Your Visa Handbook
Pre-sessional students 2018

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Introduction

This is your Visa Handbook! It explains everything you need to know about applying for your Tier 4 visa. You should read it carefully as it will help you as you work through the visa application process. It will help you know what you need to do, when you need to do it and what to expect.

There are also useful links in each section which point you to our answers to some frequently asked questions.

You can find out more information from our website:

http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/tier-4/

Student Visa Services
Help from Student Visa Services

- We are here to help! We are holding three events:
  - Visa Lecture – June/July (compulsory)
  - Question and Answer session – July (if you have a question)
  - **Visa Checking Event** – September (compulsory)

- The dates for the Visa Lecture are:
  - Wednesday 20 June for 14 and 10-week pre-sessional students:
    - 2pm: all 14 week students and classes 10.03 – 10.24
    - 3.30pm: classes 10.25 – 10.49
    - Priory Road Lecture Theatre
  - Wednesday 18 July for 6-week pre-sessional students:
    - 2pm: classes 6.01 – 6.24
    - 3.30pm: classes 6.25 – 6.48
    - Physics Building G42 Powell Lecture Theatre

- At the lecture we will explain how to apply for a Tier 4 visa

- The Question and Answer session dates and times will be emailed to you

  The information in this guide will help you get your documents ready so make sure you read it and follow the instructions carefully
Your application for your new Tier 4 visa

- **When** – at the end of the pre-sessional course, you will need to apply for a new Tier 4 visa so that you can start your main course of study.

- **Where** – if you already have a Tier 4 visa for the pre-sessional course, you can make your new visa application here in the UK. We strongly recommend that you do this.

- **CAS** – you need a new [Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies](#) (CAS) number for your main course, before you can submit a new visa application. You will get this once we know that you have successfully passed your pre-sessional course.

- **Documents** – you should begin to prepare your documents as soon as possible as you will need time to get everything in place.

- **UKVI** – your visa application will be assessed by a [UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)](#) caseworker.

- You **must** meet [UKVI](#) requirements for your new visa application. If you do not, your application may be refused and you will not be able to start your main course of study.
Your application for your new Tier 4 visa - exceptions

! Combined CAS holders – if you received a combined CAS for the pre-sessional course, and therefore have a visa that lasts for the whole of your main course of study, then you will not need to make another visa application

! Dependants – if you have dependants (husband/wife/partner and/or children) and you want them to join you while you are studying, they will need to apply for a Tier 4 dependant visa. Please inform Student Visa Services by emailing student-visa-advice@bristol.ac.uk – please give your name, student number, class number and ‘pre-sessional dependants’ in the subject line

! ‘Low-risk’ applicants – students from some specific countries are regarded as ‘low-risk’ and can submit their visa application under the differentiation arrangement

Refer to: Frequently asked questions
What you need to do now

• **Get started** – do not wait until you get your new [Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies](#) (CAS) number. You can get started right away!

• **Get your documents ready:**
  
  • **Financial documents** – you need to show that you have the required amount of money available. The money must have been held for 28 consecutive days
  
  • **Qualifications** – you must have the certificates for the qualifications on your offer letter. You also need to have accurate translations that meet UKVI requirements
  
  • **Photographs** – you need two new, identical photos. They must meet UKVI requirements
  
  • **ATAS certificate** – depending on your course, you may also need an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate. Your offer letter will state if ATAS is required

✓ **Attend the Visa Lecture**

✓ **Start your application** – once you have your documents organised, you can start to fill in the [UKVI online application form](#). However, you should not submit it until you know when you will attend the Visa Checking Event. You only have a limited time to send your documents to UKVI, and our advisers will help you check them at the event.

