

Immigration Health Surcharge guidance

If you are applying for a Tier 4 (General) student visa you will be liable to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge. This payment will entitle you to receive health care from the National Health Service while studying in the UK.

If you're making an application for a Tier 4 visa outside the UK you will be charged if your course is over 6 months in length. If you are applying to extend your Tier 4 visa in the UK you will be charged for a course of any length. The charge is mandatory, even for those who have private health insurance.

How much is the surcharge?

When applying for a Tier 4 visa, you and your dependents will be charged £300 for each year of your visas duration (leave). If your period of leave includes part of a year that is less than 6 months you and your dependents will be charged £150 this period.

The Immigration Health Surcharge will increase to £470 per year for visa applications made on or after 1st October 2020.

Please be aware that you will be charged for the full length of your visa (leave) not the length of your programme at SOAS.

For example, if you are applying for a Tier 4 visa to study a 3 year undergraduate degree programme, you should be granted 1 month of leave before the start of your programme and 4 months of leave following the programme end date. The total length of the leave granted would be 3 years and 2 months. The surcharge for this programme would be $3 \times £300 + £150 = £1050$.

If you are applying for a Tier 4 visa to study a 1 year master's degree programme, you should be granted 1 month of leave before the start of your programme and 4 months of leave following the programme end date. The total length of leave granted would be 1 year and 5 months. The surcharge for this programme would be $1 \times £300 + £150 = £450$.

Paying the surcharge

You pay the surcharge as part of the online Tier 4 visa application process. The amount of surcharge will be calculated using the start and end dates of your programme. You will then be asked to pay the surcharge using a credit or debit card. You will then be given a unique reference number. This number starts with the letters IHS followed by nine digits eg IHS123456789 and this will be automatically entered into your online form.

Exceptions

If you are applying outside the UK for a programme of less than 6 months in length you are exempt from the charge.

If you are coming to the UK on a Short Term Student visa for 6 months or less you are exempt from the charge. However, you do not qualify for free NHS treatment and will need private health insurance.

If you are applying to come to the UK as an academic visitor you are also exempt from the charge even if you come for more than 6 months. If you are a national of Australia or New Zealand you are also exempt from the charge.

However, even if you are exempt you must still complete the IHS section of the application and you will be given a reference number confirming exemption.

UK government sponsored students are exempt from the charge. However, dependents of government sponsored students are also exempt from the charge but the IHS portal currently does not allow for this. Your dependant will need to state that they are also a government sponsored as part of the online Tier 4 application

Refunds

If you pay the IHS for the same period twice you will be refunded for this period. If your visa is refused you will be refunded the surcharge. However, if your visa is issued and you decide not to travel you will not receive a refund. You will not receive a refund if you do not use NHS services or if you leave the UK before your visa expires.

More information and advice

For more information about the Immigration Health Surcharge, please see the [UKCISA website](#).

Immigration Health Surcharge [calculator](#)

If you need advice about the surcharge, please contact email advice@soas.ac.uk