



UK Visas
& Immigration

Tier 4 of the Points Based System Guidance for Sponsors

version 04/2014

Document 2: Assigning CAS and Sponsoring Students

This guidance covers:

1. The Sponsorship Management System (SMS) and Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)
2. How to sponsor students
3. Assigning CAS

Please also see the guidance documents 'Applying for or Renewing a Tier 4 Sponsor Licence and Highly Trusted Sponsor Status' and 'Sponsor Duties and Compliance'

This guidance is to be used for all Tier 4 applications made on or after 6th April 2014

Contents

Glossary of terms	3
Section 1: The Sponsorship Management System (SMS) and Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)	7
What is the sponsorship management system (SMS)?	7
What is a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS)?	8
Key information on sponsoring students under Tier 4	9
Section 2: Sponsoring Students	11
Which Tier 4 route shall I use to assign a CAS?	11
What types of course/study can I assign a CAS for?	11
What courses may a Tier 4 (child) student undertake?	12
What courses/study may a Tier 4 (general) student undertake?	13
Working while studying	21
Section 3: Assigning a CAS	25
What to consider before assigning a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS)	25
English language requirements	25
Academic progression	27
Place of study	28
How long can a sponsored student stay in the UK?	29
How to assign a CAS	32
Examination re-sits and repeating study	38
Cancelling a CAS	39

Glossary of terms

When we say	We mean
Care arrangements	Suitable arrangements for any children for their travel to the UK, reception at port and living arrangements while in the UK.
CAS	A Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies – a virtual document issued by a sponsor to a student to allow them to apply for a student visa under Tier 4.
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
Course start date	The date of enrolment in person, or induction on the course, whichever is the earlier.
Course end date	The date by which the student is expected to have completed all academic elements of the course – taught sessions, examinations including meetings with examination boards, assessments, including oral assessments and other formal assessments, and writing and submitting dissertations or theses. In the case of PhD students, academic elements include writing and correcting theses and oral (viva) examinations, provided the sponsor is satisfied that they can continue to carry out their sponsor duties for the student.
English language course	For PBS this means a course where a student is studying English as a Foreign Language.
Foundation degree	A programme of study which leads to a qualification awarded by an English higher education institution with degree awarding powers which is at a minimum of level 5 on the revised National Qualifications Framework, or awarded on a directly equivalent basis in the devolved administrations. In Scotland, a Higher National Diploma at level 8 on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, awarded by the Scottish Qualifications Authority is equivalent to a foundation degree.
HTS Status	Highly Trusted Sponsor status.
LTR	Leave to remain.
NQF	National Qualifications Framework.
Parent(s) or legal guardian	The child's parent(s) or legal guardian, or just one parent who has the sole legal responsibility for the child.
Publicly funded Colleges	Colleges that are listed by the Association of Colleges on their website on the basis that they are Further Education Colleges, Further Education Corporations (FECs) or Sixth Form Colleges. For more specific information in relation to how this definition applies to educational establishments in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland please see the section called 'Educational oversight' in the Tier 4 'Applying for a Licence' guidance document.
Pre-sessional course	A course that prepares a student for, and directly precedes, their intended full-time course of study in the UK and enables them to acquire the ancillary skills or knowledge necessary to adjust to study in the UK. This will usually be supplementary English Language training or some instruction in the British education system. Courses which are designed to give a student fundamental training in the subject area of the main course as a stepping stone to it – e.g. a foundation degree – or courses which form an integral part of the main course of study or replace part of it – but which are administered separately – are not considered to be pre-sessional courses.
QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework.
SCQF	The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

Settled Worker	<p>a) is a national of the UK;</p> <p>b) is a national of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden or Switzerland who is exercising an EC Treaty Right in the UK; (Please note that although not requiring sponsorship, workers from Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania must have work authorisation in order to work lawfully, unless exempt. Employers commit an offence by employing Bulgarian, Croatian or Romanian nationals who have failed to comply with the work authorisation requirements);</p> <p>c) is a British overseas territories citizen, except those from Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus. (Those included are Anguilla, Bermuda, British Antarctic Territory, British Virgin Islands, British Indian Ocean Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands and dependencies, Gibraltar, Montserrat, Pitcairn Islands, St. Helena and Dependencies and Turks and Caicos Islands);</p> <p>d) is a Commonwealth citizens who was allowed to enter or to remain in the UK on the basis that a grandparent was born here;</p> <p>e) has settled status in the UK within the meaning of the Immigration Act 1971, as amended by the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, and the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.</p>
SMS	The Sponsor Management System.
Tier 4 register of sponsors	The register that all Tier 4 sponsors appear on once we have given them a licence to bring students to the UK.

UK Higher Education Institution (HEI)	<p>A recognised body, or a body that receives public funding as a higher education institution from the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, or the Scottish Funding Council. We also accept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richmond, the American International University in London, as an HEI because it is recognised in statute in the Education (Recognised Awards) (Richmond The American International University in London) Order 2006. • The UK Foundation Programme Office as an HEI for sponsored students undertaking a recognised Foundation Programme for post graduate doctors. • The Yorkshire and Humber Strategic Health Authority, and the South London Local Education and Training Board (also known as South London Health Education England) as an HEI for sponsored students undertaking a recognised Foundation Programme for postgraduate dentists. • You will find a list of UK HEI's on the following websites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ England: www.hefce.ac.uk/unicoll/he/ ▪ Scotland: www.sfc.ac.uk/about_the_council/council_funded_institutions/WhoWeFundColleges.aspx ▪ Wales: www.hefcw.ac.uk/about_he_in_wales/higher_education_institutions/he_institutions.aspx ▪ Northern Ireland: www.delni.gov.uk/index/further-and-higher-education/higher-education/role-structure-he-division.htm <p>Recognised bodies: www.bis.gov.uk/policies/higher-education/recognised-uk-degrees/recognised-bodies</p>
'You' or 'Your'	the sponsor organisation or prospective sponsor organisation, including any owner, director, authorising officer, key contact, level 1 user and anyone involved in your day-to-day running
We/us/our	Home Office.
Working Days	Any day other than Saturday or Sunday, a day which is a bank holiday under the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971 in the part of the United Kingdom to which the notice is sent, Christmas Day or Good Friday.

Changes to the Assigning CAS and Sponsoring Students guidance

Current Paragraph Number	Previous Paragraph Number	What has changed?
42	New paragraph	We have added new wording to clarify what we mean by your premises in relation to self-governing colleges.
55	365	We have added clarification about the circumstances of when a student who is applying for the Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES) needs to have an ATAS certificate to cover them until the end of their course.
104	415	We have changed the wording of the original paragraph to clarify that any further study at a lower level must be under exceptional circumstances only.
111-117 (including flowchart)	488-489	We have made further clarification to the amount of time a sponsored student can study in the UK for.
144-147	454-457	We have re-drafted the paragraphs on assigning a CAS for a new course with the same sponsor for clarity.
162	n/a	We have added new text under the section titled assigning a CAS to a student who wants to extend their stay under the Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES)) to clarify when a sponsor can assign a CAS to a DES student.
	Throughout this document	Throughout this document we have changed references to 7, 14 or 28 calendar days with 5, 10 or 20 working days (a definition of a working day can be found in the glossary).
	Throughout this document	We are no longer defining the words you/your and a relevant person separately. When we say you/your we mean: The sponsor organisation or prospective sponsor organisation, including any owner, director, authorising officer, key contact, level 1 user and anyone involved in your day-to-day running.
	Glossary	We have removed definitions of terms from the main body of the guidance and placed into a glossary at the front of the document.

Section 1: The Sponsorship Management System (SMS) and Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

This section gives information on:

- Your sponsorship management system (SMS) account and who can use it
- Definitions of a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies and how many you will be allowed to assign
- Key points you need to know about sponsoring students under Tier 4

What is the sponsorship management system (SMS)?

1. When we grant your sponsor licence, we also set up your [sponsorship management system \(SMS\)](#). This is an online tool which lets you carry out day-to-day sponsorship activities and report any changes. You will also use it to assign [confirmation of acceptance for studies \(CAS\)](#) to students who wish to come to, or stay in, the UK to study, and to fulfil your reporting duties for your sponsored students. For more information on student reporting duties please see the Sponsor Duties and Compliance guidance document.

2. We call a person who has access to the SMS a 'user'. The SMS allows users two levels of access – 'level 1' and 'level 2'. The level decides the type of access (permissions) the user has to the system and the functions they can perform. Please see the section titled Nominating key personnel in the Applying for or renewing a Tier 4 sponsor licence and HTS status guidance document.

