Applying for a UK TIER-4 Visa: Process Overview and Workshop
Agenda

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Important Terms

**London Personal Page** – A website/database managed by the BUSA London Office

**United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI)** – The government agency that issues the TIER 4 visa and manages all immigration matters in the UK.

**CAS number** - The number is issued by the UK government and is distributed by the London Office. The CAS number is tied to your passport information and to you as an applicant.

**Biometrics and Application Support Centers** – You have your biometrics, fingerprints and picture, taken at the local USCIS Application Support Center. They do not evaluate Tier-4 applications during this appointment. This may differ when applying abroad.

**VFS Global** – UKVI partners with VFS Global, a commercial company for its expediting and shipping services.
What Is the TIER 4 General Student visa and do I have to apply for it?

• The Tier-4 General Student visa is a sticker in your passport issued by the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration office that allows you to participate in the London Internship Program.

• All London Internship Participants must have the TIER 4 visa sticker in their passport when they arrive in London to begin their program. This will be verified when you check in on-site. Only EEA citizens are exempt from applying.

• This visa allows you to study and intern in the UK. It does not allow you to work for pay.
Before You Apply:

- **Take a look at your passport. Will it still be valid 6 months after the program end date?**

  If not, you need to apply or renew your passport, strongly consider expediting the application so your visa application is not delayed too long. You will need your passport in hand to apply.

- **We highly recommend all students apply WITHIN the United States.** If you are applying in your home country, you may need to provide additional documentation for your visa application. Check with your local UK Consulate for any specific requirements. BU Study Abroad cannot advise you on how to apply for the Tier-4 outside the United States.
TIER 4 Visa Application: Step One

Upload a copy of your passport signature and picture pages to the London Personal Page Visa and Passport tab, and input the corresponding passport information in the fields provided.

Once the upload is complete, you can request a CAS number. You should later receive that number on your London Personal Page, if you're within the 90 day window.

You will need a Certificate of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) number to complete your Tier 4 Visa Application. Upload your passport’s photo page and complete ALL of the section above then, click the ‘Request CAS’ button below to upload.

Copy and paste the responses below to the Sponsor section of your online form at: https://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk

Note: Please see your CAS number below

Maintenance and Fees

- How much are the fees for your course of study?
- Have any of your course fees been paid?
- Do you have an established presence in the UK? No
- Accommodation fees paid to your sponsor?
- Do you receive support from a financial sponsor? No
- Remaining fees and maintenance due for payment?
- Do you have money in your own name? Yes

Points Claimed

- Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies: 30
- Maintenance: 10
- Total: 40

You must have your Tier 4 Visa by: Thursday 4 January

Visa Application Progress

- Biometric Appointment: 15/11/2010
- Date Mailed: 03/11/2010
- Passport Returned: 24/11/2010

Use the space below to update us on problems with your application...

By checking this box, I acknowledge my responsibility to submit all stages of my visa application to the consulate for processing. Failure to receive my visa well before the start of the programme will result in withdrawal, with liability to cover

Log Out
Create an account for your visa application on the UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) website. There are 4 parts to complete in order.

- **Questionnaire:** using the Sample Visa Application as a guide, fill out and submit a Tier-4 General Student visa application.
  - You will also have to confirm some (BRP) collection information and Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) information. It is just a formality but must be completed to advance.

- **Biometrics:** Schedule a biometrics appointment after you submit your online visa application. This appointment can only be made using the online application system.

- **Payment:** Pay the visa fee of approx. $450.00 after you schedule your biometrics appointment. The charge will come from the UK, so you may want to alert your bank or credit card company before you place the payment to avoid fraud alerts.

- **Print:** Print your completed online application and biometrics confirmation form from the online application system.
Attend your biometrics appointment. During this appointment, no evaluation of your visa application will take place. Electronic finger prints and a photo will be taken and stored in the US State Department database. To attend this appointment, you will need to bring:

- Your actual passport, signed.
- Biometrics Confirmation Form
- 2nd form of government issued photo ID (driver’s license is fine)
- Printed Tier-4 visa application

**NOTE:** Your full visa application needs to be sent to the consulate for processing **within 5 days of this appointment.** *Note (Those doing group mailings can have biometrics within two weeks of submission)*
Tier 4 Visa Application: Step Four

Assemble all application and supplemental materials. Use the checklist provided to make sure that you have all the necessary documents and their required characteristics.

Helpful Tips:

- You do not need to provide a photo! Your photo from your Biometrics Appointment will be used on your Tier-4 UK visa sticker.

- Only use VFS Global or UPS for your return envelope/shipping. It will be rejected by the UK Consulate in New York otherwise. We recommend using the VFS Global website for shipping (VFS Global is a trusted partner with the UK Government)

NOTE: that any deviation from the checklist could result in severe delays or a rejection of your visa application.
Tier 4 Visa Application: Step Five

Submit your full visa application to the British Consulate General in New York.

