

PGR Visa Information Webinar

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www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/immigration-and-visas

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Session Outline



- Student visa responsibilities
- Attendance and engagement
- Fieldwork / change of study location
- Work conditions
- Writing up / Submission Pending Location
- Programme changes
- ATAS
- Breaks in study (interruptions and annual leave)
- Maternity leave
- Early Completion
- Post-study visas (Graduate and Skilled Worker visas)

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Immigration Advice Authority

Student Immigration Team

- We are responsible for providing immigration advice to applicants and students as well fulfilling the University's compliance obligations as a Student route sponsor to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

- We are the only university team that is qualified to provide immigration advice, and we are regulated by the Immigration Advice Authority to be able to do so.

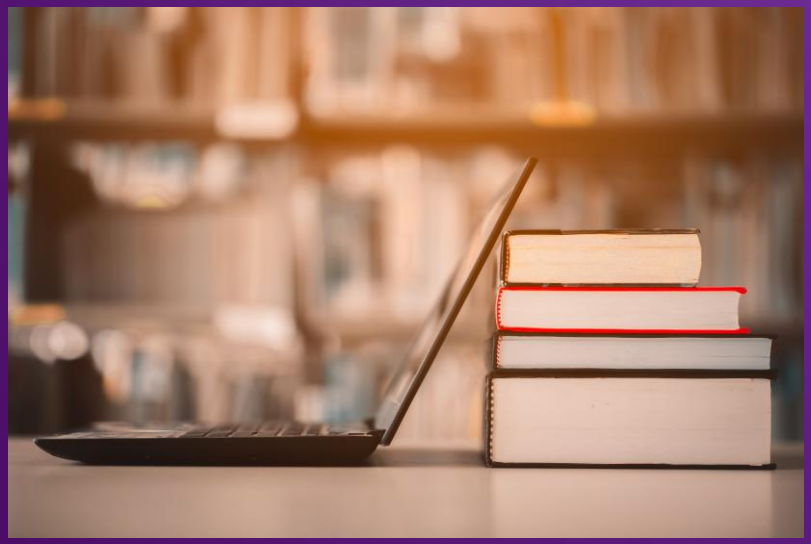
- We run a face-to-face advice drop-in from the ground floor of the Main Library on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays between 11:00 & 13:00. No appointment necessary to attend.

- You can also contact us by email at **visa@manchester.ac.uk**.

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Student visa responsibilities

As Student visa holders, you have several responsibilities you must continue to comply with for the duration of your studies to protect your immigration status:



- Attendance and engagement

- Working conditions

- Changes in your personal or contact details

- Changes in your circumstances

- Changes in your immigration status

- ATAS

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Attendance and Engagement

Expectations for regularity of attendance & progress in study

- Must maintain **regular** engagement with on-campus study.
- You should be:
  - Having regular in-person meetings with your supervisory team.
  - Working towards the completion of your eProg milestones.



Studying Remotely

- **What is Remote Study?** Study outside of Manchester, not just outside of the UK.
- Remote study is generally not permitted under the Student route except for:
  - Formally authorised fieldwork/placements which are **integral** to your research.
  - This activity must be authorised and recorded by the Doctoral Academy and not just your supervisor so the information can be reported to the Home Office.
  - Submission Pending (writing up period) - must be requested through **MyPlacement**.

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Fieldwork & changes in location of study

- Fieldwork & Placements must be reported to UKVI by the University.
- Applies to anything more than **two weeks,** e.g. short conferences are not reportable.
- **How Long?** - No specific limit on length, but usually should not exceed 1 year.
- **How to Request?** – Speak to supervisor **and** DA Team, then arrange via MyPlacement.



- **You need to provide:**
  - Full address details of where you will be based.
  - How long your fieldwork/placement will be (date of return is important).
  - If your fieldwork includes multiple locations, you must confirm the address details for each location you will be based at.

Don’t make any travel arrangements or start the placement before your request is formally authorised by your DA.

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Working whilst studying



- Student visa holders have limited working rights:
  - **20 hours per week** during active study periods.
  - UKVI defined week is a 7-day period, Mon to Sun
  - Weekly limit includes: paid work, unpaid work, voluntary work and internships.
  - No self-employment or business activity.
- You can work full-time hours when not in 'Term Time':
  - 32 working days of annual leave per academic year, in addition to public holidays and University closure days. No single period longer than four weeks.
  - After submission of final corrected version of your thesis post-viva.
- Outside of the above full-time internships/placements cannot be undertaken in the UK if it's not an assessed and integral part of your course.
  - Your DA will determine what activity can be considered integrated.
  - You **cannot** interrupt your studies to undertake a non-integral UK internship or placement.
  - Non-integral placement activity outside the UK will require interruption.