3. To maintain security we will:

- a) send the user name for the level 1 user to the authorising officer by email unless, the level 1 user is also the authorising officer and in which case we will send it by post; and
- b) send the password directly to the level 1 user by email.

4. Your SMS account is also the primary source of information about your sponsor licence and you can use it to view details such as your current organisation and key personnel details, the number of CAS you have remaining in your allocation and your allocation expiry and licence end dates. Your SMS account also has a message board where we post useful messages from time to time. It is important that you access your SMS account on a regular basis to review and update your licence details. We recommend that your level 1 user accesses your account on at least a monthly basis.

5. SMS users must never give their password to anyone else. If they do, we will take action against you, this may include suspending or revoking your licence.

6. You can access the SMS on our website at <https://www.points.homeoffice.gov.uk/gui-sms-jsf/home/SMS-oo3-Home.faces>

7. You can also find some helpful guides on our website that explain:

- a) The changes that you can report using your SMS account
- b) and how to assign a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS).

You can find this information located on our pages on the Gov.uk website using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sponsorship-information-for-employers-and-educators#user-manuals-sponsorship-management-system-sms>

8. You must have at least one level 1 user in place throughout the life of your licence. If we find that you have no level 1 user in place at all this means that you can't fulfil your sponsor duties and we will take action against you. We will also take action against you if you have no SMS users in place at all. Please see the section titled Nominating key personnel in the Applying for or renewing a Tier 4 sponsor licence and HTS status guidance document.

What is a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS)?

9. A CAS is not a paper certificate or document but a virtual document, like a database record. When you have followed all the rules set out in this guidance and you are ready to sponsor a student under Tier 4 (General) or Tier 4 (Child) you must assign a CAS to them using your SMS account. This involves working through a short online form where you give information about the student you want to sponsor and the course of study they will follow.

10. You must complete all the relevant details in the SMS, for example the student's personal details, course level, start and end dates, and information about fees. Complete the 'evidence provided' section in detail. This includes:

- a) Stating how you assessed the student's English language ability, when this is required.
- b) Explaining how you assessed the student's ability to follow the course.
- c) Explaining how the course represents academic progression when this is required.
- d) Stating the course fees and how much the student has paid towards their fees.
- e) Giving the required details for gifted university students.

11. We recognise that sponsors' academic schedules can change, and that it may therefore be difficult for you to pinpoint the end date of a course precisely when assigning a CAS. If changes to the academic timetable means that the student's course finishes one or two weeks earlier or later than the [course end date](#) given on the CAS, this will not be considered as non compliance with sponsorship duties. However, if there is evidence that a sponsor repeatedly gives course end dates that are significantly later than students are expected to complete their studies that will be considered to be a breach of sponsorship duties.

12. All the information you enter will be stored and can be viewed by us. A CAS can only be assigned by a person who has access to the SMS as a level 1 or level 2 user.

13. You are fully responsible for the actions of anyone who assigns CAS on your behalf. If you break any of our rules on assigning CAS we will take action against you. If we find that you employed an illegal worker because you have negligent recruitment practices, we may issue you with a civil penalty. If we find that you have knowingly employed an illegal worker we will refer the case for prosecution.

14. When you assign a CAS, you must give the unique reference number to the student to use when they apply to us. Give the student the CAS details too, such as information on the qualifications you assessed. This will help them with their application. The CAS is valid for six months from the date you assign it. However, it does not guarantee that we will grant the student's application.

15. Treat the CAS number as a secure and confidential document. Make sure you send it securely and directly to the student personally because anyone could try to use it to apply for permission to come to or stay in the UK.

16. The student may ask for other information that was part of the process of generating the reference number. You can give the student a copy of their CAS and there is a function within your SMS account to print any CAS you have assigned. You can do this by using the 'view CAS' function, where you can open the CAS and chose 'print'. More information on how to use this function can be found in the SMS user guide available on our pages on the Gov.uk website using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sponsorship-information-for-employers-and-educators#user-manuals-sponsorship-management-system-sms>

17. Once you have assigned a CAS it can be used by the student to support their application at any time during the six month period from the date it was assigned. If the student does not use the CAS within this period it will expire and show as 'expired' in your SMS account.

18. A CAS can only be used to support one application, whether or not that application is successful. If the student's application fails and they wish to reapply, you must assign a new CAS to them to send in with their new application. They will not need a new CAS if their original application was rejected or withdrawn.

19. If the student's application is rejected or withdrawn the CAS will still show in your SMS account as 'assigned' which means it can be used again to support a further application.

20. Assigning a CAS does not guarantee that the student will succeed in being granted entry clearance or leave to remain. They must meet all the criteria for the Tier 4 leave they are applying for.

Key information on sponsoring students under Tier 4

21. All students who wish to come to the UK under Tier 4 of the points-based system must obtain a visa before they travel. Students who are already in the UK under Tier 4 can apply for an extension of their permission to stay. We call this 'further leave to remain'.

22. They cannot apply for a visa or extension of their permission to stay without a CAS. When you give a student an unconditional offer of a place on a course, you will issue the CAS using the sponsorship management system. For details of the sponsorship management system, see section titled [What is the Sponsorship Management System?](#)

23. Students cannot apply to us under Tier 4 more than three months before their course starts.

24. Students coming to the UK under Tier 4 must be able to support themselves for the entire length of their stay in the UK without using public funds (state benefits). This includes course fees and living expenses. We call this 'maintenance'.

25. Full details of the maintenance requirements are in the Tier 4 Migrant Guidance located on our pages on the Gov.uk website using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>

26. The CAS will not guarantee that we will grant a student a visa or further permission to stay in the UK. Before you assign a CAS, you should ensure that the student will meet the requirements for a visa or permission to extend their stay. You can find details of these on our pages on the gov.uk website using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>

Section 2: Sponsoring Students

This section gives information on:

- Whether you should assign a CAS under Tier 4 (General) or Tier 4 (Child)
- What types of course you can assign a CAS for
- Working while studying

Which Tier 4 route shall I use to assign a CAS?

27. There are two routes you can use to sponsor a student. These are Tier 4 (Child) Students and Tier 4 (General) Students.

28. Tier 4 (Child) is for children between the ages of 4 and 17 (inclusive) who come to the UK for their education. Tier 4 (General) is for anyone who comes to the UK for post-16 education.

29. Students aged 16 or 17 who are studying a course at [Qualifications and Credit Framework \(QCF\)](#) or [National Qualifications Framework \(NQF\)](#) level 3 or above (for example A-levels) can apply for a visa under either Tier 4 (Child), or Tier 4 (General). Students aged 16 or 17 who wish to take QCF or NQF level 2 courses (for example GCSEs) may only apply as child students.

30. Students aged 16 or 17 who wish to study English as a foreign language can only apply under Tier 4 (General) unless they are taking a pre-sessional language course before their main course of study.

31. You must not offer [English language courses](#) to students aged 15 or under using Tier 4 (Child). They should apply to come to the UK as a 'child visitor'.

What types of course/study can I assign a CAS for?

This sub section gives information on:

- What courses a Tier 4 (Child) student may undertake
- What courses a Tier 4 (General) student may undertake
 - Level of course
 - Full-time course
 - Approved qualification
 - Pre-sessional courses
 - Postgraduate Doctors and Dentists
 - Doctorate Extension Scheme Students
 - Postgraduate Students (Writing up Thesis)
 - Sabbatical Officers
 - Gifted University Students
 - Supplementary study

What courses may a Tier 4 (child) student undertake?

32. Please see the diagram below titled Courses a Tier 4 (child) student may undertake for details of when you may assign a CAS to a Tier 4 (child) student.

Courses a Tier 4 (child) student may undertake diagram



33. You can also assign a CAS to a Tier 4 (Child) student to undertake a [pre-sessional course](#) to prepare them for their main course of study.

34. You must assign a CAS for each separate course of study the student will take. A ‘course’ of study is, for example, the period of study for GCSEs or A-levels. You cannot assign a single CAS that covers both GCSE and A-level studies.

What courses/study may a Tier 4 (general) student undertake?