✓ **Attend the Visa Checking Event** – on the date given in your email, which will be sent to you closer to the time. Our Visa Advisers will check your documents before you send them to UKVI.
✓ **Complete and submit your online form and pay the fees** – the date you submit and pay online is the date of application
Getting ready to make your application

1: Your financial documents

! If your document does not meet UKVI requirements your visa application will be refused

✓ Open a UK bank account – it is easier for UKVI staff in the UK to assess a UK bank statement

✓ Find out how much money you will need to have – you should carefully read all the information at this link: Money required for Tier 4 application. You will need to show financial evidence of your tuition fees + your living costs for 9 months (£9135)

✓ 28-day requirement – make sure that this money is in your UK bank account by 1 August. You must keep this money in your account for at least 28 consecutive days. Your balance must not fall below the total required amount of money during that time

! If you need to make any payments during the 28 consecutive days, make sure that you have enough money in your account to stay above the required amount

✓ Sponsorship – if you have an Official Financial Sponsor (e.g. government or international scholarship agency), obtain an original letter from your sponsor
✓ **Obtain your bank statement/s** – after your money has been in your UK account for at least 28 consecutive days

! **Bank statements must be original documents** – scans or photocopies are not acceptable

- You can print your own statement, but you must then go to the bank to have every side of each page of the statement stamped by the bank. Sometimes banks will not do this, and you will have to ask the bank to print the statement again.

- Check that your full bank account number appears on the statement. Sometimes statements from some banks do not show the full account number which is not accepted by UKVI

- Leave the money in your account until your visa application has been decided. Do not transfer it back to another account

- Your bank statement must be less than 31 days old on the date that you submit your visa application online

Refer to: [Frequently asked questions](#)
UKVI bank statement requirements

Your bank statement must:

- Prove that you have held the money for at least 28 consecutive days
- Be less than 31 days old on the day you submit online
- Be an original document (not a copy or scan)
- Prove the required funds
- State the bank’s name and logo
- State your name and the account number
- State the date of the bank statement
- State the closing balance
2: Qualifications and translations

- **Proof** – you must provide proof of your qualifications to meet the conditions of your offer to study your main programme at University of Bristol

- **Certificates** – the qualifications that you need are listed on your offer letter. You must submit these certificates with your visa application

- **Originals** – you must submit the original qualification certificates. Copies of certificates are not accepted by UKVI

  ! If your original qualification certificate is not in English then you will need a fully certified translation that meets UKVI requirements. Your home University’s English translation will not meet UKVI requirements

Refer to: [Frequently asked questions](#)
Translating your qualifications

- Translations of your qualifications must meet [UKVI requirements](#)
  - Unless you studied in an English-speaking country, it is likely that any certificate issued in English will not be suitable for your visa application
  - You must use a professional translator

The following translation services can provide translations that meet UKVI requirements:

http://www.translatemydoc.co.uk

http://www.sallywalker.co.uk/

! Get your translations done as soon as possible. Translators are very busy in September and prices will be higher
**UKVI translation requirements**

Translations **must** contain the following information:

- Name of translator
- Details of translator’s qualification (e.g. Tem 8)
- Translator’s signature and date
- Translator’s contact details (address and telephone number)
- Statement: ‘I confirm this is an accurate translation of the original’ (or similar statement)

Refer to: [Frequently asked questions](#)
3: Photographs

- **Photos** – you will need two new, identical photographs for your visa application. The photographs must not have been used in any previous application and they must have been taken in the UK in the last month. The photo will be used to verify your identity – it will not be the photo that will be displayed on your BRP card.

- **Check** – the photographs must meet [UKVI requirements](#). If they do not meet the requirements, your visa application will be rejected as invalid.

- **Where** – we recommend that you use a photo booth. The nearest booths are:
  - Richmond Building, Queen’s Road, BS8 1LN
  - Clifton Down Shopping Centre, Whiteladies Road, BS8 2NN
  - Most Post Offices, including Bristol Galleries, Broadmead, BS1 3XX

Refer to: [Frequently asked questions](#)
UKVI requirements for photographs

Your photos must:

✓ measure 45 millimetres (mm) high by 35mm wide (the standard size used in photo booths in the UK)
✓ not be a cut down version of a larger picture

Your photos must be:

