**Working in the UK - A guide for students on Tier 4/student visas.**

This guide summarises some of the key points about working in the UK whilst on a whilst on a Tier 4/Student visa.

More detailed information about working in the UK both during and after your studies can be found on Studynet at [**https://go.herts.ac.uk/immigration-advice**](https://go.herts.ac.uk/immigration-advice). It is important that you also read the University’s policy regarding students in employment, which is available on the University’s website.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you do not breach either the UK Home Office or the University of Hertfordshire’s policies and procedures. Student/Tier 4 visas enforce strict limitations on working in the UK. If you hold a Tier 4/ student visa, you must adhere to these restrictions. It is now a **criminal offence** to breach the conditions of your visa, which includes employment breaches - see the ‘Breaches of Working Conditions – illegal working’ section.

Working during your studies

If you are studying at the University, with Tier 4/Student (General) immigration permission, you should have been given a visa which allows work during your studies. This will be stated on the vignette (yellow sticker) in your passport or on your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP). Check the front of your visa/BRP to see how many hours you are permitted to work.

**How many hours can I work?**

Your visa/BRP will confirm how many hours the Home Office permit you to work:

* 20 hours per week during term time if you are studying at degree level and above; OR
* 10 hours per week during term time if you are studying below degree level OR
* Full time during vacation periods (see ‘What is term time’ section)
* Full time during a work placement that is an assessed and integral part of your studies (see

‘Work placements’ section)

These hours are per week and must never be averaged over a longer timescale. The Home Office have also defined, for a Tier 4/Student, a working week as running from Monday to Sunday regardless of where or for whom you work. This is especially important to remember if you have more than one job. Remember – paid and unpaid work, on-call hours, on-the job training and working as a voluntary worker all count towards your permitted weekly working hours limit.

Check your visa/BRP carefully for any working hour’s errors before you start working. If you think

that your working hour’s restriction is incorrect, please contact the Student Immigration Team (Advice) as soon as possible to get the error corrected – **sitadvice@herts.ac.uk.** You cannot exceed the working hour’s restriction until you get your visa/BRP corrected.

**University of Hertfordshire working hours**

The University has its own restrictions on how many hours students can work, regardless of whether your visa/BRP states 20/10 hours. See page 7 section – ‘Working for the University of Hertfordshire’. Contact the Human Resources (HR) team to discuss how many hours you are permitted to work as a student sponsored by the University – **recruitment-hourlypaid@herts.ac.uk**

**What type of work can I do?**

The type of work you can do on a Tier 4 General/Student visa is subject to certain restrictions.

***Permitted:***

* Part-time employment that is paid or unpaid
* Work placement as part of a course that is paid or unpaid
* Volunteering - as long as it meets the definition in the [Tier 4 Policy Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student) (Can I volunteer while I am studying?).

***Not permitted:***

* **Self-employment e.g. freelancing**, working from home, selling your own products such as artwork, music or jewellery.
* **Engaging in business or any professional activity**. This includes (but is not limited to): setting up a business, being a company director, sleeping partner, sole trader, shareholder or entering a partnership arrangement. It also includes any work for a business which is based overseas, but the work is being done from within the UK.
* **Doctor or dentist in training**
* **Professional sportsperson/sports coach**. Professional sportsperson includes playing or coaching, paid or unpaid, at all levels in any capacity. This includes being registered with a national/youth/state/ professional/semi-professional team. This is not an exhaustive list, so if you are involved with any type of sporting activity or coaching, please seek advice from the Student Immigration Team (Advice).
* **Entertainer** (including modelling)
* **Sole trader** e.g. eBay, Amazon, Etsy
* **Delivery person as a contractor** e.g. Deliveroo, Uber, DPD, MyHermes etc.
* **Direct sales** e.g. Avon, Amway, Thermomix etc.
* **Internship or work placement** that is not an **integral and assessed** part of a course
* **Filling a full-time permanent position**

There is a blog available for students on the UKCISA website (UK Council for International Student Affairs) which provides some good examples of what is classed as ‘work’: [**www.ukcisa.org.uk/blog/6257/A-workingdefinition**](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/blog/6257/A-workingdefinition)

**What is term time?**

Your Tier 4/student visa restricts the number of hours you can work during term time, but you can work full time outside of term-time. It is therefore important that you know when **your** term time is, as this is different for every student. For students employed at UH, you cannot work full-time (max of 37 hours per week) until Ask Herts has confirmed to HR that you have successfully passed all modules and no referrals/deferrals are due.