Level of course

35. Please see the table below titled Level of course for details of the level of courses you can assign a CAS for.

Level of course table

Can I assign a CAS to a student studying at a minimum level of:	Yes	No
Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) or National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 3 or above in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (or the equivalent in Scotland).	✓	
Level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) for English language students. However, students who currently have permission to stay in the UK, and applied for that before 5 October 2009, are exempt from this requirement. They are allowed to start a new English language course at a minimum of CEFR level A2. But if their current permission to stay expires before their new course starts, they cannot extend it to complete an English language course that is below CEFR level B2	✓	
Below QCF or NQF level 3		✓
Below level B2 for English language students (except those who currently have permission to stay in the UK, and applied for it before 5 October 2009).		✓
English Language courses	✓	
Courses (including pre-sessional courses) at QCF or NQF Level 3 or equivalent at an A rated sponsor		✓

36. We will take compliance action against you if you assign a CAS for a Tier 4 (General) student to take courses that do not meet our minimum level.

Full-time course

37. The course must be full-time, which we define as:

- a) A full-time course of study that leads to a UK-recognised qualification at level 6 or above on the QCF or NQF or equivalents; or
- b) An overseas higher education course that the student is studying for in the UK and leads to a qualification from an overseas higher education institution that is recognised as being equivalent to a UK higher education qualification; or
- c) A course of study below UK degree level that involves a minimum of 15 hours a week of classroom-based, daytime study (08:00 – 18:00, Monday to Friday)

Approved qualification

38. The course that you assign a CAS to a student to take must lead to an approved qualification. Please see the diagram below titled Approved qualification.

Approved qualification diagram



39. If the approved qualification is covered by (g) in the diagram above, an authorised signatory for institutional agreements within the recognised body must sign this. The agreement must confirm the recognised body's own independent assessment of the level of your or the awarding body's programme compared to the NQF (or its equivalents). It must also state that the recognised body would admit any student who successfully completes your or the awarding body's named course onto a specific or a range of degree-level courses it offers.

40. We do not accept distance learning courses or courses designed specifically to support students taking distance learning courses, as leading to an approved qualification. This is because distance learning courses are specifically designed in a way that does not require the learner to be physically present in a traditional educational setting such as a classroom. Courses offered in the UK that are designed to support students on distance learning courses can be undertaken using the Student visitor route if the conditions of that route are met.

41. Pre-sessional courses must meet the requirements for the level of the course but the course does not have to lead to a recognised qualification.

42. Except when a student is on a work placement, all study that is part of the course must take place on your premises, or at a temporary location you authorise. For example, it is acceptable if a student is on a field trip. We do not accept the location of a student's work placement as a temporary, authorised location. Any study they do there cannot contribute to the 15 hours of classroom study we require for courses below QCF or NQF level 6. In the case of the universities of Cambridge, Oxford, Durham and London, the university premises are taken to include the premises of self-governing colleges (which include permanent private halls and approved foundations) of the university named in the statutes of those universities, although it is open to the colleges to hold a separate sponsor licence.

43. This only applies to the student's main course of study. Supplementary study can be at any level.

Pre-sessional courses

44. A pre-sessional course is a course that prepares a student for, and directly precedes, their intended full-time course of study in the UK and enables them to acquire the ancillary skills or knowledge necessary to adjust to study in the UK. This will usually be supplementary English Language training or some instruction in the British education system.

45. Courses which are designed to give a student fundamental training in the subject area of the main course as a stepping stone to it – e.g. [a foundation degree](#) – or courses which form an integral part of the main course of study or replace part of it – but which are administered separately – are not considered to be pre-sessional courses.

46. The pre-sessional course must meet the full requirements of the relevant Tier 4 category for the level of the course, but it does not have to lead to a recognised qualification. A Tier 4 (General) student must pass a secure English Language test (SELT) showing proficiency at CEFR level B1 or B2 depending on the academic level of the pre-sessional course.

47. A pre-sessional course may be provided in the following ways:

- a) By a Tier 4 sponsor who is also sponsoring the student for the main course of study. Please see the section titled Assigning a single CAS to cover both pre-sessional and main course

of study which sets out the circumstances in which a single CAS can be assigned for both courses. Where this does not apply, separate CAS must be assigned for the pre-sessional and the main course.

b) By a different Tier 4 sponsor from the one assigning the CAS for the main course of study. In this case, a separate CAS must be assigned for each course.

c) By an education provider that is named as a partner on a Tier 4 sponsor's licence. Where a partner institution is not a licensed Tier 4 sponsor, they may only offer pre-sessional courses as described in the section titled [Assigning a single CAS to cover both pre-sessional and main course of study](#) and the Tier 4 sponsor must issue the CAS. In all cases, partner institutions must be named on a Tier 4 sponsor licence, even if the partner has a licence in its own right.

Postgraduate doctors and dentists

48. Students may take up a recognised foundation programme as a postgraduate doctor or dentist in the UK under Tier 4 (General).

49. They must have a valid CAS from their sponsor. For postgraduate doctors the only sponsor is the UK Foundation Programme Office. For postgraduate dentists there are two sponsors, the Yorkshire and Humber Strategic Health Authority and the South London Local Education and Training Board (also known as South London Health Education England).

50. A student who wishes to take a recognised foundation programme under Tier 4 (General) must also:

a) have successfully completed a recognised UK degree in medicine or dentistry at:

- i. an institution with a Tier 4 (General) student sponsor licence; or
- ii. a UK [publicly funded institution](#) of further or higher education; or
- iii. a genuine UK private education institution which maintains satisfactory records of enrolment and attendance; and

b) previously have been granted permission to stay in the UK as a student (under either Tier 4 (General) or the student rules that applied before 31 March 2009), for the final academic year and at least one other academic year of their studies leading to that degree.

Doctorate extension scheme students

51. If you are a [Higher Education Institution \(HEI\)](#), the Doctorate Extension Scheme allows you to sponsor students who are currently following a course leading to a PhD to stay in the UK for up to 12 months after their course has ended. Once the student has successfully completed their PhD there will be fewer restrictions on the work they can do and they can use the 12 months to gain further experience in their chosen field, seek skilled work, or develop plans to set up as an entrepreneur.

52. If you wish to sponsor a student under the Doctorate Extension Scheme, you must agree to continue sponsoring them for the 12 months after their course. To continue sponsoring the student, you must maintain contact with them. At a minimum, there must be at least two contact points at regular intervals during the time the student is on the scheme. This arrangement is intended to enable you to continue to offer support to the student to use their time on the scheme to gain experience in their specific field or seek skilled work. However, you do not have any formal

responsibility to ensure they do this.

53. To qualify for the Doctorate Extension Scheme, students must meet the requirement set out in the table below titled Checklist for the Doctorate Extension Scheme.

Checklist for the Doctorate Extension Scheme

A student must :	✓
Have leave as a Tier 4 (General) student, or as a student under the old rules, to study a course that leads to the award of a PhD qualification	
Be studying with a Tier 4 sponsor that is a UK HEI	
Have not yet completed their course	
Have a CAS from you confirming that you expect them to successfully complete their course on the specified course end date, and that you will sponsor them during the 12 months they are on the scheme	
Be applying no more than 60 days before the end date of their course (as stated on the CAS)	

54. Sponsored students apply for the Doctorate Extension Scheme by making a new Tier 4 (General) application. They are expected to meet all the normal Tier 4 (General) criteria. You will need to assign a new CAS to them to make this application.

55. If the student is applying for the Doctorate Extension Scheme and they are studying a course which requires an ATAS clearance certificate, they will need a certificate that covers them up to the end of their course unless their course will finish within 28 days of their doctorate extension scheme application date. They do not need an ATAS clearance certificate to cover their time on the Doctorate Extension Scheme after they have finished their course.

56. If you are sponsoring a student for DES, they will need to satisfy the normal English language requirements for PhD level students. However as PhD students are studying a course at degree level or above with an HEI, you can make your own assessment of the students English language ability. This assessment could for example be based on your experience of this student and their progress to date during their studies.

57. Students on the Doctorate Extension Scheme have new work conditions when they successfully complete their course. They will be regarded as having successfully completed their course on the date that their Tier 4 sponsor formally confirms that their PhD is completed to the

standard required for the award of a PhD.

58. If the student does not successfully complete their PhD, or they are awarded a lower qualification, their work conditions will not change. You must report this on the SMS. The student's leave will be curtailed to the time they would normally receive after their course. For example if their course was three years long, their leave will be curtailed to four months from the date their course ended.

59. No compliance action will be taken against the sponsor if the student fails to leave the UK at the end of their visa or apply for further leave.

60. For more information on reporting duties and assigning a CAS to a student who wants to extend their stay under the doctorate extension scheme please see the sections titled:

- [Assigning a CAS to a student who wants to extend their stay under the doctorate extension scheme](#)
- Additional reporting for doctorate extension scheme students in the Sponsor Duties and Compliance guidance document.

