

Frequently Asked Questions – in-country applications

Alongside this letter you will have received your Certificate of Sponsorship. Please see the guidance below regarding the visa application process.

How do I apply for the visa?

- **For standard Tier 2 applications, apply online here:** <https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier2-general>

If you wish to **expedite your visa application** at an additional cost, there are 'value added services' which are available to select as part of the online application process, which you can access locally.

You can find further information here:

<https://www.soprasteria.com/docs/librariesprovider41/ukvi/ukvi-app-services.pdf>

- **In all cases, you must apply for your new visa before your current visa expires.**
- **Once you submit your visa application, you cannot leave the UK for any reason until the application is granted, or your application will be automatically withdrawn by immigration.**

How much will the visa cost?

Please see here for up-to-date guidance on visa fee costs: <https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/overview>

How long will the application process take?

UK Visas and Immigration provide for an 8 week service standard for all online applications. The 8 weeks starts from the date you enrol your biometrics at a [UKVCAS centre](#).

For applications made through the Priority and Premium services, you will receive your new Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) within 10 working days.

Can the University help with my visa costs?

Yes. The University operates a loan scheme for all current and prospective staff applying for Tier 2 visas, covering common costs associated with making such an application, including the cost of visas for dependants.

You will find a loan application form attached to the email which contains your CoS.

Further details of the scheme can be found here:

https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/visa_loan_scheme_guidance.pdf

What is the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)?

The payment of the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) is mandatory for all non-EEA nationals who are issued a visa of **more than 6 months** in length. It is an additional charge, over and above the visa fee and must be made up-front at the time of the visa application. Payment of the surcharge will ensure that you have **full access to the NHS** on the same terms as a permanent UK resident.

The surcharge will cost an additional **£400 per person per year that your visa is valid**. For example, if you apply for a three year visa, you will be charged an additional £1,200. If you have dependants, the surcharge will also apply to their visa applications on the same basis. The full cost must be paid at the point of application.

As part of the online visa application process, you will be prompted to pay the surcharge via a separate online portal. After payment of the charge, you will automatically be issued a long reference number which will start 'IHS'. When prompted in the online visa application, you must enter this reference number in order to proceed. For further guidance, please see the UKVI webpages: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-health-surcharge-information-for-migrants>.

What documents do I need to submit?

After you submit your application online, you will be provided with an information sheet which confirms which documents you need to submit.

What are the conditions of holding a Tier 2 visa?

Please see the UKVI webpages here: <https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general>

You are also permitted to undertake supplementary employment in line with the conditions here: <http://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-services/immigration/visas-and-right-work-uk/time-limited-right-work/tier-2tier-5-supplementary>

What happens if my application is refused?

You must notify your recruiting department immediately if your visa is refused.

If you are refused, there is no separate appeal process, but you may be able to lodge what is known as an 'Administrative Review'. Please see any correspondence from the Home Office that accompanies your refusal letter.

Switching, Extending or Changing?

As you are making a Tier 2 application from inside the UK, the type of application you make will be classed as either a **Switching, Extension or Change of Employment application**.

Please see the appropriate guidance below, only **one** of which will be applicable to you:

Switching – Page 3

Extensions – Page 5

Changes of Employment – Page 6

For guidance on **Settlement/ILR**, please see page 7

Switching

- ❖ This section is only applicable to you if you are already in the UK and hold a visa in a **different** category (commonly a Tier 1 or Tier 4 visa)

When can I apply for the visa?

In all cases you must apply for your new visa before your current visa expires.

If you are a **Tier 4 Higher Education student**, you can switch to Tier 2 only when you have either:

- completed, or applying no more than 3 months before the expected completion date for a UK bachelor's or master's degree; or
- completed, or applying no more than 3 months before the expected completion date for a UK Postgraduate Certificate in Education or Professional Graduate Diploma of Education; or
- completed a minimum of 12 months study in the UK towards a UK PhD.

If you hold **any other visa type**, there are no other limitations on when you can apply.

How do I meet the English language requirements?

Please see the guidance on our webpages here:

https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/tier_2_english_language_guidance_v.4.pdf

How do I meet the Maintenance requirements?

Please check the final entry on your Certificate of Sponsorship which will confirm if the recruiting department has agreed to certify maintenance for you. If they have, then no further action is required.

If they have not, then you must ensure you have a bank/savings account in your name that holds at least £945. You must have had this in your bank account for **a full 90 days before you apply**. If the balance of your account has fallen below £945 for even a single day in that 90 day period, your visa application will be refused.

I'm already employed by the University. Can I continue working if my visa expires?

Yes, but only if you made your new visa application before your current visa expires.