Please note that Induction/Fresher’s week, school reading weeks and study weeks are considered

to be term-time, so you should not work full-time during these weeks. You can find the **general** term dates and vacation periods on the University website, however these may not apply for all undergraduate courses or for Master’s or PhD students: **https://www.herts.ac.uk/study/term-and-semester-dates**

For Master’s students, Christmas and Easter are usually the only vacation periods in each year of registration. If you are only completing your dissertation/project, your working hours are still restricted because working on your dissertation is classed as term time study. If you do not want to come onto campus while you work on your dissertation you need to apply for absence (to be away from campus) otherwise we may be required to stop sponsorship of your Tier 4 visa. The absence request form is available on Ask Herts: [**https://ask.herts.ac.uk/absence-your-tier-4-visa**](https://ask.herts.ac.uk/absence-your-tier-4-visa)

Masters students who started their programmes in January may be entitled to a summer vacation

period, but you must check with your Programme Leader first as vacation times vary between courses. You **cannot** work full-time during your course vacation times until your successful results have been released in writing by the Exam Board. For students employed by UH, please first contact the HR Team – recruitment-hourlypaid@herts.ac.uk. Students who are re-sitting are not permitted to work full time during the summer vacation period until all exams/resits are completed and the exam board has confirmed a successful result.

Students with referred/deferred modules, exams or project also cannot work full-time until they have completed their studies and the exam board has confirmed a successful result.

Research students (Master’s by Research/MPhil/ PhD) are considered to be studying throughout the

year (52-week term), so should not exceed their working hours restriction at any point. If you need to take vacation, please contact the Doctoral College team to discuss **before** taking any leave.

Work placements

When considering whether to take a work placement, we advise that you contact a Student Immigration Adviser first before making a decision, as taking a work placement may affect your visa status. Email **sitadvice@herts.ac.uk** to discuss this.

If you wish to take a work placement as part of your studies, you can work full-time whilst on the

placement. However, there are some job roles which you are not able to do:

**Not permitted:**

* **Self-employment e.g. freelancing**, working from home, selling your own products such as artwork, music or jewellery.
* **Engaging in business or any professional activity**. This includes (but is not limited to): setting up a business, being a company director, sleeping partner, sole trader, shareholder or entering a partnership arrangement. It also includes any work for a business which is based overseas, but the work is being done from within the UK.
* **Doctor or dentist in training**
* **Professional sportsperson/sports coach**. Professional sportsperson includes playing or coaching, paid or unpaid, at all levels in any capacity. This includes being registered with a national/youth/state/ professional/semi-professional team. This is not an exhaustive list, so if you are involved with any type of sporting activity or coaching, please seek advice from the Student Immigration Team (Advice).
* **Entertainer** (including modelling)
* **Sole trader** e.g. eBay, Amazon, Etsy
* **Delivery person as a contractor** e.g. Deliveroo, Uber, DPD, MyHermes etc.
* **Direct sales** e.g. Avon, Amway, Thermomix etc.
* **Internship or work placement** that is not an **integral and assessed** part of a course
* **Filling a full-time permanent position**

Remember – you cannot start your placement until you have obtained official approval (from either your Programme Leader/UH Careers & Employment team) **AND** you have checked your visa status

with a Student Immigration Adviser.

Whilst you are on a full-time work placement, you are also able to work part-time (up to your weekly working hours limit) at another job - both jobs can be paid. Please make sure that any part-time job does not impact on your work placement.

Masters with placement students are not permitted to work full-time during the period between completing studies and waiting to start a work placement. This time is to be used for finding a work placement, including attending any interviews. You should also engage with any 'preparation for placement' modules which your programme may have.

**Extending your visa for a work placement**

Students who wish to add a UK based work placement year to their course can either apply for a new visa before the placement starts, OR after the placement has ended. We strongly advise that you contact a Student Immigration Adviser first before deciding to do a work placement, so that you fully understand how taking a work placement will affect your individual visa situation.

If you wish to apply for your new visa before your UK based placement starts, then you must make sure that you leave enough time to make the application and receive the new visa. You will not be able to start the placement until you receive the new visa if you decide to make the application before starting the placement. You cannot start the work placement and then apply for a new visa once the placement has started. If you are taking an **overseas** **work placement**, then the University would **stop sponsorship of your Tier 4/student visa**. You would then need to make a new visa application from overseas to return for your final year studies. You are not able to apply for the new visa until three months before you are due back to university studies.

If your placement will last for less than an academic year (e.g. one semester only), then at the end of your placement you must either return to studies OR secure another placement before the first placement ends. If you are unable to do this, then you must return to your home country and reapply for a new visa to return to the UK when your studies resume. Think about how likely it is that you will be able to secure another placement starting straight after the first placement. If you cannot do this, then we would suggest that you do not take a one semester only placement.