Postgraduate students (writing up thesis)

61. You may continue to sponsor a postgraduate student to write up a dissertation or thesis if you are confident that you can meet your sponsor duties for them during the period leading up to its final submission, including any oral (viva) examination. If you cannot meet your duties during this period you should tell us this, and advise the student to leave the UK. You may later assign a CAS which they may use to apply to return to the UK. You may be able to meet your sponsor duties if for instance you require their continued participation in classes or by contact.

62. You must ensure students know what their term and vacation dates are, so they can comply with these limits. Students can work full time at the end of their course, provided their conditions of stay permit work during term time and they have leave to stay in the UK. The period at the end of the course is vacation for this purpose.

Students union sabbatical officers

63. A students' union sabbatical post is a full-time, salaried, elected, executive union position. A Tier 4 (General) student may be a students' union sabbatical officer for a maximum of two years, either during their course or in the academic year immediately after they graduate. The post must be at the institution that sponsors them or they must be elected to a National Union of Students of the UK position.

64. If the student takes up the sabbatical officer post while they have current permission to stay under Tier 4 (General), you must notify us of this change in their circumstances. If the student's permission was granted on the basis of a visa letter, you can email the change to: MigrantReporting@UKBA.gsi.gov.uk. If the student's permission was granted on the basis of a CAS, you must report the change using the sponsorship management system.

65. If the student wants to take up a post as a sabbatical officer at the end of their course and their permission to stay has expired, they must apply again with a new CAS from their licensed sponsor that gives details of the post.

66. The term of office for a sabbatical officer is normally one academic year and if the student takes the post after their course is finished we may grant them permission to stay under Tier 4 (General) to cover this period. If the student is re-elected after one year, they must apply again with a new CAS from their licensed sponsor that gives details of the post. They cannot apply again for a third year.

67. A work placement must be no more than 33 per cent of a student's overall course in the UK, or 50 percent if the course is at or above degree level and is studied at a higher education institution or where the course forms part of a study abroad programme. However, this does not include any time they spend as a sabbatical officer. If they have another job as well as sabbatical officer duties, they can work part-time during term-time and full-time during vacations if they do not work full-time for the students' union in the vacations.

Gifted university students

68. In exceptional circumstances, you may waive the English language requirement for a student if you are a HEI, the student is studying at degree level and you consider the student to be gifted. You must only do this if English language proficiency is not integral to that particular course of study and a pre-session course would be inappropriate.

69. If you want to waive the English language requirement for a gifted student, your academic registrar, or your institution's equivalent, must approve this and you must follow the process below.

70. When you complete the CAS you must confirm in the 'evidence provided' field:

- a) that you are treating the student as gifted;
- b) the reason why you are treating them as gifted; and
- c) the name of your academic registrar, or your institution's equivalent, their contact number and email address.

71. You must give the student an original letter signed by your academic registrar, or your institution's equivalent. This must confirm:

- a) your sponsor name;
- b) your sponsor licence number;
- c) the student's name;
- d) the student's course including the level of study; and
- e) that the academic registrar, or your institution's equivalent, considers the student to be gifted and the reason why.

72. If the student is applying from overseas they must have this letter with them when they enter the UK.

73. You must also email us details of each CAS you assign to a gifted student. Please email T4GiftedStudents@UKBA.gsi.gov.uk. Put the CAS reference number in the title of the email and your contact details and sponsor licence number in the main body of the email.

74. If we are concerned about the number of gifted students you have assigned a CAS to, we will contact your academic registrar, or your institution's equivalent.

Supplementary study

75. Tier 4 students are allowed to take extra (supplementary) study such as evening classes in addition to their main course of study. This supplementary study can be in any subject and does not have to relate to their main course of study.

76. Students do not need our permission to take supplementary study and do not have to inform you, but they must continue to meet the conditions of their permission to stay.

77. The supplementary study should not in any way hinder the student's progress on their main course of study. If the supplementary study continues after the student has completed their main course, this should not delay their departure from the UK. Extensions of leave will not be given to complete the supplementary study.

Working while studying

This sub section gives information on:

- Whether a student can work while studying and for how many hours
- Can a student volunteer while studying in the UK?
- Work that is not allowed
- Work placements

78. Tier 4 (Child) students aged 16 or over and Tier 4 (General) students maybe allowed to work while they are in the UK. The work they do can be in addition to any work placement that is part of their course.

79. There are limits on students' working hours that depend on when they applied for permission to come to or stay in the UK, the type of course they study and what type of sponsor you are.

Can a student can work while studying and for how many hours?

80. If the student used a CAS to apply to us before 4 July 2011, please see the table below titled Limits on working hours – CAS used pre 4 July 2011

Limits on working hours table – CAS used pre 4 July 2011

	10 hours per week during term-time and full-time during vacations	20 hours per week during term-time and full-time during vacations	No work Allowed
Is the student studying:			
A foundation degree course or degree courses at QCF or NQF level 6 (and equivalents) or above		✓	
Below QCF or NQF level 6 (and equivalents), (except students on foundation degree courses).	✓		

81. If the student used a CAS to apply to us after 4 July 2011, please see the table on the next page titled Limits on working hours – CAS used post 4 July 2011

Limits on working hours table – CAS used post 4 July 2011

	10 hours per week during term-time and full-time during vacations	20 hours per week during term-time and full-time during vacations	No work Allowed
The student is studying:			
At degree level (QCF or NQF level 6 (and equivalents)) or above and you are a recognised body or a body that receives public funding as a higher education institution		✓	
At an overseas higher education institution and they are on a short-term study abroad programme in the UK		✓	
At below degree level (QCF or NQF level 6 (and equivalents)) and you are a recognised body or a body that receives public funding as a higher education institution	✓		
At minimum QCF or NQF level 3 (and equivalents) if you are a highly trusted sponsor and you are a publicly funded further education college	✓		
At a minimum QCF or NQF level 4 if you are not a highly trusted sponsor and you are a publicly funded further education college	✓		
A course at any level with a Tier 4 sponsor which is not a UK HEI, a short-term study abroad degree programme at an overseas HEI or a publicly funded further education college			✓
If you are a Tier 4 (Child) student who is over the age of 16 years old	✓		
If you are a Tier 4 (Child) student under the age of 16 years old			✓

Work that is not allowed

82. Students cannot work if they do not fit into any of the categories in the section above titled Limits on working hours.

83. They cannot be self-employed or employed as:

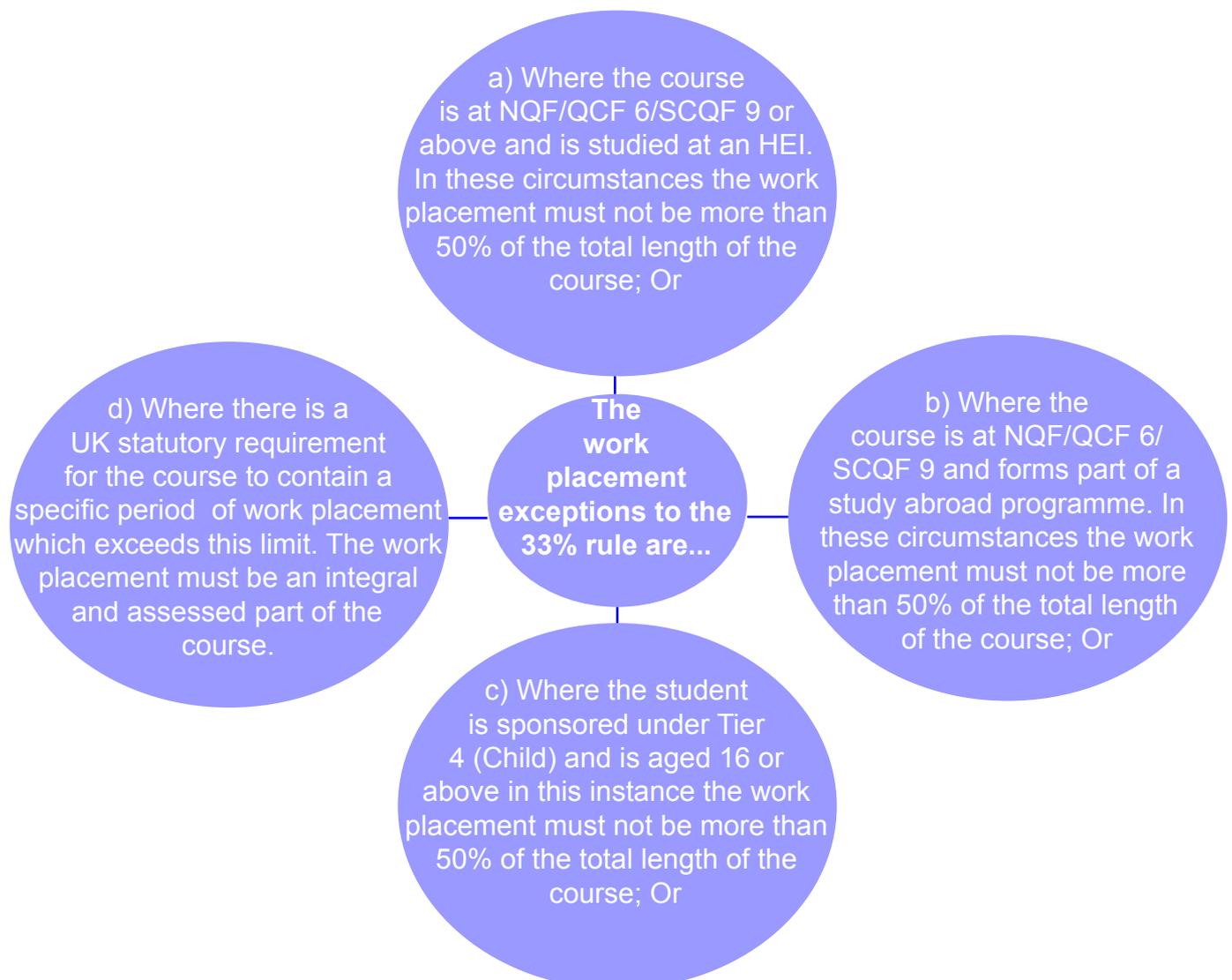
- a) a doctor in training (except on a recognised foundation programme);
- b) a professional sportsperson (including a sports coach); or
- c) an entertainer.