✓ printed to a professional standard
✓ taken within the last month
✓ in colour on plain white photographic paper with no border
✓ taken against a plain cream or light grey background
✓ clear and in focus
✓ without any creases or tears
✓ unmarked on both sides (unless a photo needs to be countersigned)
✓ unaltered by computer software

Your photos must:

✓ be a close-up of your full head and upper shoulders
✓ contain no other objects or people
✓ be in clear contrast to the background

In your photo, you must:

✓ be facing forward and looking straight at the camera
✓ have a neutral expression and your mouth closed
✓ have your eyes open, visible and free from reflection or glare from glasses
✓ not have hair in front of your eyes
✓ not have a head covering (unless it’s for religious or medical reasons)
✓ not have anything covering your face
✓ not have any ‘red eye’
✓ not have any shadows on your face or behind you

✓ You can wear reading glasses, but your eyes must show fully through clear lenses without glare or reflections

! You cannot wear sunglasses or tinted glasses
4: Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

- **Check** – for some subjects, you will need to apply for and obtain an [Academic Technology Approval Scheme](#) (ATAS) certificate before you apply for your Tier 4 visa

- **Check** – you can find out if you require ATAS clearance by looking at the offer letter for your main course of study

- **When** – you can apply for ATAS clearance as soon as you have received a conditional or unconditional offer to commence a course of study

- **How long** – ATAS applications usually take 4-6 weeks to be decided but can take longer in busy periods. You should submit your ATAS application as soon as possible

- You can [complete and submit your ATAS application form](#) online, following the [guidance](#) provided
5: Tier 4 Visa Pilot Information

The University of Bristol has been selected to join a small number of universities in the Home Office Tier 4 Visa Pilot.

What is the Tier 4 Visa Pilot?

The Tier 4 Visa Pilot provides full-time students (and their dependants), on master’s programmes that are 13 months or less in duration, a streamlined visa application process and six months extra time at the end of their course.

Who is eligible?

- Applicants for a Tier 4 student visa to study a postgraduate master’s programme of 13 months or less commencing study in the 2018/19 academic year
- Applicants for entry clearance overseas or for leave to remain (in the UK) following successful completion of an undergraduate or previous postgraduate degree
- Dependants making a Tier 4 dependant visa application at the same time as an eligible main applicant

Differences to a standard Tier 4 application

The Tier 4 Visa Pilot offers a streamlined visa application process. This means that students do not have to submit documentation to show they meet the financial or academic requirements. However, they do still need to prepare these, as UKVI could ask them to show the documents at any point in the visa application process. If an ATAS certificate is required, they will still have to submit it.

Students still need to meet all visa application requirements, including the need to maintain funds for at least 28 days in their UK bank account.
Any application for a master's programme of 13 months or less will automatically be considered under the pilot. It is not possible to opt out.

Refer to: Frequently asked questions
Your online visa application form

- **Get started** – now that you have got all your documentation organised, you can start to complete the [UKVI online visa application form](#)!

- **CAS** – you can start to fill in the online application form before you have your [Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies](#) (CAS) but you won’t be able to submit it until you have received your CAS. You will receive your new CAS after you receive the results of the pre-sessional course.

- **How much** – there is a charge payable for the application. The cost varies depending on the level of service required.

! You should submit your online application form the day before you attend the Visa Checking Event. You only have a limited time to send your documents to UKVI after submitting your online form and our advisers will help you check them at the Event

! **We strongly suggest you use our office address in your application.** Tick the box that states: ‘I want to receive mail at a different address’ and then enter the following address exactly:

**C/O Georgina Asser/Sarah Sherwin**  
**Student Visa Services**  
**Ground floor, Senate House**  
**Tyndall Avenue**  
**Bristol**  
**BS8 1TH**

This means that your passport, visa and documents will be returned to our office once your visa has been granted. We will email you when they are ready to be collected. If you do not use our address, we will not be able to help you if your documents go missing

! You will not have your passport during this period, so do not plan any travel outside the UK!
1: ‘Low-risk’ students and differentiation arrangements

- If you are a national of any of the following countries you are able to apply under differentiation arrangements:

Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Barbados, Botswana, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, The Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, The Maldives, Mexico, New Zealand, Qatar, Serbia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, British National (Overseas), Hong Kong, Macau SAR, Taiwan (must hold a passport issued by Taiwan with the number of the identification card issued by the competent authority in Taiwan)

- What does this mean?

