Guidance for Entry to Study in the United Kingdom

The information below pertains to US citizens. <u>This is only a guide</u>. All students, regardless of your nationality, should work with your CSU Education Abroad Coordinator and your host institution in the UK to ensure you are in compliance. For the most up to date information see www.gov.uk

NOTE: <u>do</u> <u>not</u> initially enter the United Kingdom from the Republic of Ireland.

Guidance:

1. Short-term Student: studying abroad for the semester
    a. Short-term student approval on arrival to the UK
    b. Short-term student approval before arrival to the UK
2. Tier 4 Visa: studying abroad for the academic year, or working while in the UK
3. Useful links regarding UK immigration

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1. Short-term Student: US citizens who will be studying in UK for 6 months or less (such as summer or one semester) without work, internship, or an extension of your stay have **two options**. CSU students most commonly use the "on arrival" route.

a. on arrival: You can obtain a stamp for short-term study upon arrival in UK. This route is known as "short-term student route for non-visa nationals" or more simply, you are a "student visitor". There is no fee. It is important that you ask to be admitted as a short-term student. It is technically a single entry approval, so you need to reapply at the border if you travel outside the UK during your course of study. Initial entry and reentry are at the discretion of each British immigration officer so be sure to have your documents in order! Do not enter more than a week before the start of your official program start date, as noted on your letter of acceptance from your host university.

b. before arrival: requires online application, fee, biometric screening, and delivery of passport with required documentation to the British consulate in New York at least three weeks prior to travel but not more than 90 days prior to start to program. You can enter the UK up to one week prior to start of program. Technically this is a multi-entry approval but **always** bring the required documentation*. The primary, but not only, reasons to go this route is if:
> **i.** You have been denied entry to the UK in the past.
> **ii.** You are concerned that you may not pass a background check.

*see below for documentation that you are required to bring **each** **time** you enter and exit the UK

1a. Short-term Student on arrival? You need:

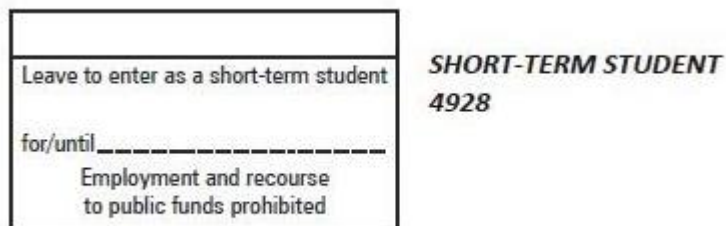Obtaining approval at port of entry upon arrival in the UK requires:

- Passport valid for 6 months beyond duration of program with an unused visa page
- Invitation or acceptance letter from host institution
- Evidence of sufficient financial resources
- Evidence of return airfare

Financial Resources: Original bank statement in own name and/or parent/guardian name with a letter of their support. Documentation of scholarships, student loans, housing, and prepaid or guaranteed tuition can be shown too. Total available support should be equivalent to about £1015 per month outside the London area or £1265 per month within London Inner Boroughs for the **duration of study**, plus the amount of tuition that is not documented as prepaid or guaranteed.

 See https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/ for current exchange rate.

Limitations: Student Visitors can enter the UK for maximum six months per 12-month period, cannot work nor intern, and must depart UK before the stamp expires. The stamp received upon arrival on the "short-term student" route is technically a single entry approval without guarantee of reentry if you travel outside UK during your course of study. **If you travel outside UK during your program, you must present US passport and original host institution letter plus financial documentation for reentry to complete your approved course of study.** Reentry is at the discretion of the immigration officer, who will ask questions to verify that you are still attending classes at the host institution on full time basis and can afford the remaining costs. If traveling outside UK after the program ends, you can return to UK as a tourist to catch flight home.

Goals: To ensure you receive the stamp you need, it is recommended that you carry an example and politely request this endorsement from the Immigration Officer. You are seeking the stamp shown below, along with another stamp recognizing your date of entry. **You do not want a Standard Visitor stamp.** If for any reason you do not receive short-term student stamp, you are perfectly entitled to ask the Immigration Officer to confirm that the endorsement given permits you to study in the UK for up to 6 months. If the Immigration officer has issued the wrong stamp they can easily correct it then and there.