84. They must not fill a full-time, permanent vacancy (except on a recognised foundation programme or as a students' union sabbatical officer).

Work placements

85. The course of study for Tier 4 (General) students (or child students aged 16 or above) may include a work placement if it is an integral and assessed part of the course, but it must not be more than 33 per cent of the total length of the course in the UK. For exceptions to this 33 per cent rule, please see the diagram below titled Work placement exceptions to the 33 per cent rule.

Work placement exceptions to the 33 per cent rule diagram



86. Students who are undertaking a course of study in music or dance at NQF/QCF 6 or [SCQF 9](#) or above, are able to undertake work placements which involve a professional performance, where the performance has been arranged by the sponsoring education provider and is an integral and assessed part of the course.

87. If you are an A-rated sponsor you cannot offer courses to new Tier 4 (General) students that are below QCF or NQF level 6 and include a work placement.

88. A student who is enrolled on a higher education course at an overseas higher education institution and comes to the UK to do part of their course may also complete a work placement during their time in the UK. You can assign a CAS to cover the period of UK study and the work placement, if:

- a) the student will study with a licensed sponsor for at least 50 per cent of the total time they spend on the course in the UK;
- b) the work the student does will be an integral and assessed part of their overseas qualification; and
- c) the student will work for an employer in the UK for no more than 50 per cent of the total time they spend on the course in the UK.

89. You will be responsible for the student throughout the period of their work placement and must continue to comply with all your sponsor duties during this time.

90. We will take action against you if you offer courses with work placements to students and:

- a) you are an A-rated sponsor and the course is below QCF or NQF level 6; or
- b) the work placement element is more than 33 per cent of the total length of the course and there is no UK statutory requirement for the course to exceed this limit; or
- c) the work placement element is more than 50 per cent of the total length of the course if the course is at NQF/QCF 6 or SCQF 9 or above and is studied at a higher education institution or the course forms part of a study abroad programme, and there is no UK statutory requirement for the course to exceed this limit; or
- d) the work placement is more than 50 per cent of the total length of the course where the student is sponsored under Tier 4 (Child) and is aged 16 or above, and there is no UK statutory requirement for the placement to exceed this limit; or
- e) the study element of the course is not taken in an education institution; or
- f) the work placement is not an integral and assessed part of the course of study for which you have assigned the student a CAS to follow; or
- g) you do not continue to fulfil your sponsor duties to monitor the student while they are on their work placement.

Section 3: Assigning a CAS

This section gives information on:

- What to consider before assigning a CAS
- How to assign a CAS
- Cancelling a CAS

What to consider before assigning a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS)

This sub section gives information on:

- English language requirements
- Students studying at degree level and above
- Students studying below degree level
- Exceptions to the English language requirements
- Academic progression
- Place of study
- How long can a student stay in the UK?

English language requirements

91. We may interview a Tier 4 (General) student, either as part of their Tier 4 application overseas, or when they arrive in the UK (for example at the airport). If we interview a Tier 4 (General) student who was assigned a CAS on or after 21 April 2011 and they cannot show at that interview that their English language ability is of the standard required in the immigration rules and this guidance without an interpreter, we will refuse their application or refuse them permission to enter the UK.

Students studying at degree level and above

92. Depending on whether you are a HEI or not, you must assess this competence in one of two ways. Please refer to the glossary of terms located at the front of this document for a definition of a HEI.

a) a. If you are an HEI we will allow you to choose your own way to assess it. (You may not have to do this for 'gifted' students. Please see the section titled [Gifted university students](#) above). However, you must ensure they are proficient to level B2 in each of the four components (speaking, listening, reading and writing), unless they are exempt from being proficient in a component because of a disability.

b) b. If you are not a HEI you must make students demonstrate their level B2 English language competence by providing a recent secure English language test (SELT) from one of our approved test providers. They must have achieved at least CEFR level B2 in all four components (unless a test provider exempts them from sitting a component because of a disability). If you have doubts about any documents then you should verify them with the

appropriate body. You can read the list of our approved English language tests which is located on our pages on the Gov.uk website using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests>

Students studying below degree level

93. When you assign a CAS to students studying courses at QCF or NQF level 3, 4 or 5 (SCQF level 6, 7 or 8 in Scotland) you must ensure they are competent in English language at a minimum level B1 on the CEFR. It is not acceptable to issue a CAS based on a student’s expected results.

94. Whether or not you are an HEI, you must assess your students’ English language competence at CEFR level B1 by making them provide a recent secure English language test (SELT) which confirms that they have achieved at least level B1 in all four components (unless a test provider exempts them from sitting a component because of a disability). If you have doubts about any documents then you should verify them with the appropriate body.

95. This requirement also applies to students who are:

- a) undertaking foundation degrees;
- b) taking pre-sessional courses which are below QCF or NQF 6 before a degree course, this includes students sponsored by an HEI; or
- c) studying English as a foreign language under Tier 4 at CEFR level B2 or above.

Exceptions to the English language requirement

96. You do not have to confirm English language competence for:

- a) Tier 4 (Child) students;
- b) students moving from Tier 4 (Child) into Tier 4 (General);
- c) those who have previously completed an academic qualification equivalent to a UK degree which was taught in what we call an ‘majority English-speaking’ country,(see the table below): or

A – H	I – P	Q - Z
Antigua and Barbuda	Ireland	St Kitts and Nevis
Australia	Jamaica	St Lucia
The Bahamas	New Zealand	St Vincent and the Grenadines
Barbados		Trinidad and Tobago
Belize		United Kingdom
Dominica		United States of America
Grenada		
Guyana		

- d) those who are nationals from what we call ‘majority English- speaking’ countries, (see the table below)

A – H	I – P	Q - Z
Antigua and Barbuda	Jamaica	St Kitts and Nevis
Australia	New Zealand	St Lucia
The Bahamas		St Vincent and the Grenadines
Barbados		Trinidad and Tobago
Belize		United States of America
Canada		
Dominica		
Grenada		
Guyana		

97. Our pages on the Gov.uk website has a list of the approved English language tests for Tier 4, including how long tests are valid for, and the scores a Tier 4 (General) student must achieve to meet CEFR levels B1 and B2 in all four components (reading, writing, speaking and listening). For more information please see the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests>

98. The immigration rules specify that only academic qualifications are acceptable for point c above. We will only consider a qualification to be an academic qualification if the awarding body consider it to be an academic qualification. Professional or vocational qualifications, regardless of whether or not they are equivalent to a UK Bachelors degree, are not acceptable. If you are unsure whether or not a qualification is acceptable, you should check this with the awarding body.