You can submit your application without including your qualification certificates and financial evidence.

BUT:

✓ You must be able to meet the requirements of the application and to have the evidence ready at short notice in case it is requested by UKVI. This means that you must have your financial documents prepared and have your qualification certificates and any translations ready.

❗ Your visa application will be refused if you are unable to provide these documents if they are requested by UKVI, within the given time frame.
2: Services, fees and visa processing times

There are three different levels of service available when you make your visa application. Please note, if you choose the Standard or Priority Service, you will not have your passport during the visa processing period as it will be with UKVI until they have made a decision about your visa application. This means that during this period you will not be able to travel outside the UK.

• Standard service
  - The cost is £475
  - You must send your documents to UKVI within 15 days of submitting and paying for your application online.
  - UKVI state that this service normally takes 8 weeks from the day you submit and pay for your online visa application to receive the outcome of your application and your documents. However, this is not guaranteed. UKVI can take up to 6 months to decide the outcome of a visa application.

• Priority service
  - The cost is £952
  - You must request a priority reference number before you are able to submit your application. Read about the Priority service here: www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/extend-your-visa.
  - You should only submit and pay for your application online the day before you are due to attend the Visa Checking Event. This is because your documents must reach UKVI no later than two days after you submit the online application form.
  - If you have submitted your application using the Priority service, you must email us to let us know. Please email student-visa-advice@bristol.ac.uk – put your name, student number, class number and the words ‘Pre-sessional Priority application’ as the subject of your email. Please tell us the date you submitted your application.
If you do not let us know that you are using the Priority service, there may be a delay before we can return your documents.

Add the word “PRIORITY” to the first line of our office address. This will also help us avoid any delay in getting your documents back to you.

• Premium service
  o The cost is £1085
  o You do not send your documents to UKVI. You book an appointment at a Premium Service Centre (the nearest one to Bristol is in Cardiff). When you go to the appointment you must take your documents with you.
  o You should receive the outcome of your application on the same day or the next day after your appointment.
  o You should receive your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) card within 2 weeks of receiving the outcome of your application.
  o If you have submitted your application using the Premium service, you must email us to let us know. Please email student-visa-advice@bristol.ac.uk – put your name, student number, class number and the words ‘Pre-sessional Premium appointment’ as the subject of your email. Please tell us the date, time and location of your appointment.

! Do not book any flights until you have your new visa (BRP card) and your passport.

! Please note: we cannot speed up the visa application process nor can we influence the outcome of visa application decisions. If you need to make travel plans in the near future, you may wish to consider using the Priority or Premium service.
3: Submit and pay for your online visa application

Are you ready to submit your online visa application?

✓ You have received your new CAS

✓ You have got all your documents ready – your financial evidence, your qualifications and translations, your photos and your ATAS certificate (if necessary)

✓ You have held the required money (tuition fees + living expenses) in your UK account for at least 28 consecutive days

✓ You know the date and time to attend the Visa Checking Event

✓ You have decided which level of service you want (Standard, Priority or Premium)

Let’s do this!

✓ Submit your online visa application

✓ Pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) which costs £150 per year and respond to any emails from UKVI

✓ Pay the visa application fee

✓ Download, save and print the three documents at the end of your completed application: the document checklist, the biometric enrolment letter, and the completed application form.

What next?

There are two key things left for you to do:

✓ Post your documents to UKVI after they have been checked at the Visa Checking Event

✓ Enrol your biometric information – this means you need to give your fingerprints and have your photo taken at the Post Office.
Visa Checking Event

- **When** – the Visa Checking Event will take place in September. You **must** attend the event on the **day and time** that you have been given.

