtained a new Student visa before you can change programmes and start the new part of your course here in the UK.
- ❖ If you need to extend your current visa because you are undertaking an assessed placement overseas, then you should ideally have applied for and obtained your new visa **before leaving the UK**. If you are unable to do so then you will need to wait until you have completed your placement and apply for a new Student visa from your home country before returning to your studies in Manchester.
- ❖ If you are unable to obtain a new visa before your placement begins, the University will need to cease sponsorship of your visa before you start it. This will, however, have no impact on your ability to apply for and obtain a new visa to resume your studies upon completion of the placement.

## If you change to a lower-level course:

### Integrated Master's Students

- ❖ Students who are downgrading and continuing with the lower-level qualification of an integrated master's programme (e.g. MEng to BEng) do not need to obtain a new Student visa to change programmes. The Student Immigration Team will report the change to the lower qualification to UKVI, but this report will not impact on your visa's validity.
- ❖ Instead, when you complete your studies after downgrading, the University will inform UKVI that you have completed your course early and email you to confirm this. UKVI should then send you a curtailment notice which will confirm an earlier expiry date for your current Student visa. You must ensure that you either leave the UK or apply for further leave under either the Student route for a new course or another immigration category before your curtailed visa expiry date. You should check your emails regularly, but we advise that you act within four months of our report to UKVI.
- ❖ Provided you still successfully complete your integrated course with the lower award (e.g. BEng), your early completion should not impact on your eligibility to apply for a [Graduate visa](#).

### Postgraduate Research Students

- ❖ If you are a PhD student who is downgrading to an MPhil, you cannot study the MPhil using your existing visa and you are also not eligible to apply for a Student visa extension from within the UK. You will need to return home and apply for a new Student visa overseas before you can change courses and continue your studies. You should discuss the best time for you to return home with staff in your school or department to minimise the impact on your studies.

## Changing to a course of the same duration or shorter:

- ❖ You can change to a programme of the same academic level and duration as the course your CAS was originally issued for without having to obtain a new visa. This change in programme will be reported to UKVI, but this report will not impact on your visa's validity.
- ❖ You can also change courses and continue studying on your existing visa if your new course is shorter and still at the same academic level as your current programme (e.g. if you are removing a placement year). Once you complete this shorter course, the University will inform UKVI that you have completed your course early and email you to confirm this. UKVI will then send you a curtailment notice and provide you with a new visa expiry date. You must leave the UK or switch to a different immigration category before your curtailed visa expiry date. You should check your emails and post regularly, but we advise that you act within four months of our report to UKVI.
- ❖ Provided you still successfully complete the shorter course you change to, the early completion report should not impact on your eligibility to apply for a [Graduate visa](#).
- ❖ You may also move to a higher levelled integrated programme (e.g. BEng to MEng) without having to obtain a new Student visa if you already possess sufficient Student leave to cover the additional period of study that would come with the change in programme. This is only possible where the length of the new course is the same or shorter than the course your CAS was issued for. If any element of the course is longer than a new visa would be required. Additionally, if the new course requires ATAS, you cannot change programmes until you have obtained the necessary clearance.



## Further considerations

### Immigration Healthcare Surcharge (IHS)

If you apply for your new Student visa from outside the UK, you will not receive a refund for any money you previously paid for the IHS as part of your Student visa application. You will have to pay this again for your new visa. This is the case even if you have no option of applying in the UK.

If you apply in the UK, you should be eligible for a partial refund of your previous IHS payment. You should be refunded for any overlapping period of coverage greater than 6 months. You will however still need to pay the new IHS in full when you make your new visa application and will only receive a refund for any previous IHS payment within 6 weeks of getting a decision on your new visa application.

### Part-Time Study

Although UKVI introduced a part-time Student visa route for some postgraduate study in the UK, after careful consideration, The University of Manchester took the decision not to offer part-time study for any Student visa holders. As such, we cannot continue to sponsor any Student visa holder who wishes to transition from full-time to a part-time programme. Any student who wishes to do so would need to switch to a new immigration category (e.g. dependant or work visa) which was not dependant on their studying or otherwise remain on a full-time programme to retain their current Student visa.