Your new location will be reported to the Home Office once you start at the placement, and your attendance will still be monitored throughout your placement. If your immigration status or circumstances change whilst on placement these must be reported to **sitcompliance@herts.ac.uk.** If you are withdrawn or suspended by the University whilst on work placement, **you have** **a responsibility** to inform your work placement supervisor of this. You must also stop attending

the work placement with immediate effect.

Working for the University of Hertfordshire

University regulations relating to students employed by the University of Hertfordshire can be found in the University Policies & Regulations, which are available on the UH website.

The University of Hertfordshire **has its own** **restrictions on how many hours its students** **can work,** regardless of whether your BRP states 20/10 hours per week. This applies to **all** employment at the University, e.g. Student Ambassadors, Residential Assistants (RAs), Visiting Lecturers (VLs), Aramark, Sports Village etc. Where full time work may be undertaken during vacations, the University permits a maximum of 37 hours per week.

If you participate in the **Go Herts Award** scheme, these voluntary activities count towards your weekly working hours limit. It is **your responsibility** to monitor your hours. Contact the HR team for advice if you are unsure as to how many hours work you can work as a University of Hertfordshire student: **recruitment-hourlypaid@herts.ac.uk****.**

Whilst on a Tier 4/Student visa, you are only permitted to have one job at the University at any one time and will not be able to take on multiple roles within the University, for example, you cannot work for Aramark as well as working as a Student Ambassador. This rule applies also to jobs in Hertfordshire Student Union (HSU).

Students are not permitted to start work for the University until they have fully completed the recruitment process. This includes signing and returning your appointment letter AND receiving confirmation of your start date from the HR Department. Failure to follow the recruitment process fully could mean that you are not able to be paid, and you could also be in breach of your visa conditions. Recruitment documents are available from your recruiting manager – however **your recruiting manager should not confirm your start date before HR have done so.**

**Student Union Sabbatical/School Officers**

If you decide to run for election as a Hertfordshire Student Union Sabbatical Officer/School Officer and are successfully appointed, this will have implications for your Tier 4/Student visa. Before you decide to run for election, it is important that you speak with a Student Immigration Adviser at Ask Herts Hutton to discuss how being elected as a Sabbatical Officer would affect your visa/studies. If you are elected as a Sabbatical Officer partway through your studies, you will not be able to continue your studies alongside your full-time Sabbatical post. In this situation, you would be required to defer your studies and the University would notify UKVI that you are now working as a Sabbatical Officer. You would still need to renew your visa if it is expiring during the term of your Sabbatical post. If you are coming to the end of your studies when you are elected, then you would need to apply for a new Tier 4 Sabbatical Officer visa. If you are elected as a part-time School Officer, you can continue studies alongside this post. However, you must not exceed your working hour’s restriction. Any work carried out in a part-time School Officer position counts towards your weekly working hours limit. Working as a part-time School Officer must not impact on your studies. In either appointment (both School & Sabbatical Officers), you will be required to see a Student Immigration Adviser to read and sign a declaration form, to make sure that you are fully aware of what is expected of you whilst in post. You will not be permitted to start your role if you have not signed the declaration

form.

You are not able to work for the Student Union and have a job with the University at the

same time. You should also be aware that HSU will share information about your employment as a Sabbatical Officer with the appropriate teams here at university, and vice-versa.

**Working at the end of each academic year (not including final year)**

Subject to your visa conditions, you can work full time hours at the end of each academic year once your successful results have been released in writing by the Exam Board. For work at the University you need to first contact the HR team – recruitment-hourlypaid@herts.ac.uk. HR must then confirm to your manager that you are able to increase your hours before you do so. Please be aware this does not guarantee that your manager will be able to allocate you any extra hours.

**Working at the end of your studies**

Upon completion of your course, you can usually work full time hours for up to a maximum of four

months, although this is dependent on your course of study and as long as you have enough time left on your Tier 4/Student visa. Remember – you cannot work full time until you have completed all your studies (including referred/deferred modules, coursework, project or exams) and you have reached the official end date of your programme. This also applies to PhD students.

For the purposes of working after your studies, the official end date of your programme is the date that the Board of Examiners confirms your successful award in writing.

For work at the University, HR must confirm to your manager that you are able to increase your

hours before you do so. Please be aware this does not guarantee that your manager will be able to allocate you any extra hours.

There are several options available to students who want to remain in the UK to work at the end of their course; please see **http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Working-after-studies** for details.

**Graduate visa route**

The UK Government have announced proposals to introduce a new immigration route, which will allow Tier 4/Student graduates to stay in the UK for up to 2 years to find work (3 years for PhD graduates).