! We are only able to check your documents at this scheduled event, and not at any other time.

✓ We will also complete your pre-registration checks at the Visa Checking Event so that you are ready to attend your registration event for your main course of study.

**Make sure you are ready for the Visa Checking Event**

- **Submit** – your [online visa application](#) and pay your fee. Make sure that you have carefully followed the instructions for your chosen [service level](#)

- **Documents** – download and save the three documents at the end of your completed application: the [document checklist](#), the [biometric enrolment letter](#) and the [completed application form](#)

- Keep these documents safe – you may need them in the future!

- **Print** – the three documents and bring them to the Visa Checking Event with your other documents

- **Print** – your University of Bristol certificate of registration and pre-registration checklist. Bring these to the Event too

- **Ready to go** – our Visa Advisers will check your documents and make sure that you have got everything you need
1: Documents required at the Visa Checking Event

! **Remember** – all documents must be original documents

You must bring:

- Your passport(s)
- 2 new identical photographs
- ATAS certificate (if required)
- 2 x UKVI application document checklist (print out two copies)
- Completed application form
- Qualifications and translations
- University certificate of registration and pre-registration checklist
- Financial evidence: bank statement/s or sponsor letter
2: Post your documents to UKVI

• **When** – once the Visa Adviser has checked your documents, you will be given an envelope which you must use to send your visa application to UKVI.

! **It is your responsibility to send your documents to UKVI in the timeframe stated on your document checklist**

• **Post** – take your documents to the Post Office to send the envelope using the Special Delivery service. This is a tracked service and it costs £7.25.

• **Keep your receipt** – the Post Office will give you a receipt with a tracking number. Keep this safe as you may need it in the next few weeks!

• You can use any Post Office to send your documents to UKVI. These are the closest ones:

  o The Galleries, Broadmead, BS1 3XX
  o 3 Cotham Hill, Cotham, BS6 6LD
  o 22 Regent Street, Clifton, BS8 4HG
  o 169 Whiteladies Road, Clifton, BS8 2RL
Enrolling your biometric information

• **What is this?** You must provide your biometric information (fingerprints, photograph and signature) as part of your visa application. The biometric enrolment letter that you received at the end of your completed application explains the process – read the letter carefully.

! **It is your responsibility to enrol your biometric information in the timeframe stated in your biometric enrolment letter**

! The photo that will be used on your BRP card (your new visa) will be the photo taken when you enrol your biometric information.

• **Where** – you must go to the Post Office in The Galleries, Broadmead, Bristol BS1 3XX. It is open from Monday – Saturday, 9am – 5.30pm. You do not need an appointment but there may be long waiting times. Make sure that you go early so that you can successfully enrol your information.

  • Smaller Post Offices do not offer the biometric enrolment service.

  • **Remember** – you must take the biometric enrolment letter with you, as it contains a barcode which will be scanned to link your biometric information to your visa application.

  • **Cost** – the service costs £19.20. You will need to pay in cash or using a debit card – the Post Office does not accept credit cards.

  • The Post Office will securely send your information to UKVI.
Your new visa and your BRP card

- **Documents** – if your visa application is successful, UKVI will send the following documents to the address you stated in your application:
  - The decision letter (keep this for your own records)
  - The documents that you sent to UKVI with your application
  - Your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) card

- **Collection** – if you stated our office address in your application, we will receive and check your documents. We will email you to tell you when you can come to collect them.

- You can only collect your own documents. You cannot collect documents for anybody else.

! **Remember** – do not book any flights until you have your new visa (BRP card) and your passport.

! **Please note**: UKVI can take up to 6 months to decide the outcome of a visa application. We cannot speed up the visa application process nor can we influence the outcome of visa application decisions. If you need to make travel plans in the near future, you may wish to consider using the [Priority or Premium service](#).
About your BRP card

! You will be issued with a BRP card. **THE BRP CARD IS YOUR VISA.**

! There will be no new visa in your passport.