- If you are applying in the US, you must use the New York consulate. The only way to submit your full visa application is by mail - in person appointments are not allowed except in extreme emergencies for a substantial fee.

- Applications are typically processed in 14-21 business days.

- If your application is denied, you will need to fully re-apply, which includes re-submitting Biometric Data, the Application Fee, and obtaining a new CAS number.

- In all cases, you should be sure that you will be at the address you indicate as your return address for at least 4 weeks after mailing. Please keep in mind winter and summer breaks, and your campus’s mail forwarding process when selecting an address.
There are three methods for submitting your full application:

1. **Use a group mailing through the BU Study Abroad office.** Program managers will look for basic errors, and mail them in a group to the New York Consulate. The advantages of this method are:
   - Increased accuracy of your application
   - Occasionally slightly faster processing times.

If you need to expedite your visa application, please submit independently. **Group mailing deadline is June 28 or July 19.**

2. **Mail your visa application independently** to the British Consulate General in New York. This method might be right for you if:
   - You have international travel plans
   - Need to expedite your application
   - You are unable to submit your application for a group mailing

You may request a time to meet with your program manager, either in person or by phone, to go over your full application for accuracy.
3. Schedule a “premium appointment” at the UK Consulate in Boston or another “premium” location (San Francisco, New York, Houston, Washington DC, Miami, Los Angeles, Chicago).

There are select UK Consulates in the US where you can attend your biometrics and submit your Tier-4 application in person at one time - these are called premium appointments and centers. These consulates will send your documents to the UK Consulate in New York, but do require additional fees above and beyond the cost of the Tier-4 visa. Students selecting premium appointments will be required to attend their biometrics at the application center and will submit their applications in person to the UK Consulate instead of by mail.

Fees vary depending on the package chosen ($235 - $1,645) so please be very careful to read through what is included in your package before purchasing and scheduling your premium appointment with a UK Consulate.

This method might be right for you if:

• You wish to have your biometrics and application submission at the same time
• You are late to submit your application
• You do not wish to expedite
• You are unable to submit your application for a group mailing or on your own
Faster processing is available for an extra fee of approx. $210.00. Expediting using the Priority Service takes approx. 6-10 business days from the date of receipt (excluding mail time).

- Priority Service should be purchased **before mailing your full application**.
- Instructions must be followed exactly, or expedited processing will be refused.
- Expediting services are through a third-party company, VFS Global. **Do not** use another expediting company as it will cost more and can delay your application. VFS Global is the official partner of the British Consulate.
Tier 4 Visa Application: What happens Next?

- Update your London Personal Page with your visa progress: your biometrics date, the date your visa was mailed, and the date you receive your visa back.
- Read the Visa FAQ if you run into issues while applying. If you are still having issues, contact your Program Manager.
- Watch your email! The British Consulate will likely email you when your full application has been opened, and when your visa has been issued. They may also email you if they find a problem with your application, as well as time sensitive instructions for resolving the problem. Follow any instructions they send exactly to ensure your visa is issued.
- Check your visa! Issued visas will be mailed back to you. When you receive your visa, be sure to check that all the information is correct. If something is wrong, alert your program manager right away.
- Plan Ahead! Tier 4 visas are only valid 7 days prior to, and 7 days after the program start and end dates. You must plan your travel to and from the UK accordingly, or risk potentially severe repercussions.
Traveling to the UK: your passport, visa and supporting documentation

When arriving in the UK, make sure that you have:

• Your passport with Tier-4 Visa
• Immigration letter, download from your London Personal Page
• Directions to your flat in South Kensington, downloaded from your Personal Page.
• You may only enter up to 7 days prior, and must leave the UK no later than 7 days after the program end date. Most students can then re-enter on a travel visa.
• Do Not fly through Ireland as a connecting flight into the UK – They will not be able to verify your visa!!
Application Tips!

#1: Plan Ahead:

- Think about how much time you need – do you need to renew a passport?
- Are you traveling abroad before your semester in London? Do you need to expedite your visa?

#2: Only use the BU instructions/VFS Global

#3: Follow the instructions literally:

- Triple check before mailing – this could be the difference between going or not.
- Apply as early as possible!

#4: If you forgot something, say something! Get in touch with your Program Manager.
International Students

- You may be interviewed by phone or video-call.

- The London Personal Page denotes an English Language Requirement section – please DO NOT fill out this section. English Language Tests are NO LONGER required for international students applying in the US.

- We strongly do not recommend applying outside of the USA, as the visa application process may be different. If you are applying from your home country, you are solely responsible for your local UK Consulate’s specific visa requirements.

- Schengen Visa:
  - Non-EEA citizens, exceptions apply
  - For planned travel to continental Europe
  - Separate visa, apply after you receive the Tier-4
Questions & Wrap-Up

• Questions?

• London Calling: Watch out for future communications from Boston and London.

• Contact information:
  • Corey Blackmar: coreys@bu.edu
  • Shannon Williams: sw1@bu.edu
  • Student Life (London)
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