Q. What happens if I still have a long period remaining on my existing visa when I am due to complete e.g. 11 months, can I just use my existing visa to remain and look for work after I have completed?

A. No, if your Tier 4 visa was issued with a CAS number once your degree has been awarded and you have surplus leave on your existing visa, the University is obliged to report your early completion to UKVI and your visa may be cut short (curtailed). You should instead apply under the Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme before you complete to give you the correct permission to remain and look for work.

Q. My visa will expire before I can apply for the DES visa. What can I do?

A. You will have to apply for a normal student extension under Tier 4 for more time to complete your course and then apply for the DES visa at the appropriate time. However, if you are handing in your final thesis within 60 days, you may be eligible to apply for a Doctorate Extension Scheme visa. For check if you are eligible to do this, please contact tier4visa@lincoln.ac.uk

Q. What kind of employment am I not allowed to take up?

A. You cannot work as a doctor or dentist in training or a sportsperson (including coaches). You are permitted to take up any other form of employment or be self-employed. Note that if you wish to progress to Tier 2, your employment must meet the requirement for this visa.

Q. Am I restricted to how many hours I can work on a Tier 4 visa under the Doctorate Extension Scheme?

A. No, the Tier 4 visa under the Doctorate Extension Scheme does not limit the number of hours you can work in a week.

Q. Can I use the student batch scheme to apply?

A. Yes, the University's International Advice Team can check your visa application form and documents and then submit the application to UKVI.

Q. Am I still eligible for the Doctorate Extension Scheme if I receive a lower award i.e. Master of Philosophy?

A. No, the Doctorate Extension Scheme is only available to students who are on track to receive a PhD. If a student is not conferred a PhD after the DES Tier 4 visa application is submitted, the University would need to withdraw sponsorship of the application.

Q. Is there a fee for the University sponsoring me for the Doctorate Extension Scheme?

A. No, there is no charge for the request of a DES CAS and the only fee you will pay will be the cost of the Doctorate Extension Scheme visa application.
Q. I have had my viva and have been told I have major amendments to do on my thesis, why am I not eligible for the Doctorate Extension Scheme?

A. The University allows research students up to 12 months to complete major amendments on their thesis. As the UKVI rules are clear that you cannot submit a DES Tier 4 visa application until 60 days before your 'completion date', you would not be eligible to apply whilst you have major amendments to complete until near your hand in date.

Please contact the Tier 4 Compliance team for further advice on the ideal time to complete a DES CAS request form.

Q. Would I need to have found employment to be eligible for the Doctorate Extension Scheme?

A. No, you would not need to have found employment prior to applying for the Doctorate Extension Scheme.

Q. Would my Doctorate Extension Scheme visa get cancelled if I do not find employment?

A. No, the University will not withdraw sponsorship if you cannot find employment.

Q. Can I apply for the Doctorate Extension Scheme from my home country?

A. No, you must make an application within the UK. Once you have received your DES Tier 4 visa, you may return home for visits if you wish.

Q. Can I extend my stay in the UK after my 12 months under the Doctorate Extension Scheme?

A. There is no option to extend the DES visa for longer than 12 months. As long as your DES visa is still valid (not expired or curtailed) you can switch into Tier 2 or Tier 1 (Entrepreneur). You would need to meet the requirements for the relevant tier.