! You **must look after your BRP card** very carefully. It is the document which proves your permission to be in the UK.

! You will need your BRP card when you travel outside the UK to show to the UK immigration authorities when you return to the UK.

! Take care of your BRP card when you are travelling outside the UK. If it is lost or stolen, you will have to apply for a replacement BRP visa to allow you to travel back into the UK. This is difficult, expensive and time-consuming. Then, when you are back in the UK, you will have to apply for a replacement BRP card.

! Take care of your BRP card when you are in the UK. If it is lost or stolen, you will have to apply for a replacement BRP card which takes approximately 8 weeks and you will not be able to travel outside the UK during this period.

! **Keep your BRP card safe** – keep it with your passport. Do not carry it with you every day – no-one will stop you in the street to ask to see it.

Refer to: [More information about BRP cards](#)

Refer to: [What to do if you lose your BRP card](#)
Conditions of your new Tier 4 visa

• Police registration

Some nationalities will need to register with the police upon receiving the BRP card. Please see our website for details and follow the instructions there to complete the Police Registration:
  o www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/tier-4/registering-with-the-police/

• Working in the UK

Your new visa will allow you to work in the UK but there are conditions. It is a criminal offence to break these conditions. Please see our website for details:
  o www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/work-visas/

• Your responsibilities as a Tier 4 Student visa holder

The purpose of your Tier 4 visa is study. There are conditions attached to this. Please see our website for details:
  o www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/tier-4/responsibilities/
Recap – Action Checklist with Required Dates

### JUNE/JULY
- **OPEN UK BANK ACCOUNT IN YOUR NAME**
- **PUT ENOUGH MONEY IN YOUR ACCOUNT FOR YOUR TUITION FEES + £9135 LIVING COSTS**
- **ATTEND VISA LECTURE AND Q&A SESSION**
- **APPLY FOR ATAS CERTIFICATE (IF REQUIRED)**

### AUGUST
- **All month**
  - **KEEP YOUR FEES + LIVING COSTS IN YOUR ACCOUNT**
- **August 1st half**
  - **GET YOUR ORIGINAL QUALIFICATION CERTIFICATES**
  - **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ACCEPTABLE TRANSLATIONS**
- **August 2nd half**
  - **GET YOUR NEW PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN**
  - **LOOK AT OUR WEBSITE TO FIND OUT WHEN YOU MUST ATTEND THE VISA CHECKING EVENT**

### SEPTEMBER
- **First week**
  - **GET A BANK STATEMENT SHOWING YOU HAVE HELD THE REQUIRED MONEY FOR 28 CONSECUTIVE DAYS**
- **Early Sept**
  - **SUBMIT YOUR ONLINE VISA APPLICATION AND PAY THE IHS AND VISA APPLICATION FEE**
  - **ATTEND THE VISA CHECKING EVENT AND POST YOUR DOCUMENTS TO UKVI**
  - **ENROL YOUR BIOMETRIC INFORMATION AT THE POST OFFICE**
Frequently asked questions

Your application for your new Tier 4 visa

*Can I have my documents checked face to face with an adviser?*

Qualifications and translations – will be checked at the Visa Checking Event only. All students will have their qualifications and translations checked at this event. Before this event you should check your own documents and ensure that they meet the requirements given in this handbook.

Low-risk and pilot students – will not have financial documents checked. Although they will not be sent with your application, you should prepare them according to the instructions in this handbook in case they are requested later by the UKVI. You should then check them yourself and ensure that they meet the requirements given in this handbook. At the Visa Checking Event you will be expected to sign a declaration confirming that you have prepared the financial documents. If the UKVI request your documents after you have submitted your application, you must contact us first so that we can check your documents before sending them.

Non-low risk/non-pilot students – will have an opportunity to have documents checked before sending them to the UKVI as they are required when you submit your application. We will run a specific Visa Checking Event for you and will email you a time and date for this event nearer the time.

