



International Students - A Guide to Visa Conditions across the English Speaking World

In 2012 the Home Secretary announced her plans to tighten some aspects of the student visa system, mainly below graduate level. The Australian, American and Canadian governments have also recently reviewed their student regimes. This note compares the outcomes and demonstrates that the UK is internationally competitive. Fuller details are at Annex A.

	UK	Australia	Canada	New Zealand	USA
Sponsor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
English Language	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Maintenance Funds	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Health Insurance	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Interview	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Genuine Intent Assessment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dependants	Yes, with restrictions.	Yes, with restrictions.	Yes	Yes, with restrictions.	Yes
Working Rights	Yes, 20 hours per week, with restrictions.	Yes, 40 hours per fortnight.	Yes, 20 hours per week.	Yes, 20 hours per week, with restrictions.	Yes, with many restrictions.
Extensions (academic progression)	Yes, but must demonstrate academic progression.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maximum Length of Study	5 years, with exceptions for PhDs etc.	No	No	No	No
Other requirements	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Post Study Work Rights	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Annex A

	UK (Tier 4 Visa)	Australia (573 Visa)	Canada (Study Permit)	New Zealand (Student Visa)	USA (F1 Visa)
Sponsor	Applicants must be issued with a letter of acceptance from a registered sponsor.	Applicants must have a letter of acceptance for a registered course.	Applicants must have a letter of acceptance from a designated education institution.	Applicants must have an offer of a place from a NZ education provider.	Applicants must have a letter of acceptance from an approved educational institution.
English Language	Yes. Applicants must demonstrate English Level B2 English on CEFR in all four components of language (Equivalent of IELTS 5.5).	Yes. Applicants must meet Level 6 in all four components of language on IELTS.	No.	No language requirement but applicants must have the appropriate level of English proficiency for their programme as deemed by education provider..	No language requirement but applicants must be prepared to provide scores from standardised language tests required by sponsor.
Maintenance Funds	Yes. This varies depending on your circumstance.	Yes—applicants must have enough money to pay for tuition and living costs for themselves, and dependants This includes a minimum of AUS \$18,610 (£10,235) per year living expenses plus the full costs of tuition.	Yes—applicants must have enough money to pay for tuition and living costs for themselves and dependants This includes a minimum of C\$10,000 (£5,400) for a 12 month period plus the full costs of tuition.	Yes—applicants must demonstrate that they have sufficient funds available to meet their living costs during their stay.	Yes—sufficient funds to cover tuition and living costs during the period of intended study.
Health Insurance	No - Students have full access to the NHS. Residents of certain countries are required to be screened for TB.	Yes –Proof must be submitted when lodging a visa application. Students must also meet certain health requirements and may need to undergo a health examination.	Yes - There is no health cover for students while in Canada and insurance is advisable. Applicants must be in good health and willing to complete a medical examination, if necessary.	Yes - Applicants are required to have acceptable medical insurance while studying in New Zealand. PhD and NZ Aid programme supported students are not required to have insurance. Applicants may be required to provide a Medical and Chest X-ray Certificate.	Yes - Students are advised to obtain health insurance as there is no free health provision.

Interview	Yes. Applicants may be asked to attend an interview, includes online/telephone interview.	Yes. Students may be asked to attend an interview including over the telephone.	Yes. Applicants may be asked to attend an interview.	Yes. Applicants may be interviewed over the telephone.	Yes. An interview at the embassy consular section is required for all student visa applicants from age 14 to 79.
Genuine Intent Assessment	Yes. The genuine intent of a student may be assessed by an interview.	Yes. Applicants must demonstrate that they genuinely intend to stay in Australia temporarily	Yes. Applicants must satisfy an immigration officer that they will leave Canada at the end of their authorised stay.	Yes. Applicants must show that they genuinely intend a temporary stay in New Zealand.	Yes. Applicants must demonstrate that they intend to depart from the US upon completion of the course of study.
Dependants	Yes –only postgraduate students studying a minimum of 12 months can bring dependants.	Yes – but depends on nationality and level of study. Undergraduate students and above from low risk countries can bring dependants. Those from high risk countries can bring dependants if their course is longer than 12 months or they have been in Australia for 12 months. Below this level, dependants are not permitted to join.	Yes	Yes – partners and children may be granted an appropriate visa depending on the programme of study of main applicant.	Yes
Working Rights	Yes. Undergraduate level students and above can work up to 20 hours per week during term time and full time during scheduled breaks. Students studying below this level can work up to 10 hours per week during term and full time during holidays. Students at privately funded colleges are unable to work.	Yes. Students can work 40 hours per fortnight during term time and full time during scheduled breaks. There is no limit on the numbers of hours that students can work if they are studying at postgraduate level.	Yes. Students can work up to 20 hours per week during term time and full-time during scheduled breaks.	Yes, with restrictions. Students that meet certain study level, duration and provider requirements can work up to 20 hours per week during term time and full time during scheduled breaks. There is no limit on number of hours that Research Masters or Doctoral students can work.	Yes—with many restrictions. Students can only work on-campus in their first year. Students in their subsequent years of study may up to 20 hours per week off campus in a role related to their studies and approved by their school however post study work is consequently restricted.
Extensions	Yes, but applicant must prove academic progression.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes

Maximum Length of Study	Yes - Five years with some exceptions for PhDs, Medical Courses etc.	No	No	No	No
Other requirements	No	Yes - Applicants must have no outstanding debts to the Australian government and must declare that they will respect Australian values obey the law.	Yes - Applicants may need a criminal and security check.	Yes - Applicants wishing to study for more than 24 months have to provide police certificates as evidence of good character.	No
Post Study Work Rights	Students can switch into Tier 2 if they find a graduate level job paying £20,500 per year. Students are granted an additional four months after they complete their course to find work. Work visas can be granted for up to five years and can lead to settlement. There are no restrictions on where the graduate can work for and no restrictions on the field of work.	<p>Graduates who have obtained a Bachelor degree or higher at an Australian university are eligible for a two year post-study work visa. Those completing Masters and Doctorate degrees may be entitled to three and four year post-study work visas respectively.</p> <p>Students are not required to have a job offer in order to access the post-study work scheme and there are no restrictions on the type of employment that students can undertake.</p> <p>Those below graduate level can apply for a two year Graduate Work visa but the nominated occupation must be closely linked to the qualification studied.</p>	Students of eligible courses can obtain a post-study work visa of up to three years depending on the length of course studied.	<p>Students who have completed an eligible qualification in New Zealand may be granted a Post-study work visa (open) for 12 months. A job offer is not required. A further 2 year Post-study work visa (employer assisted) can be granted if the student obtains a job offer relevant to their qualification.</p> <p>NZ\$4,200 (£2,130) is required for applicants of the Post-study work visa (open) to support themselves while looking for work.</p>	<p>US university graduates may apply for permission to work under the Post-Completion Optional Practical Training programme.</p> <p>OPT allows a foreign graduate to work for 12 months beyond graduation. STEM graduates can work for up to 29 months.</p> <p>The work must be in a field related to their studies and</p> <p>The period which a student can engage in post-completion OPT is limited if a student has engaged in pre-completion OPT (i.e. employment during their studies).</p>

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