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Writing Up (Submission Pending)



What is Submission Pending? - Additional time to complete the writing up.

- You can apply for a period of submission pending if you have completed all research **but** are unable to submit your thesis within the by your original submission deadline in the final year of your PhD.
- Four-year doctoral degrees do usually not allow a period of submission pending.

- PGRs who have entered into submission pending may write up from outside the UK, but this **must** be requested through MyPlacement.
- PGRs planning to spend all or part of this period outside the UK must:
  - Obtain formal approval in advance through your Doctoral Academy;
  - Confirm overseas location and return date so that this can be recorded in MyPlacement.
- If absence is more than four weeks, we will notify UKVI of a change of study location.
- The University cannot continue sponsorship where a PGR leaves the UK without prior approval through this process.
- Further information is set out in the PGR Submissions Pending Policy: https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76401

Programme Changes

- Programme changes are quite common for PGR students.
- Most are straightforward, but some may require a new visa and/or ATAS.
- Certain programme changes require a new Student visa application that must be made **outside the UK**.
  - Downgrading from a PhD to an MPhil.
  - Transferring from an MPhil to a PhD without being awarded an MPhil.
  - You must obtain your new visa and provide evidence to the Student Immigration Team before the change can be made.

Programme Change Process

- Discuss with both supervisor and DA.
- Where new Student visa is required, you will need to request a continuer CAS and complete and return a Continuer CAS Request Form (CCR1) to the Doctoral Academy for this to be completed and sent over to our team for processing.



Our course change guide is the best place to refer to in the first instance (https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=37044)

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Programme Extensions

- Many PGRs end up requiring more time to complete their degree (e.g. after receiving corrections post-viva).
- Generally eligible to apply for an extension of your Student visa to cover the additional period.
  - PhD students are eligible to apply in the UK to continue the same programme.
  - Research Masters students need to leave the UK to make a new visa application if they require more time.



- Due to UKVI restrictions, you can only apply for a visa extension for the same programme no more than 3 months before your current visa expires.
- Request a Continuer CAS Request Form (CCR1) from your Doctoral Academy once you are at the 3-month mark.

If your course requires ATAS then you must obtain a new ATAS certificate before you can be issued with a new CAS

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Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)



- ATAS is the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) research screening programme for science and technology courses, but some humanities courses are included, like those related to AI.
- If you are currently studying on a course which requires ATAS and the **content**, **direction** or **scope of your research changes**, you will need to obtain new ATAS before the change can be permitted.
- You will also need to apply for new clearance if your **main supervisor changes,** your studies are extended by **more than three months** beyond the expected end date on your CAS or you transfer to a new course i.e. PhD to MPhil or MPhil to PhD.
- Visa extensions for courses requiring ATAS will also require you to have obtained a new ATAS certificate before you will be able to request a continuer CAS.

Note: The requirement for ATAS and is not just limited to Student visa holders and is also applicable to other time-limited visa categories (Skilled Workers, Dependants etc.)

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ATAS: When to apply

- You should apply for ATAS clearance as soon as you know that you require an extension to your course.
- Current ATAS application processing times are **at least** 30 working days (6 weeks).
- The processing clock starts when an application has been assessed as 'complete'.
- Editing an application or being required by the ATAS team to provide additional information will reset the clock, so there is no advantage to applying early with incomplete or incorrect information!
- If you make an error in your ATAS application, you will need to withdraw it and submit a new one.
- The ATAS Team can only amend your passport number if you obtain a new one. They cannot amend any other errors in your application.



Breaks in study

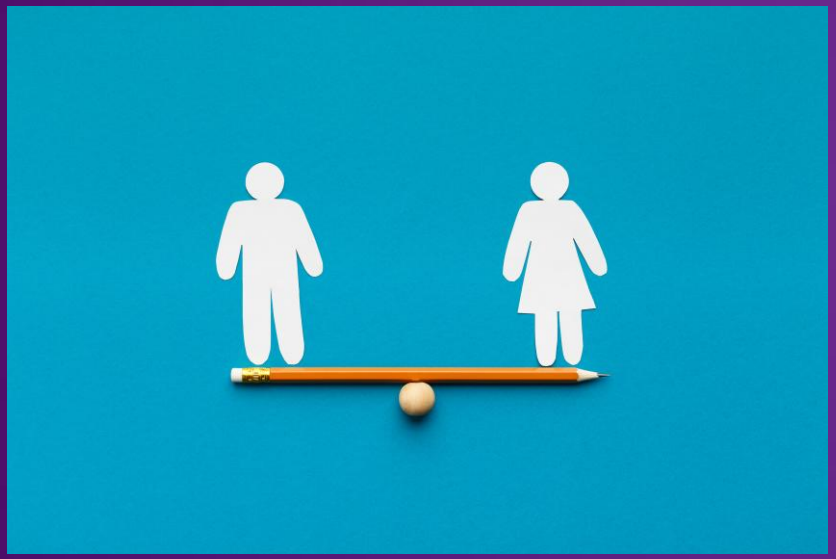
- The University is generally required to report to UKVI that we are no longer sponsoring your Student visa if you interrupt your studies for more than 60 calendar days (excl. maternity leave).