99. Please also see the section titled Gifted University Students who may also be exempt from the English language requirements and [Assigning a CAS](#) section for details on how to demonstrate a student's language ability when assigning a CAS.

Academic progression

100. Since 4 July 2011, if you assign a CAS to a Tier 4 (General) student to take a course in the UK after they have finished another course in the UK under Tier 4 (General) or as a student prior to the introduction of the Points Based System, it must represent academic progression from the previous course. This applies whether the student is applying from overseas or in the UK.

101. You do not need to show academic progression if:

- a) this will be the student's first course of study in the UK; or
- b) you are assigning a CAS for a student to make a first application to complete an existing course. The student may be completing a course with you that they started with another Tier 4 sponsor, for example if the student was studying for a degree and their original sponsor had their licence revoked, then the student wishes to complete their existing course with you; or
- c) you are assigning a CAS to a Tier 4 (Child) Student; or
- d) you are assigning a CAS for a student to resit an examination or repeat a module.

102. To show academic progression the student's new course should normally be above the level of the previous course for which we gave them permission to stay in the UK as a student. For example, if a student's previous course was at QCF or NQF6 (and equivalents) we expect their next course to be at least at level QCF or NQF7.

103. However, academic progression may involve further study at the same level. In these cases, you must confirm that the new course complements the previous course. For example, a student may be moving from a taught master's degree to an MBA or research-based master's degree, or taking a course to develop a deeper specialisation in a particular field. If the course is at the same level we may request an explanation to confirm why the student has been approved by you for this course.

104. In exceptional circumstances only, the further study may be at a lower level but we expect these cases to be rare. Again, you must justify this on the CAS. We will closely monitor the situation.

105. If the student is taking a further course in the UK you must confirm that this is academic progression in the 'evidence provided' box on the CAS unless the new course is an obvious step up in academic level. For example the student is moving to a degree level course after finishing an A-level course. When the course is at the same level or a lower level you must justify this as progression. When we visit you, we may also ask you to show why it is academic progression and how you assessed it.

106. If you are sponsoring a student under the Doctorate Extension Scheme you should confirm this on the CAS. You do not need to show that the course represents academic progression.

107. If you are required to confirm the student's academic progression on the CAS, and you do not, we will refuse the student's application. We will also take action against you if:

- a) you cannot show how you assessed the progression, or we are concerned about how you assessed it; or
- b) we find, after you have assigned a CAS stating that there is academic progression, that there is no academic progression.

Place of study

108. We will accept a course that involves periods of study outside of the UK but the student must meet all the immigration requirements of the country in which they will study. If the student intends to return to the UK to continue or complete their course, it may be practical for you to continue sponsoring them for the period they are outside the UK.

109. This means you must continue to meet all of your reporting duties for the student but it also means their permission to stay in the UK will remain current and they will be allowed to return to the UK without having to apply again. However, we will assess the reports you make on the student, and may not allow them to re-enter the UK after studying abroad if they have failed to meet any requirements.

110. If a student does not plan to return to the UK or you do not want to continue to be responsible for them while they are out of the UK, you can end their sponsorship at the time they

travel overseas. If you do this, we will cancel their permission to stay in the UK. If they want to return to the UK later on, they will have to apply for a visa again. They may have to return to their country of normal residence to apply to re-enter the UK under Tier 4.

How long can a sponsored student stay in the UK?

111. We decide how long a student can stay based on the length of their course. We will calculate the length of the course from the course start and end dates you put on the CAS.

112. If a student receives government or other official financial sponsorship, we will limit their permission to stay in line with any requirements the sponsor specifies.

113. A Tier 4 (General) student is allowed to spend no more than three years studying in the UK below NQF/QCF 6 or SCQF 9 since the age of 18 studying courses that did not consist of degree level study.

114. The time a student can spend studying at or above degree level is limited to five years unless:

a) the student is studying a course at or above degree level in one of the following exceptional subject areas:

- i. Architecture;
- ii. Medicine;
- iii. Dentistry;
- iv. Veterinary Medicine & Science;
- v. Music at a music college that is a member of Conservatoires UK (CUK); or
- vi. Law, where the applicant has completed a course at degree level in the UK and is progressing to:
 - a law conversion course validated by the Joint Academic Stage Board in England and Wales, a Masters in Legal Science (MLegSc) in Northern Ireland, or an accelerated graduate LLB in Scotland; or
 - the Legal Practice Course in England and Wales, the Solicitors Course in Northern Ireland, or a Diploma in Professional Legal Practice in Scotland; or
 - the Bar Professional Training Course in England and Wales, or the Bar Course in Northern Ireland.

b) the student is studying a Post-Graduate research qualification which is listed in part 4 of Annex 6 of the Tier 4 Migrant guidance and is being studied at and awarded by a Recognised Body or an HEI. If by the time the student completes that Post-Graduate Research qualification, the time spent studying in the UK at or above degree level exceeds eight years, then we will not grant any further leave in this category. For further information please see our pages on the Gov.uk website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>

c) The student is on the Doctorate Extension Scheme.

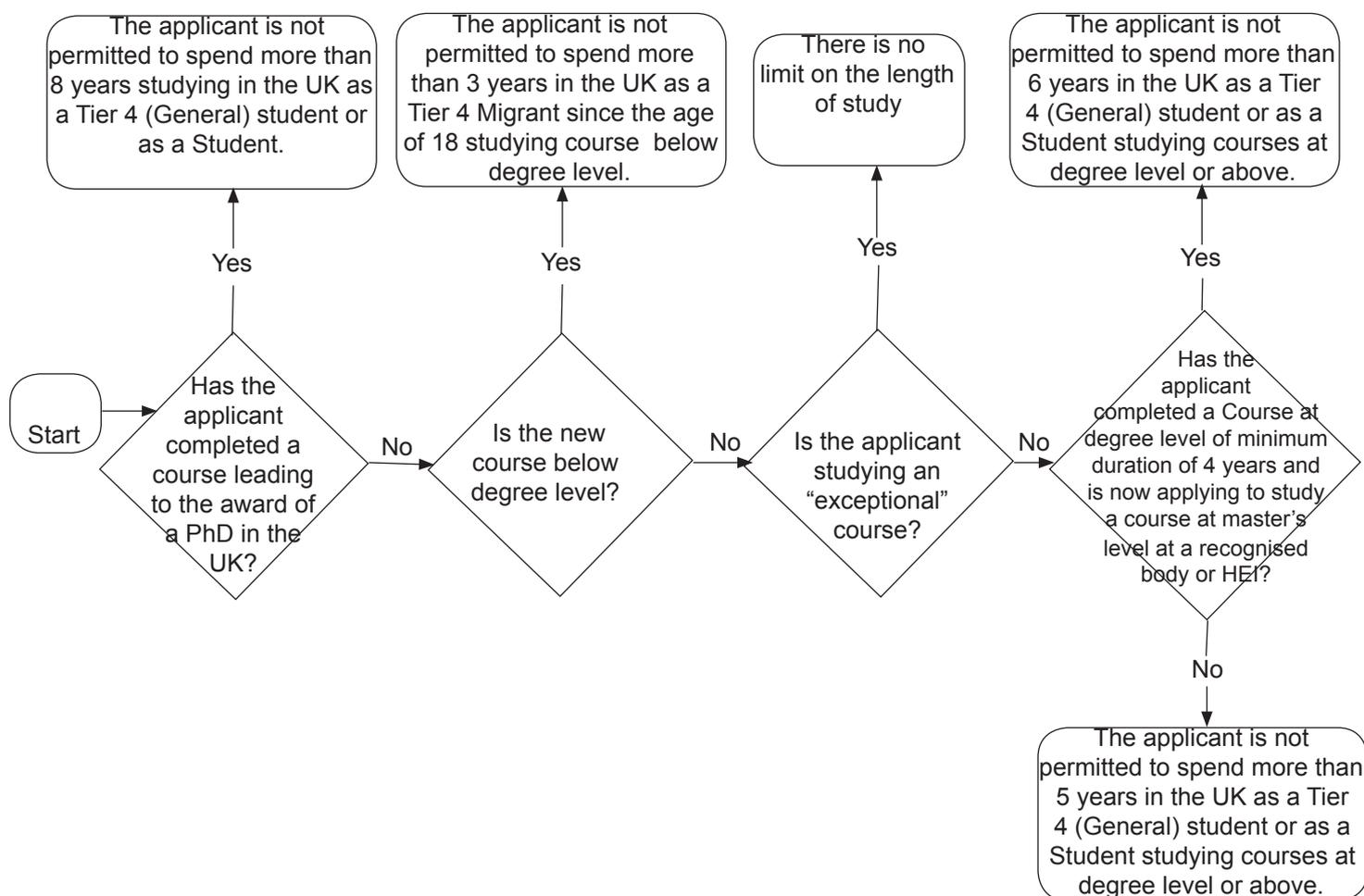
115. In all cases, if you have already completed a course leading to the award of a PhD in the UK, the grant of leave you are seeking must not lead to you spending more than eight years in the UK as a Tier 4 (General) Migrant, or as a Student.