See Ask Herts for more details and proposed eligibility criteria: [**https://ask.herts.ac.uk/post-study-work-visa**](https://ask.herts.ac.uk/post-study-work-visa)**.** Please be aware that UKVI are currently proposing that any **course transfers** will affect your eligibility to apply for this visa.

Stopping studies

If you stop your studies before you complete your programme (e.g. you withdraw or defer) then you must stop working immediately, even if you have time left on your visa. You must report any changes to your student status to HR or your external employer. Failure to do this could impact

on any future visa applications and you may also incur a fine/prosecution if you continue to work.

How can I prove to an employer that I’m allowed to work?

The University is unable to provide a letter confirming your eligibility to work in the UK as it’s the **employer’s** responsibility to check your work eligibility. The Home Office expects all employers to conduct ‘Right to Work’ checks and to keep a record of the evidence which proves that their employees can work.

**The employer** is required to obtain and retain evidence of your academic term and vacation dates. These dates are available from our website at **https://www.herts.ac.uk/study/term-andsemester-**

**dates.** If your employer has any concerns about eligibilityto work, they can contact the Home Office: **www.gov.uk/legal-right-work-uk**

You can also prove your right to work to an employer at [**www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work**](http://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work). You’ll need a valid BRP to use this service. **Remember** – it is a requirement of **your employer** to conduct a Right to Work Check, including whether you can work full-time hours during vacation. If you are not sure when your term-time is, please obtain confirmation of this from your Programme Leader.

Working whilst you have a pending Tier 4 (General) /Student visa application

If you have submitted a valid in-time Tier 4/Student visa application, the conditions of your previous leave with regards to your **studies** should continue until you receive a decision on your visa application.

However – once your visa expires, you are not allowed to continue to **work**. If you wish to continue

working whilst you have a pending visa application, your employer must apply for, and receive a Positive Verification Notice (PVN) before you are permitted or allowed to continue to work. This includes when you have submitted an application to replace a lost or stolen BRP.

If you are working for the University, you will be contacted by HR prior to the expiry of your visa, for your permission for the PVN process to be undertaken. If you have any concerns, please contact HR at **recruitment-hourlypaid@herts.ac.uk**

If your passport or visa is due to expire during your employment, you must inform your employer of this before the documents expire, so that they can carry out the necessary Right to Work checks.

National Insurance, Tax and the Minimum Wage

As an International student, you are required to pay National Insurance (NI) contributions if you work in the UK. You may already have a National Insurance (NI) number printed on the back of your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP). You don’t need to reapply for a National Insurance number if you

already have one, or one is printed on your BRP.

If you don’t have a National Insurance number, you must apply for one. You can only apply for it once you’re in the UK – you’ll need to apply by telephone (contact details available at [**https://www.gov.uk/**](https://www.gov.uk/)**apply-national-insurance-number**). You must have the right to work or study in the UK to get a National Insurance number. You can apply for an NI number whilst you are

looking for work. You can even start work without an NI number, but once you have started work, if

you don’t already have one, then make sure that you apply straightaway. However, to work for the

University, you will be required to show your NI number as part of the Student Application pack.

You may also be required to pay income tax. There is a Personal Allowance (PA) for workers, which

means that your earnings are not taxed until you exceed your Personal Allowance threshold. This

means that you will become liable to pay income tax once your earnings go over your PA.

There are different rates of minimum wage according to age. You should not be paid at

any rate lower than those rates, as this is a legal requirement for employers.

For more information on National Insurance, tax and the minimum wage, please see **http://www.**

**ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Employers-income-tax-National-Insurance**

Breaches of working conditions – illegal working

WARNING: Do not breach your visa working conditions. It is important that you understand the rules about working in the UK, as the consequences of breaching your visa conditions (including working over your weekly limit) are extremely serious, for both the worker and the employer.

**Working breaches are a criminal offence** and can lead to a fine of £5,000 and/or up to six months in prison and the possibility of removal from the UK. It can also seriously impact on the University’s ability to recruit & retain international students and staff. Any student suspected of breaching their visa conditions has to be reported to the Home Office by the University. If that student is also working for the University, they will be told to stop working immediately and the University may also stop sponsorship of their Tier 4/Student visa.

If you have any questions about working in the UK, please contact the Student Immigration Team (Advice). If you have specific questions about working for the University of Hertfordshire, please contact the HR Department.

**Contact us**

**Student Immigration Team (Advice)**

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[**https://go.herts.ac.uk/immigration-advice**](https://go.herts.ac.uk/immigration-advice)

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