

TIER 2 VISA APPLICATION GUIDANCE FOR OVERSEAS APPLICANTS

Overview

This document provides guidance on the requirements for a Tier 2 (General) visa application made overseas.

Applicants are advised to refer to the Home Office comprehensive guidance found at: www.gov.uk/tier-2-general alongside this document.

You will be issued with a unique Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) number by the University of Oxford Staff Immigration Team via email. You **must** then submit your Tier 2 (General) application within three months from the date that the University issued the CoS after which it will automatically expire.

You cannot apply for your visa any earlier than three months before the start date given on your CoS.

PLEASE NOTE: If your start date is delayed by more than **four weeks**, your sponsorship will have to be withdrawn. The start date listed on your CoS can be amended before you submit the visa application. After this point the four week limit on any delayed start would apply. **If you have any concerns about meeting the start date listed on your CoS please contact us.**

Application Processing Timescales

We strongly recommend that you and your dependants do not make any travel arrangements until your application(s) have been approved. The University is **not** able to request that a visa application is treated urgently.

Visa processing times can be found at: www.gov.uk/visa-processing-times. You should enter the location from where you will be making your application, select 'points based system visa' followed by 'PBS Tier 2' to view processing times for previous months as a guide.

Some (not all) visa application centres offer a priority visa service at an additional cost. This generally means your application is placed at the front of the queue. The priority service can be paid through the online application described on the following page.

Further information on this service can be found via the visa application centre website: www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre

The current visa application fees are listed on our website at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/tier2/overseas/costandpaymentofapplications/

Outline of the Tier 2 Application Process

Each country's application process varies slightly so please refer to the local visa application centre website: www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre for specific information.

However, as an overview, the general process steps are:

1. Staff Immigration Team issue a Tier 2 CoS via email.
2. You should apply for a Tier 2 (General) visa via the online system:
visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/apply-visa-type/tier2

If you are residing in North Korea, further information on applying can be found here:
www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/apply

3. Dependants do not require a CoS, but you must create and submit a separate online application for each dependant. Dependant applications are usually submitted at the same time as the main applicant, although applications can be submitted separately, if necessary.

Please note: When applying for dependant children (under the age of 18), **both** parents must be applying for a visa at the same time, or be lawfully present in the UK (other than as a visitor), unless there are personal circumstances; one surviving parent, sole responsibility for their upbringing or serious or compelling family considerations.

4. You will pay the appropriate Immigration Health (NHS) Surcharge, if you are coming to the UK for more than 6 months.

During the online application process both you and any dependants will be redirected to make a separate payment for this NHS Surcharge. You should ensure you make this payment and then return to the visa application within 30 minutes.

More information about the NHS Surcharge can be found here:
www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application

5. Once the online application is submitted, you will need to print out a copy of the application and book to attend an appointment at the visa application centre.
6. When you attend the appointment, you will need to submit your biometric details (fingerprints and facial image).
7. You will arrange for your supporting documents to be submitted, this may be part of the appointment or a separate stage. You will also need to specify how you would like to collect these supporting documents once a decision is made.
8. If you are applying for a visa with a duration of 6 months or less, the vignette stamped into your passport will state the full duration of your visa.

If however, you are applying for more than 6 months you will be issued with a 30 day vignette in your passport to enable you to enter the UK. You will then collect a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) within 10 days after you enter the UK from a pre-designated Post Office, based on the UK residential address entered on the online application.

A letter issued with your 30 day vignette details the designated Post Office and the date from which the BRP will be available for collection. When collecting your BRP you must present your passport containing your vignette and the letter.

Online Application – Key Points

Answers to some of the general questions:

How long do you intend to stay in the UK? Enter this period based on the work dates detailed on page 2 of your Certificate of Sponsorship.

Is you sponsor a limited company? ‘No’

You may be asked questions in relation to **criminal record checks**. Criminal record checks are only required for a few limited employment professions. It does not apply to the job type for Researchers (SOC code: 2119) and Lecturers (SOC code: 2311).

If you are unsure how to answer questions relating to criminal record checks, please refer to the SIT website: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/tier2/overseas/visaapplicationprocess/ or contact your Staff Immigration Advisor.

Is your job with the University of Oxford on the shortage occupation list? In most cases the answer is ‘no’. If your role is a shortage occupation this will be listed on the Certificate of Sponsorship and in the email correspondence you receive from the Staff Immigration Advisor.