116. We will operate the five year limit, and exceptions, in addition to the three year limit in Tier 4 (General) below NQF/QCF 6 or SCQF 9 and any time spent in Tier 4 (Child).

117. The flowchart below titled Maximum period of leave that can be granted to a Tier 4 (General) student has been developed, not to replace the text above but to assist your understanding.

Please refer to the paragraph above which highlights the exceptional courses the flowchart refers to.

Maximum period of leave that can be granted to a Tier 4 (General) student flowchart



Additional periods of leave

118. In addition to the period of leave given to the applicant to carry out their course of study, leave to remain will also be granted for the periods set out in the following table.

Type of course	Period of leave to remain to be granted before the course starts	Period of leave to remain to be granted after the course ends
12 months or more	1 month	4 months
6 months or more but less than 12 months	1 month	2 months
Pre-sessional course of less than 6 months	1 month	1 month
Course of less than 6 months that is not a pre-sessional course	7 days	7 days
Postgraduate doctor or dentist	1 month	1 month

119. These additional periods of leave to remain will be disregarded for the purposes of calculating whether a migrant has exceeded the limits as specified in paragraphs 245ZX(h) to 245ZX(hb) of the Immigration Rules and the flowchart above.

How to assign a CAS

This subsection gives information on:

- Assigning a single CAS to cover both pre-sessional and main course of study
- Assigning a CAS to a student who wants to extend their stay
 - Assigning a CAS for a new course with the same sponsor
 - Assigning a CAS to a Tier 4 Student coming to study with you from another establishment
 - Students who applied before 5 October 2009
 - Exemptions for students who applied before 5 October 2009
- Assigning a CAS to a student who wants to extend their stay under the Doctorate Extension Scheme
- Examination re-sits and repeating study

120. We have produced a document to help you complete a CAS. This help document for Tier 4 sponsors' is located on our pages on the Gov.uk website accessed using the following link: www.gov.uk/government/collections/sponsorship-information-for-employers-and-educators#user-manuals-sponsorship-management-system-sms

121. If you wrongly assign a CAS, we may take action against you.

122. If you use all of your CAS we may not allocate more to you. For more information on applying for more CAS, please see the section titled 'How many certificates of acceptance for studies (CAS) will I be allowed to assign?'

123. A student can study only with the sponsor named on their CAS or visa letter, including at any partner institution named on the CAS or visa letter. The exceptions to this are:

- a) where a student has a new sponsor with HTS status who has assigned them a new CAS and they have applied to us before their existing permission to stay has expired – please see the section titled '[Assigning a CAS to a Tier 4 student coming to study with you from another establishment](#)'; or
- b) where a student is also undertaking supplementary study, in addition to the studies they are taking with the sponsor named on their current CAS, at another education provider – please see the section titled [Supplementary study](#).

124. Before you assign a CAS you must assess a student's ability to follow a course of study. You must state on the CAS what evidence you have used to make this assessment. For example, you might:

- a) confirm any qualifications the student already has which make them suitable for the course you are offering, such as checking a master's degree if they are going to do a PhD; or
- b) base the assessment on their progress in their existing course or a recently completed course. You must take reasonable steps to ensure that you are satisfied through your assessment that the applicant's qualifications are authentic. One method of doing this would be

to contact the awarding body.

125. Before you assign a CAS you must be satisfied that you and/or the student can meet the criteria laid out in the table below titled Checklist for assigning a CAS.

Checklist for assigning a CAS

Are you satisfied:	✓
The student intends and is able to follow the course of study concerned?	
The student will successfully complete their course on the date specified on the CAS? This includes any CAS issued for the Doctorate Extension Scheme.	
The course the student intends to follow will lead to an approved qualification?	
The student is aware of their responsibility to abide by the conditions of their Tier 4 visa, including that they will leave the UK when their visa expires unless they have obtained further valid leave?	
The CAS you are assigning is for a course that represents academic progression if the student is continuing their studies in the UK? See 'Academic Progression' in the previous section.	

126. You must not assign one CAS to cover more than one course (unless in some cases the student is taking a pre-sessional course). You must assign a separate CAS for any stage of the course that leads to a recognised qualification in its own right. For example:

- a) if a series of modules leads to a certificate or a diploma, each of which is a recognised qualification in its own right; or
- b) if a student will do an HND and then a Bachelor's degree. You must assign a new CAS before each stage starts.

127. You can only assign one CAS to cover a dual award course where there is a clear cohesive programme and this programme has been signed off by the relevant awarding bodies. You must assess students for admission into both parts of the programme independently and also accept them into both parts of the programme at the same time at point of entry onto the course and assigning the CAS.

128. If an international student is specifically studying towards an Association of Certified Chartered Accountants (ACCA) qualification or an ACCA Foundation Level qualification (formally known as Foundations in Accountancy), you can only assign a CAS and/or deliver this course to them if you are an ACCA approved learning partner – student tuition (ALP-st) at either Gold or Platinum level. For more information about the levels of ACCA approval please see: <http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/learning-provider/acca-approved/applying-for-approval.html>

129. You must state on the CAS at what level you have assessed the student's language ability, and give the name of any formal assessment they have, if appropriate.

130. If you have used an approved English language test to check that a student is competent in English language at a minimum of CEFR level B1 or B2, you put their test result for each

component on the CAS and the name of the test provider. You must put this information in the text box 'Is SELT required' under the 'Course details' section on the CAS. It is not acceptable to use a student's expected results.

131. However, you do not have to do this if you are an HEI and you have used an approved English language test to assess a student's competence at level B2 (for courses at QCF or NQF 6 (SCQF level 9 in Scotland)) or above. In these cases you must have seen scores that the approved test provider specifies are equivalent to level B2 in each of the four components, but you only need to state on the CAS that the student is proficient to B2 level in each of the four components.

132. You must keep records of the specific method or combination of methods you used to ensure your student's language competence.

133. The student automatically meets the English language requirements if they have successfully completed a course as a Tier 4 (Child) student (or under the student rules that applied before 31 March 2009, if they were given permission to stay in the UK while they were under 18 years old). The course must have lasted for at least six months, and must have ended no more than two years before the date when you assign the CAS. If you have used this to prove their competence in English language, you must state this on the CAS.

Assigning a single CAS to cover both pre-sessional and main course of study

134. A single CAS can be assigned to cover both the pre-sessional course and the main course in the following circumstances.

- a) Where you are an independent school and:
 - i. you have made an unconditional offer to a Tier 4 (Child) student for a main course of study at your independent school and the student will also take a pre-sessional course, as defined above; and
 - ii. the total length of the pre-sessional course plus main course of study is not more than the maximum time for which the applicant may stay in the UK as a Tier 4 (child) student.
- b) Where you are a higher education institution and:
 - i. you have made an unconditional offer to a Tier 4 (General) student for a main course of study at degree level, and the student will also take a pre-sessional course as defined in the section titled [Pre-sessional courses](#) with you or with a partner institution named on your licence; and
 - ii. the pre-sessional course is no more than three months long; and
 - iii. the pre-sessional course ends no more than one month before the main degree course.

135. You may also issue a single CAS where:

- a) the pre-sessional course is an English language course that is no more than three months long and will end no more than one month before the main degree course; and

b) the student has demonstrated their ability to speak English at B1 level by providing a SELT meeting the requirements of this guidance and you are satisfied that on completion of the pre-sessional English language course the student will have reached B2 level and will proceed to the main degree course.

136. Sponsorship must be withdrawn if on completion of the pre-sessional course, the student has not reached B2 level.

137. In any other circumstance, the student will have to make two separate applications with two separate CAS, to come to the UK to study.

