

Information Notes for Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur

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Introduction

This guide is for candidates who have been recommended for endorsement under Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur. It is intended to provide an overview of endorsement under the scheme to help you consider and prepare your visa application and explain the conditions you must adhere to whilst endorsed by the University.

NB while this information is accurate, to the best of our knowledge, at the time of writing, the immigration rules and guidance change and we may not be able to inform you directly of any changes that may affect you and your visa application. Please familiarise yourself with the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur information and Policy Guidance on the gov.uk website: www.gov.uk/tier-1-graduate-entrepreneur-visa/overview

Endorsement process

To endorse a visa application under Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur, the University will issue a letter of endorsement. If you have been awarded your degree we issue the letter when we confirm endorsement. Otherwise, if we recommend endorsement, pending outcome of your degree, we will issue the letter soon after the date of award.

You cannot apply for your Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa before receiving your letter of endorsement

Once you receive the letter of endorsement, you must apply within three months of the date on the letter. If you are applying in the UK, your current visa must be valid at the time of application.

The Home Office allows you to work on your business venture only when you have submitted your application.

International Student Team

The International Student Team, based in Student Operations, administers the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur scheme at the University. We are also authorised to provide students with visa advice and have a responsibility for ensuring institutional compliance under Tier 4 and any related schemes.

If you have any questions about endorsement under Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur, please contact us at international.students@admin.cam.ac.uk

Pre-application preparation

- Decide whether to apply for your visa from inside or outside the UK, and familiarise yourself with the application process and requirements as detailed on the [gov.uk website](#). The application cost is £310 outside the UK and £422 within the UK.
- If applying in the UK, ensure your visa is valid at the time of your application, if your visa has expired contact the International Student Team immediately. You can only apply for a Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa if your current visa is Tier 4 or Tier 2 (post-doctoral researcher sponsored by the University).
- Ensure you have the financial documentation to meet the specific requirements of the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa. See information in the 'Maintenance' section.
- If you are going to be in the UK with dependant family members, ensure you are familiar with the [PBS Dependant Guidance](#).
- If you are currently sponsored by a Government or international scholarship agency, or such scholarship ended in the past 12 months, you must obtain and provide written consent from your sponsor giving their unconditional consent for you to remain in the UK. Without this, your visa application will be unsuccessful.
- Provide all the documents specified, and in the format stated; otherwise, your application is likely to be refused.
- Only send the documents required by the Home Office.

When and how to apply for your visa

The Home Office requires you to apply within three months of the date on your letter of endorsement and whilst your visa is valid if you are applying in the UK. As you cannot start working on your business venture until you have submitted your Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa application, we expect you to apply shortly after receiving your degree award and endorsement letter.

You will need to apply for your visa online and then have your biometric information taken at an application centre.

To be successful, your application must score 95 points: 75 points for 'Attributes'; 10 points for 'English Language', and 10 points for 'Maintenance'. The letter of endorsement awards you both the 75 points for Attributes and 10 points for English Language. You must then provide the evidence to achieve the remaining 10 points for Maintenance.

Maintenance

The Home Office determines the amount and documents you need to supply to show that you can support yourself during your time in the UK. The amount you need to show depends on whether you are applying from outside or within the UK:

- If you are applying outside of the UK, you need to demonstrate you have at least **£1890**.
- If you are applying in the UK you must show that you hold at least **£945**.

Irrespective of where you make the application, your financial documentation must demonstrate that you have held the funds for a consecutive 90 day period, ending not more than 31 days before the date of application. The funds must be in personal savings as cash funds. You cannot use another person's funds as evidence and this includes your parents. Please see the [Tier 1 Policy Guidance](#) for further information about the documentation that can be used to meet the financial requirement.

Failure of the applicant to meet the Home Office's financial requirements is one of the most common reasons for visa application refusals. Ensure you do not make one of the common mistakes outlined below:

- Submitting bank statements that are too old
- Submitting bank statements for accounts where the funds are not accessible
- Submitting bank statements that do not evidence that the required funds have been in the account constantly throughout the required 90-day period
- Showing evidence of the wrong amount of money
- Using a bank statement of a relative.
- Failing to allow time to organise finances before submitting the visa application
- Submitting evidence of non-cash funds, e.g. shares, bonds
- Relying on frozen funds.

If you are applying with dependants, you will need to ensure that, in addition to the financial requirements for Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur, you are also able to meet the dependant financial requirements as outlined in the [PBS Dependant Policy Guidance](#).

Outcome of application

The Home Office ultimately decides on whether to grant you the visa.

If granted, your visa should be valid for one year. Generally the Home Office does not inform us directly of the outcome of your application. Therefore you must notify the International Student Team as soon as you receive the decision and you will be required to bring in your visa so we can copy the original for our records.

If the Home Office refuses your application, you must inform the International Student Team immediately. Please note that it is unlikely the University will be able to support a further visa application. This is because the University is given a limited number of endorsements by the Home Office each year and once an endorsement has been submitted with a visa application, it cannot be used again.

Conditions of endorsement

The University is pleased to sponsor you as a Graduate Entrepreneur, but you need to be aware that there are certain conditions attached to your visa as detailed below. It is very important that you fully understand and comply with these responsibilities. If you fail to comply, the Home Office requires the University to report this, which may result in the curtailment of your visa.

These conditions apply once you receive your new visa and remain until that visa expires or date curtailed.

- Start your venture only after making your Tier 1 application.
- Maintain at least quarterly contact with your appointed University representative. The International Student Team will receive a formal record of this contact. If you are unable to make an agreed contact you must inform the University representative, explaining why an alternative date is required.
- Actively work on developing your business in the UK. Your University representative will assess progress at each contact.
- Keep to the conditions of your leave.
- Do not claim UK state benefits.
- Update your [Police Registration Certificate](#) if required.
- Do not take employment as a Doctor or Dentist in training or professional sports person (including a sports coach).
- Inform the Home Office of any 'change in your circumstances' (e.g. change in contact details, dependants' details, your name, nationality, appearance).
- Apply for a new Biometric Residence Permit if yours is lost, stolen or damaged

Extension process

After one year, the Home Office allows you to apply for one further year to remain in the UK under the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur scheme. This requires further endorsement from the University and we must assess that you are making satisfactory progress in developing your business. Therefore, at your third contact, you are given the opportunity to be considered and you may be asked to give a presentation to a panel.