Unacceptable documents - if we check your documents at the Visa Checking Event and they do not meet the requirements, you will have a limited amount of time to get correct, acceptable, documents – 15 working days (if you use standard service), 2 working days (if you use priority service) or your appointment date (if you use premium service).

*What if I want to go back to my home country after the pre-sessional course to apply for my new visa?*

We strongly recommend that you make your new visa application in the UK, with our help, after the pre-sessional course. If you go back home, you might not get your new visa in time for the start of term. This may mean that we are not able to register you and you will not be able to start your course. Therefore, we suggest that you make your visa application in the UK, with the help of our team, in September.

If you decide to make your new visa application in your home country, you must inform Student Visa Services. Please send an email to student-visa-advice@bristol.ac.uk – include your student number, class number and ‘pre-sessional overseas’ in the subject line.

*What if I want to go back to my home country after the pre-sessional course, then return to the UK and apply for my new visa when I return to the UK?*

We strongly recommend that you make your new visa application in the UK, with our help, after the pre-sessional course. Although it is possible to travel back into the UK on your
current pre-sessional visa and then submit your visa application when you come back to the UK, there a number of issues in choosing this option. Firstly, you will have to travel with a copy of your new CAS (issued approximately 4 September) to prove to border immigration staff that you have continued studies in the UK as you may be questioned about your return on a visa that is about to expire. Secondly, you would need to ensure that you submit your visa application when you get back to the UK before your course commences and before your visa expires, this does not give you much time.

Finally, if you choose to do this, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to help you check your application when you return as we will be busy at this time assisting other students. The time we have dedicated to checking pre-sessional student visa applications is at the Visa Checking Event which will be held on 5th, 6th and 7th September (you will be emailed a time for your course). Outside these dedicated times we cannot guarantee that we can help you apply for your visa and you will have limited time to submit your own visa application and send all your documents before the course commences and before your current visa expires.

**What if I want to take an external exam in September or October?**
You must inform Student Visa Services so that a member of staff can advise you. Please send an email to student-visa-advice@bristol.ac.uk – include your name, student number, class number and ‘pre-sessional external exam’ in the subject line.

**Will I have to pay a fee to the University for the Visa Checking Event?**
No! We will not charge you a fee.

You will have to pay for: the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) and the visa application fee (when submitting your application online), the Royal Mail Special Delivery fee (when posting your documents to UKVI) and the biometric enrolment fee (when enrolling your biometric information at the Post Office).

**Your financial documents**

*Why have I been told I must open a UK bank account? I used my overseas statement when I applied for my pre-sessional visa, why can’t I use it now?*
Overseas statements are acceptable for applying overseas and in the UK but they are not always understood by UKVI staff in the UK. Some visas have been refused when students have used an overseas bank account. The risk of refusal is also higher if parents’ bank statements are used as you are then required to send additional documents (including consent letter and birth certificate).

*What do I do if I miss the deadline 1 August to put my money in the bank?*
Put the total required amount of money in your bank account as soon as possible. Be aware that you should not submit and pay for your visa application online until the total required amount of money has been in your bank account for at least 28 consecutive days.

*Do I need an original bank statement?*
Yes, you will need an original statement from your bank. Scans and photocopies are not acceptable.

**Can I print my own bank statement?**
Yes, you can print your own bank statement, but you must then go to the bank to have every side of each page of the statement stamped by the bank. Sometimes banks refuse to do this – in that case, ask for the bank to print the statement for you and check that it meets the requirements.

**Can the bank print my bank statement?**
Yes, the bank can print the statement for you, but you should check that the full account number is on the statement. Sometimes bank statements from certain banks do not show the full account number and this does not meet UKVI requirements.

**How can I check that my bank statement meets UKVI requirements?**
You can check your bank statement against the information given above and on our website. Our website has full details of the format the financial evidence should take: [www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/tier-4/money/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/tier-4/money/)

**After I have obtained my bank statement, can I spend my money?**
It is acceptable to use the money to pay for your tuition fees and/or living expenses (as that is what it is intended for) but you should not transfer it straight back to another account leaving the account you used for your visa application empty.