Assigning a CAS to a student who wants to extend their stay

138. If you are considering assigning a CAS to someone who is already in the UK, you should discuss their current immigration status with them. If they are not a Tier 4 student then they may not be allowed to switch from one immigration category to another. We recommend that any application for an extension of leave to remain in the UK is submitted to us before a student's existing leave expires. If you assign a CAS to a student whose leave has already expired, both you and the student should be aware that applications made by those who have overstayed by more than 28 days will fall for refusal, unless there were exceptional circumstances which prevented them from applying earlier. The threshold for what we consider to be exceptional circumstances is very high, as set out in the Tier 4 Student policy Guidance for students. You can access this guidance located on our pages on the Gov.uk website using the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student>

139. A Tier 4 student who is in the UK may want to extend their stay to:

- a) complete their existing course with the same sponsor; or
- b) take a different course with the same sponsor; or
- c) take a course with a new sponsor

140. If the student intends to stay with the same sponsor, we treat their application as an extension to their existing permission to stay in the UK. If they want to change to a different sponsor, we treat their application as a completely new one.

Assigning a CAS to continue the same course with the same sponsor

141. If one of your existing students applies to extend their permission to stay in the UK to continue the same course, the [course start date](#) on the CAS must be the day after their current permission expires. You should state on the CAS that the student will continue on the same course. Put this in the 'evidence provided' box. You must also explain that their ability to continue the course is based on their progress to date and any other assessments you have made.

142. We will only extend permission to stay to the maximum time allowed under the relevant sub-category, and only if the student meets all of the Tier 4 requirements at the time they apply.

143. You can assign a CAS up to six months before the student's current permission to stay expires.

Assigning a CAS for a new course with the same sponsor

144. If a student wants to do a different course of study with you, their existing Tier 4 sponsor instead of the course for which their permission to stay was granted, they do not need to get permission from us provided:

- a) they have enough time left in their permission to stay to finish the new course; and
- b) the new course is at:
 - i. the same level as the course for which the student was given permission to stay; or
 - ii. a higher level than the course for which they were given permission to stay; or
 - iii. a lower level, provided the conditions and requirements of their permission to stay are the same as they would be given if they made an application for their new course.

145. If the student's new course is shorter than their original one, you must tell us immediately.

146. If the student is a Tier 4 (General) student, the new course must still represent academic progression from their last course.

147. In any other circumstances, including if the student has finished the course of study for which their permission to stay was granted, they must make a new Tier 4 application if they wish to change their course.

Assigning a CAS to a Tier 4 student coming to study with you from another establishment

148. When a student changes to a course with a different sponsor, they must apply again under Tier 4, with a CAS from their new sponsor. There is an exception for students whose current permission to stay was based on an application before 5 October 2009 - see the next section called ['Students who applied before 5 October 2009'](#).

149. They must not start their new course until we have approved their new application unless:

- a) the new sponsor has HTS status; and
- b) the new sponsor has assigned them a CAS; and
- c) they applied to us before their existing permission to stay expired.

150. Students moving to an A-rated sponsor must not, under any circumstances start their new course until we have approved their new application.

151. The new sponsor will be responsible for them as soon as we grant the new permission.

152. A student can study only with the sponsor named on their CAS. This includes studies at any partner institution named on the CAS. Students should not apply for permission to start a new course with a new sponsor too early. If they do, they may be unable to complete their existing

course because their new permission only allows them to study with their new sponsor.

153. If a student leaves their original sponsor before we approve their new application, they may not be able to return to the course with their original sponsor if we refuse their application.

Students who applied before 5 October 2009

154. If a student wants to take a course with a new sponsor, and their current permission to stay is based on an application made before 5 October 2009, they must get our permission. Tier 4 (General) students can do this using application form T4(PTS), 'Application for permission to switch Tier 4 educational sponsor'.

155. If the student is Tier 4 (Child), their [parent or guardian](#) must complete the form.

156. We will give permission for the student to change sponsors if we can confirm that:

- a) the institution they want to move to is licensed by us under the relevant Tier 4 category;
- b) the new institution wants to be their new sponsor; and
- c) the new course meets the requirements in this guidance.

157. We will acknowledge a student's request for permission to change their sponsor and will write to them as soon as possible to either give them permission to start studying with their new sponsor, or to refuse permission.

158. A student who has applied for permission to change their sponsor may start their new course before receiving it, but should be aware that we may refuse to give this permission. We may cancel a student's permission to stay under Tier 4 if they change their academic institution without our permission.

Exemptions for students who applied before 5 October 2009

159. Students who want to change their course and currently have permission to stay based on an application made before 5 October 2009 are exempt from two changes introduced in 2010.

- a) English language courses do not need to be at CEFR level B2. They are permitted to start a new English language course at a minimum of CEFR level A2.
- b) They can start a new course with the same sponsor even if that sponsor does not hold HTS status. But if their current permission expires before their new course starts, they cannot extend their stay to start a new course at QCF or NQF level 3, or below QCF or NQF level 6 which includes a work placement, unless their sponsor holds HTS status (or is deemed to hold it while we consider an application to renew it).

Assigning a CAS to a student who wants to extend their stay under the Doctorate Extension Scheme

160. If one of your existing students applies to extend their permission to stay in the UK under the Doctorate Extension Scheme, the course start date you enter on the CAS should be the date on which you issue the CAS.

161. If one of your existing students applies to extend their permission to stay in the UK under the Doctorate Extension Scheme, the course end date you enter on the CAS should be the date you expect to formally confirm that their PhD is completed to the standard required for the award of a PhD.

162. You must not assign a CAS for a student who wants to extend their stay under the Doctorate Extension Scheme more than 60 days before the expected end date of the PhD.

163. Doctorate Extension Scheme students will be continuing their current course before entering into the 12 months leave after their course, and therefore will not be studying a course at a higher level. You should state on the CAS that the student is currently studying a PhD with you, and that you are sponsoring them under the Doctorate Extension Scheme, as the reason why the course represents academic progression. Put this information in the 'If the same or lower supply justification text' box.

164. If you are sponsoring a student to extend their permission to stay in the UK under the Doctorate Extension Scheme you must confirm that:

- a) you are sponsoring the student under the Doctorate Extension Scheme; and
- b) you expect the student to complete their course and gain a PhD on approximately the stated course end date; and
- c) you will continue to sponsor the student for the 12 months after their course is complete; and the student is aware of their responsibility to abide by the conditions of their Tier 4 leave, including that they will leave the UK when their visa expires unless they have obtained further valid leave.

Put this in the 'Evidence used to obtain offer' box.

Examination re-sits and repeating study

165. In exceptional circumstances we will allow students to re-sit examinations or repeat any part of their course more than twice for any individual examination or module but we may ask you to justify this.

166. If you are an A-rated sponsor, your students cannot re-sit examinations or repeat any part of their course more than twice.

167. If the student's permission to stay expires before they finish the re-sit or repeat, they must apply to extend it before their current permission expires. You must decide whether or not to continue sponsoring them, based on your assessment of their ability to pass the course.

168. You may continue to sponsor a student during the re-sit or repeat period if you require their continued participation (in classes or by contact) and are confident you can meet your sponsor duties for them during the re-sit or repeat period.

169. If you do not require their continued participation within 60 days of the next academic period starting (except for recognised vacation periods) you should not continue to sponsor them. If they have ongoing permission to stay in the UK, you should tell us this and advise them to leave the UK. Alternatively If their permission is due to expire, you must not assign a CAS and they must

arrange to leave the UK. You may later assign a CAS which they may use to apply to return to the UK.

Cancelling a CAS

170. We can cancel a CAS you have assigned under Tier 4 at any time if we find you were not entitled to assign it, for example if it was assigned:

- a) through misrepresentation or fraud; or
- b) for a course that you are not permitted to offer to Tier 4 students.

171. You can withdraw a CAS that you have assigned to a student if they have not yet used it to support an application for a visa or an extension of stay. You must do this using the SMS.

172. If a CAS is cancelled or withdrawn we will not refund your fee.

173. Once a CAS has been cancelled or withdrawn, we will automatically refuse any application supported by that CAS.

174. If the student is already in the UK, we will cancel or reduce (curtail) their permission to stay if we find that the CAS on which we based that permission was improperly assigned. We will:

- a) curtail their permission to 60 calendar days (to give them a chance to find a new sponsor) if they were not actively involved in the CAS being assigned improperly. Their leave will be curtailed to 60 days from the date of our letter informing them that their leave has been curtailed; or
- b) immediately end their leave if they were actively involved.

This is the end of the 'Assigning CAS and Sponsoring Students' guidance document.

Please also see the guidance documents 'Applying for or Renewing a Tier 4 Sponsor Licence and Highly Trusted Sponsor Status' and 'Sponsor Duties and Compliance'