- This applies to any combined period of formal interruption (Leave of Absence) and annual leave (i.e. you cannot use AL to extend an interruption and avoid being reported and vice versa).
- Following an update to the PGR Annual Leave policy, no period of annual leave can exceed four weeks in length. Absences greater than four weeks will require a formal interruption request.

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Maternity Leave



- Students can take a study break of up to 12 months following the birth of a baby. But as there is no specific "maternity leave" provision within the Student visa rules, the length of leave you take can have implications for your visa.
- We can maintain sponsorship of your Student visa for a period of maternity leave taken in the UK or overseas that does not exceed 4 months, as UKVI already add on 4 months to the course duration set out in your CAS.
- Maternity absences longer than 4 months will require us to withdraw sponsorship, which leads to the curtailment and early expiry of a Student visa.
- Contact the Student Immigration Team for advice if you intend to interrupt for more than 4 months.

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Early Completion

- If you complete your course more than **1 month** before the expected end date on your most recent CAS, we are required to notify UKVI and withdraw sponsorship for your Student visa.
- We will email you once we have notified UKVI that you have completed your course early. Depending on how much time is left on your visa, UKVI may curtail your visa and issue a shorter expiry date.



- If you completed your course and achieved the qualification for which your CAS was issued, you should still have a 4-month period of leave after your completion date and should still be eligible to apply for a **Graduate visa** (Provided you are still awarded an eligible qualification).
- If you plan to apply for a Graduate visa after completing early, then we advise against leaving the UK as you risk not being able to return if your visa is curtailed whilst you are overseas.
- You also won't receive an IHS refund if you complete early. You are only eligible for a refund if you reapply for a new visa from within the UK and there is more than 6 months of overlapping coverage with your previous visa.

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Post-study visas (Graduate route)

- PhD Student visa holders **who successfully complete** should be able to apply for a Graduate visa to remain in the UK for a further 3 years. Research masters students who successfully complete are currently eligible to stay for 2 years. This is due to change to 18 months for Graduate visa applications submitted on or after **1st January 2027**.
- In the context of the Graduate route, successful completion means you have submitted any final corrections and been awarded the degree reflected on your CAS statement.
- You must apply for the graduate visa from the UK while your student visa is still valid (cannot apply from overseas)
- No maintenance requirement, but you will need to pay the application fee and immigration healthcare surcharge: £937 for the application and £1035 per year for IHS.
- To be eligible, you must have studied in the UK for at least 12 months.
- If a Government or international scholarship agency sponsors you, you will also need to include a letter of consent from your sponsor permitting you to remain in the UK.



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Post-study visas (Graduate route)



- The Graduate route is unsponsored so you do not need a job to apply and can use it to look for work and work full-time or more than one job.
- Provided you meet the eligibility criteria, we will report your eligibility to apply for a Graduate visa to UKVI and notify you of this via email.

- You should only apply for a Graduate visa **once your eligibility has been confirmed**. If you require more time to complete and submit your PhD, you **must** apply for a Student visa extension.
- Once you've submitted an in-time application, your status to remain in the UK is protected by a provision called **3C Leave** until you receive a decision on your application.
- We do not advise on Graduate route applications and can only signpost to other sources of advice and guidance: **www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/immigration-and-visas/graduate**

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Other post-study visas (e.g. Skilled Worker)

- Our team cannot advise on applications for other UK visa categories.
- Consultations with Latitude Law, a specialist immigration law firm based in Manchester, are available to all UoM students and graduates who are experiencing immigration concerns, or who need advice with future immigration applications.

- You can contact Latitude Law to arrange a free telephone, Teams or Zoom consultation by emailing the following details to UoMenquiries@latitudelaw.com:
  - Your name
  - Your telephone number
  - The expiry date of your current status
  - You level of study (eg undergraduate degree) and when your course is expected to complete
  - A brief summary of what you would like to discuss (eg "I am graduating this year and intend to marry my British partner and remain in the UK"

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Any Questions?



Student Support Site:
www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/immigration-and-visas

Email us – visa@manchester.ac.uk

Face-to-Face SIT advice drop-in service

Location: Ground floor, Main Library, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PP
Availability: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 11:00 - 13:00.