To ensure the University can legally continue to employ you whilst your Tier 2 application is pending:

- We **must** see evidence of your application in line with the guidance you can find on our webpages: <https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/visa-expiries-refusals-and-appeals>
- You **must** also sign and return the form entitled 'ECS employee permission', which you can download [here](#); we are legally required to verify your ongoing visa application with the Home Office, via the Employer Checking Service.

Please send all documentation to the Compliance Team:
Compliance.Team@admin.cam.ac.uk

I'm a Tier 4 student. When can I start work?

If you've completed your degree:

As soon as you've **submitted and paid for** your Tier 2 visa application, you can commence full-time permanent employment in the role for which the CoS has been assigned whilst your visa application is pending.

The Compliance Team will require evidence that you have completed your degree and that you have applied for your Tier 2 visa. Please contact the Compliance Team for further guidance: complianceteam@admin.cam.ac.uk.

Once your Tier 2 application has been granted, you **must** present your passport and your new BRP to your departmental administrator as soon as possible.

If you've not yet completed your degree (e.g. you have submitted your thesis):

In the first instance, please speak to your departmental administrator.

It is possible for you to start work before your Tier 2 visa has been issued, but **you are still subject to the working conditions of your Tier 4 visa**. This will vary depending on your circumstances. Full guidance can be found here: <http://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-services/immigration/visas-and-right-work-uk/time-limited-right-work/tier-4-general-working>

- Before a contract can be issued, you **must** have had your passport and Tier 4 visa/BRP checked and copied by your departmental administrator.

Extensions

❖ **This section is only applicable to you if:**

- You currently hold a Tier 2 visa; **and**
- You are currently working for the University of Cambridge; **and**
- You will continue to work in the same occupation/SOC Code.

When can I apply for the visa?

You cannot apply **more than 3 months** before your current Tier 2 visa expires. However, you must apply before your current visa expires.

Do I need to meet the English language and maintenance requirements?

No. As you already hold a Tier 2 visa you are exempt from meeting these requirements for this application.

Can I continue working for the University if my visa expires?

Yes, but only if you made your new visa application before your current visa expires.

To ensure the University can legally continue to employ you whilst your Tier 2 application is pending:

- We **must** see copies of evidence of your application, in line with the guidance you can find on our webpages: <https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/visa-expiries-refusals-and-appeals>
- You **must** also sign and return the form entitled 'ECS employee permission', which you can download [here](#); we are legally required to verify your ongoing visa application with the Home Office, via the Employer Checking Service.

Please send all documentation to the Compliance Team:
Compliance.Team@admin.cam.ac.uk

Failure to provide the above documentation before your current visa expires may result in the termination of your contract.

Change of Employment

❖ **This section is only applicable to you if:**

- You currently hold a Tier 2 visa; **and either:**
 - You are currently working for a different employer; **or**
 - You are currently employed by the University of Cambridge but are moving to a new role in a different SOC Code.

When can I apply for the visa?

You must apply before your current visa expires, but there are no restrictions beyond this. Please also see the section below on “When can I start work”?

Do I need to meet the English language and maintenance requirements?

No. As you already hold a Tier 2 visa you are exempt from meeting these requirements for this application.

When can I start work?

You **must** have obtained your new Tier 2 BRP before you can start work in our new role, and this has been seen and verified by your departmental administrator.

It is possible for you to continue working for your previous employer or, if you are currently employed by the University of Cambridge, working in your previous role **up until the start date of the new job**, as stated on your new CoS, provided the Tier 2 visa you held for your previous employer/role has not expired.

When/how do I become eligible for Settlement in the UK?

After you have spent five years in the UK on a Tier 2 (General) visa you are eligible to apply for Settlement (also known as Indefinite Leave to Remain). If you are successful in gaining settlement, you are no longer subject to visa restrictions in the UK and you will have the unlimited right to work.

In order to become eligible after the minimum five year period, you need to be aware of the following criteria:

- For absences from the UK which occurred **before** 11 January 2018, you cannot have more than 180 days absence in a consecutive 12 month period.
- For absences from the UK which occurred **after** 11 January 2018, you cannot spend **more than 180 days outside the UK in any 12 month rolling period**.
- Both of the above include all personal and business-related travel, unless there are compelling compassionate reasons for travel.
- If you are working in a PhD level role (which comprises all University researchers, Lecturers and Professors), you are **not** required to meet the minimum salary threshold when you apply for Settlement. **All other** University appointments through Tier 2 will have to meet this requirement at the point you apply for Settlement.

It is also possible for you to gain settlement after you have lived in the UK for **10 years** holding **any type of visa** (except visitor visas). For further guidance on this route, please contact the Compliance Team.