

GUIDANCE FOR OVERSEAS OFFER HOLDERS



Further to the offer that has been made to you, this document should provide some guidance during the run up to your enrolment. If you have not yet accepted your offer, please do so to secure your place at SOAS.

Do You Need a Visa to Study in the UK?

If you are a Non-EEA (European Economic Area) national you may need to apply for a visa to study in the UK before leaving the country where you live.

You can check to see if you need a visa using the UKVI website: www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa **Note: USA and Canadian nationals do require a student visa to study in the UK.**

All students requiring a visa to study in the UK, who have an offer for MPhil/PhD programmes, will require a Tier 4 (General) Student visa. To apply for this you will need a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number from SOAS. This is an electronic document that confirms your unconditional offer and allows you to apply for a Tier 4 (General) Student visa.

If you are intending to enrol onto a programme that is 6 months or less in duration (e.g. Visiting Research Students attending for only one term) you may have the option to enter the UK on a Short-term study visa (www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa) and will not require a CAS number. Your letter from the School confirming your offer for the programme can be used as supporting evidence instead. Students on short-term study visas can stay for a maximum of six months but cannot extend their stay in the UK, cannot switch into another immigration category and cannot work.

How to Request a CAS

To be issued with a CAS, please complete the CAS Application Form available here: www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/pg/research/forms-for-offer-holders/ and email it to dsadmissions@soas.ac.uk along with scanned copies of:

1. the photo page of your passport, and
2. any current/previous UK visas, and
3. a highly likely to complete letter from your current institution (if applicable).

Please do not submit a CAS request form if you are going to have your passport renewed. Wait until your new passport has been issued before submitting your request.

Highly Likely to Complete Letter Definition

If you are currently completing a programme of study that has not been awarded by the time you apply for your CAS, you will need to provide a letter from your current institution that confirms you are highly likely to complete your current programme.

Please be advised, this letter is not required if you are currently studying at SOAS.

How a CAS is Issued

- CAS assignments for September entry will be issued from July onwards and according to the date the request has been received. Programmes with an earlier start date will be prioritised.
- CAS numbers will be issued to all **offer holders** who have:
 - an unconditional offer;
 - accepted their offer of admission;
 - submitted the CAS request form (with required documents); and
 - have not requested a deferral of their offer.

- CAS numbers are issued by email.
- If there is an error noted on the CAS you have been issued, please email the Tier 4 Compliance inbox on compliance@soas.ac.uk to have this amended.
- Once issued, a CAS number is valid for six months (or up until the deadline for enrolment).
- **You can apply for your visa no more than three months prior to the start date of the programme.** Applying earlier than this will result in your visa being refused.
- You can only use the CAS number **once** so if your visa application is refused and you want to reapply you must be issued with a new CAS. There may be an administration charge if we have to issue a new CAS. If your visa application is refused please:
 - email dsadmissions@soas.ac.uk copying in compliance@soas.ac.uk to request a new CAS, and
 - include a copy of your refusal letter from the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), and
 - if your refusal is linked to insufficient or incorrect documents please also provide us with a copy of the documentation submitted with your application.
- If tuition fee payments are made before you submit your visa application to the Home Office please let us know so that we can update the CAS information available to UKVI.

A CAS is issued to sponsor you in the UK as a Tier 4 (General) student, the School has a duty to report to the Home Office if you do not attend regularly, or if you withdraw from your course or interrupt your studies.

Offer Holders with a Pre-Sessional English Language Requirement

If your offer is conditional on attending an IFCELS Pre-sessional English Language Course, the number of Tier 4 (General) student visa applications you will need to make depend on the results of your most recent English test.

- If the results of your English test put you in the **CEFR level B1 or lower B2 category you may be issued with a joint CAS number** which will cover both the pre-sessional English course and the postgraduate programme.
 - **To be eligible for a joint CAS you must only have the pre-sessional programme as a condition of your offer** – all other conditions must be met before a joint CAS can be issued.
 - Upon application (see earlier guidance for how to request a CAS), the joint CAS will be issued by the Doctoral School team.
- If the results of your English test put you in the **upper CEFR level B2 category, or if you have not met all of the conditions of your offer for the main course/programme of study, you must be issued with two CAS numbers:** one to cover the pre-sessional English course and, following successful completion of the course, one to cover the main programme of study.
 - The first CAS will be issued by IFCELS. If you need more information please email: presessional@soas.ac.uk
 - Once you have successfully completed the pre-sessional course and met any other conditions you will need to request a new CAS number. This will allow you to apply for a visa extension that will cover the main programme of full-time study.

Important Notes Regarding Visa Application

For your visa application to be successful you must pass the points-based assessment. The [UKVI Tier 4 Migrant Guidance](#) contains all of the relevant information needed for preparing your application. You should also refer to the SOAS guidance: [Making an Application for a Tier 4 \(General\) Student Visa](#) which will help to explain some of the UKVI guidance more clearly. You are strongly advised to read this information and to contact us with any questions you have about the process.

You must ensure you meet the **financial requirements fully** before submitting your visa application by:

- showing that you have enough funds to cover the course fees and living costs (any outstanding course fees plus £1,265 per month of your course up to a maximum of 9 months);

Doctoral School Section, Registry

www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/pg/research

visiting address:
 Doctoral School Section, Registry
 SOAS University of London
 53 Gordon Square
 London WC1H 0PD

Postal address:
 Doctoral School Section, Registry
 SOAS, University of London
 Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square
 London WC1H 0XG

- ensuring that the necessary funds are in your account **for a minimum of 28 consecutive days** prior to applying; and
- ensuring that your financial evidence, such as bank statements, are in your name or your parent's name(s) only, company bank statements or bank statements for any other relative will not be accepted by UKVI.

Your CAS will specify documentation you have submitted to the School. You must ensure that you include this original documentation with your visa application, in addition to bank statements as outlined above. Please ensure that any documents which are not in English are submitted in the original and accompanied by a certified translation which meets the Tier 4 requirements.

Extending Your Stay Under Tier 4

If you have already been granted Tier 4 entry clearance to the UK under the sponsorship of another university but want to come and study at SOAS, you must apply for a new permission to study with a CAS issued by SOAS even if your current visa is still valid. The School will require evidence that you have applied to ~~the~~ UKVI to change educational sponsor.

Students presenting visas that do not permit them to study at SOAS will not be permitted to enrol.