Tuberculosis (TB) pre-screening

If you are applying to come to the UK for more than 6 months, from a country which is considered to have a high incidence of tuberculosis (TB), you and any dependants, must provide a valid medical certificate (issued by a Home Office approved medical practitioner) which confirms you have undergone screening and have been diagnosed as free from active TB.

The list of countries affected and country-specific guidance in relation to the process and testing of dependants (including children) can be found on the Home Office website at: www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/overview.

If you are required to undertake TB Screening we recommend you do this as early as possible. While the results of the test should be made available quite quickly, if the results are inconclusive additional tests will be required. Where TB is detected a medical certificate will not be issued until after treatment has been received (which can take up to 6 months).

The medical certificate confirming that you are free from TB must be submitted with your application and the Home Office recommends that this is carried in your hand luggage when you come to the UK to present to the immigration officer on arrival if requested.

Supporting Documents

All applicants in general are required to submit the following **original** documents:

- A valid passport
- Medical certificate confirming that you are free from Tuberculosis (TB) (if applicable)
- Official record of any criminal convictions (if applicable)

Evidence of sufficient maintenance funds:

The Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) may specify that the University of Oxford, as an A-rated (Premium) Sponsor, is certifying your maintenance this will be stated at the top of the first page of the CoS and the bottom of the second page.

If this is not the case you will need to provide original personal bank/ building society statements covering at least 90 consecutive days ending no more than 31 days before the date of the visa application. This must show your name, account number, date of the statement, financial institution's name and logo, transactions covering the past 90 days, and that the account balance has always been at least £945 during this period. **Please note even £1 under on 1 day means you will not meet the requirements.** Full details on the acceptable documents can be found in the Home Office guidance here:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/477879/Tier_2_Policy_Guidance_11_2015.pdf

Evidence of English language proficiency:

An original and valid passport for nationals of a majority English speaking country. A list of countries recognised by the Home Office can be found here: www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/knowledge-of-english

OR

An academic qualification to UK bachelor degree or above awarded by a UK University, the original qualification certificate must be submitted

OR

An academic qualification recognised by UK NARIC as having been taught in English at **CEFR level B1** and equivalent to a UK bachelor's degree or above. Statements from UK NARIC verifying that the qualification is recognised can be applied through the website www.naric.org.uk/visas%20and%20nationality/. UK NARIC will charge a fee for this.

PLEASE NOTE: the original qualification certificate must be submitted, along with a certified translation (if not in English), and the original UK NARIC statements.

OR

Passing an approved English Language Test. On successfully passing a test a SELT unique reference number is issued by the test provider which must be entered in the visa application. For a list of approved English Language Tests, please refer to:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests

Supporting Documents - Dependants

Dependants will be required to submit:

- A valid passport
- Medical certificate confirming that they are free from Tuberculosis (TB) (if applicable)
- Official record of any criminal convictions (if applicable)
- Marriage or Civil Partnership Certificate (for married/civil partners)
- Evidence of the relationship to the main applicant (for those who are not married or in a civil partnership)
- Birth Certificate (for children under the age of 18)
- If the Certificate of Sponsorship does not specify that the University of Oxford will support the maintenance requirement for your dependant(s) you will need to provide evidence that the main applicant or dependant has an extra £630 of funds for each dependant, and that these extra funds have been present in the account for at least 90 consecutive days ending no more than 31 days before the date of the visa application. **Please note even £1 under on 1 day means you will not meet the requirements.**

Important Points to Note

1. The University offers an interest free loan scheme to assist you and your dependants with the payment of UK visa fees and NHS Surcharge costs.
Details can be found on the Staff Immigration Team page:
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/reimburse&loanscheme/.
The scheme is not, unfortunately available to 'college only' appointment.
2. The Staff Immigration Team cannot guarantee the successful outcome of any visa application as this decision is made by the Home Office.
3. Applications are likely to be automatically rejected if they are submitted with missing or incorrect documents.
4. All documents provided must be **original**, not copies.
5. Any documents not in English must be accompanied by a fully certified translation. Translations must be carried out by a professional translator, and include details of the translator's credentials, confirmation that it is a true and entire translation and show the date and signature of the translator.
6. Bank statements must be dated no more than **31 days** prior to the date of application.

Should you have any queries regarding the requirements for a Tier 2 application, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards,

Staff Immigration Team

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/

Humanities / MPLS / GLAM /Colleges A–P/

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