**Qualifications and translations**

**Can I use a copy of my degree certificate?**
No, copies of certificates are not accepted by UKVI. All documents you submit must be original documents.

**Can I use my University’s English translation of my certificate?**
No, this translation will not be acceptable for your visa application. UKVI has translation requirements and translations by your University are not acceptable.

**I submitted my University’s English translation of my certificate when I applied for my pre-sessional visa overseas and I was granted my visa, why can’t I use it now?**
Your certificate and translation were not required documents for your pre-sessional course visa. The University assessed you for the pre-sessional course on your English qualification and that is all UKVI staff would have been looking for. So, even if you submitted your University’s translation, it would not have been looked at by UKVI as it was not required.

**I only have my University’s English translation, what can I do?**
You must get a new translation that meets UKVI requirements – please see the Translation section for further information.

_How can I check that my translation meets UKVI requirements?_
You can check this yourself. The translation must contain all the information given [here](#). If it does not contain all the information, you must get a translation that meets UKVI requirements.

_My photograph is on my original certificate, but it is not on my translation, what can I do?_
You do not need to do anything. Although it is on your certificate, your photograph does not need to be on your translation.

**Photographs**

_Why can’t I use the photos I had taken in my home country?_
The photos must be taken in the UK. They must have been taken less than one month before you submit your visa application. They must meet the requirements above.

_When I have new photos taken, what photo type should I choose?_
You should choose photos for passport/driving licence, NOT photos for visa.

_Where can I have my photos taken locally?_
In photo booths at the following locations:
- Richmond Building, Queen’s Road, BS8 1LN
- Clifton Down Shopping Centre, Whiteladies Road, BS8 2NN
- The Galleries, Broadmead, BS1 3XX

**Tier 4 Visa Pilot Information**

_What does a streamlined visa application process mean for eligible students?_
The main change is that you do not need to include any documentation with your application to show that you meet the financial requirement.

You also do not have to include evidence of your academic qualifications with your visa application.

However, you still need to meet the Tier 4 rules and prepare your documents. UKVI could ask you to show the documents at any time in the visa application process. You must wait until you have held the required amount of money in your UK bank account for 28 consecutive days, before you submit your Tier 4 visa application.

Please note: If you are required to submit an ATAS certificate and/or a TB screening certificate you must include these with your visa application.
If I don’t have to supply financial documents with my visa application, does this mean I don’t need to hold money for 28 days before I apply?

No. It is essential that you meet the Tier 4 visa requirements at the time you submit your Tier 4 visa application online, including the requirement to maintain funds for 28 days. Although students applying under the pilot will not have to submit these documents to UKVI, you may be asked for them and UKVI may do spot checks. If you are asked for documents and cannot provide them, your visa application will be refused. At the Visa Checking Event you will be expected to sign a declaration confirming that you have prepared the financial documents.

What happens if I submit documents when they are not required? Will they still be considered?

Yes. If you submit financial documents or qualification documents with your application when they are not required, they will be assessed in the normal way. If they do not meet the Tier 4 visa requirements, your application will be refused.

Do I still need to submit an ATAS certificate (if my subject requires this) or a Tuberculosis (TB) screening certificate (if required in my country)?

If your course requires an ATAS certificate, you must apply for and obtain it before submitting your visa application. You should then send the ATAS with your other documents to UKVI.

If you are a national of a country that is required to submit a TB certificate, you will need a certificate if you are applying in your home country. If you are applying in the UK, you will not require a certificate.

My dependant is planning on coming to the UK but will make their application later. Will they still be included in the pilot?

No. If your dependant is not applying at the same time as you they will be required to include full evidence of their finances with their visa application.

Will my visa application be processed more quickly?

The plan is that the processing of application will take less time, as there will be fewer documents to assess. However, faster processing times cannot be guaranteed.

Can I opt out of the pilot?

No. If you are applying for a Tier 4 visa to study a master’s programme that is 13 months or less at the University of Bristol then your application will automatically be considered under the pilot.