Leave to enter as a short-term student

for/until_____

Employment and recourse
to public funds prohibited

SHORT-TERM STUDENT
4928

1b. Short-Term Study before arrival? You need:

Obtaining a multiple entry short-term study prior to arrival in UK requires an online application and fee plus biometric screening and specific documentation submitted by mail to the British consulate in New York, including:

- Passport valid for 6 months beyond duration of program with an unused visa page
- Invitation or acceptance letter from host institution
- Biometric screening (at US Homeland Security facility in Denver or elsewhere)
- Original bank statement(s) in own name or joint account (or in parent's name with formal parental letter of support), original document(s) certifying financial aid (scholarships and loans) if any, and evidence of any prepaid or guaranteed tuition and/or housing, all together documenting sufficient support with funds held for at least **four weeks** prior to date of visa application

Financial Resources: see above.

Application, fee, and required documents, including passport, should be submitted to British consulate 45-90 days prior to program start date. Application will be returned unprocessed without refund if submitted

more than 90 days in advance. Documents must be received by consulate within two weeks of biometric screening. Allow three weeks for the consulate's visa center to process a properly completed application and return passport with approval.

Cost: The estimated cost for a pre-issued Short-term Study is $161 (as of August 2017), assuming approximate $123 (£93) online fee, $15 for travel for biometric screening, and $23 postage for Express Mail to British consulate.

Note: while technically a multi-entry stamp, to ensure smooth reentry you should always bring your short-term study documentation (acceptance letter and proof of funds) whenever you enter and exit the UK.

2. Tier 4 Visa (work or academic year students only)

This visa allows students to study in the UK for an extended period of time (more than 6 months) and/or work or intern while in the UK (required, even if less than 6 months).

> **a.** You must obtain a Tier 4 Student Visa from the British consulate in New York prior to departing US. This visa includes permission to work part time or have an internship (paid or unpaid) while studying in UK. Depending on length, Tier 4 requires payment of healthcare surcharge for National Health Service coverage. You can enter UK up to one month prior to start of program.

If you are indecisive about studying in UK for one or two semesters, you might initially commit to two semesters with Tier 4 visa.

2a. Tier 4 Student Visa? You need:

Obtaining a multiple entry Tier 4 (General) Student Visa requires an online application and large fee plus biometric screening and specific documentation submitted by mail to the British consulate in New York, including:

- Passport valid for 3 months beyond duration of program with an unused visa page
- Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) reference number from host institution
- Biometric screening (at US Homeland Security facility in Denver or elsewhere)
- Original document(s) certifying financial aid (scholarships and loans) if any
- Original bank statement(s) in own name or joint account (or in parent's name with formal parental letter of support) reflecting required amount of funds held for at least 28 days prior to visa application date (strict requirement – not a day nor a penny less)

Financial Resources: See above. Funds must be at least equivalent to £1015 per month outside the London area or £1265 per month within London Inner Boroughs (effective June 2017). You must show that you have money for your living costs for **each month of your course**, up to a maximum of 9 months, plus the amount of tuition that is not documented as prepaid or guaranteed.

See https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/ for current exchange rate.

See Tier 4 Policy Guidance, especially the pages pertaining to "Money" or maintenance or support funds.

Application, applicable fees, and required documents, including passport, should be submitted to British consulate 45-90 days prior to program start date. Application will be returned unprocessed without refund if submitted more than 90 days in advance. Documents must be received by consulate within two weeks of

biometric screening. Allow three weeks for the consulate's visa center to process a properly completed application and return passport with visa.

Cost: The estimated cost for a Tier 4 Student Visa is $675 (as of August 2017), assuming approximate $440 (£335) online visa fee, $197 (£150) online healthcare surcharge fee, $15 for travel for biometric screening, and $23 postage for Express Mail to British consulate.

Note: Once you have the documentation you need, including your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS), you will apply for your Tier 4 visa via www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/account/register. You will make an appointment for your biometric screening through this portal, **not before.**

3. Useful Links Regarding UK Immigration:

- NAFSA's UK Visa FAQ's Provides immigration guidance for USA students preparing to study in UK
- UK Visas and Immigration Information and requirements, including "**Check if you need a UK visa**" within the "Arriving in UK" section.
- Online Visa4UK application see their helpful FAQs too.
- Gov.UK guidance for study in UK Provides good guidance regarding pre-arrival Short-Term Study and Tier 4 Student Visa (not very helpful for on-arrival visas).
- Expedited visa processing services and fees are you a bit behind schedule for your Tier 4 application? See how to expedite your application.
- Working or interning in UK while studying