Tier 4 - Doctorate Extension Scheme

What is the Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES)?

- The Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES) allows PhD students to extend their Tier 4 visa for additional time in the UK.
- This scheme is only available to PhD students who will soon complete their course.
- It allows a PhD student up to an additional 12 months in the UK to look for, and engage in employment or be self-employed.
- During this additional 12 months, the PhD student will still be sponsored by the University of Lincoln. This means that any successful application under the DES must maintain contact at least three times in the 12 months and continue to update the Tier 4 Compliance team of any contact details.
- If contact is not maintained and details are not updated, the University of Lincoln will withdraw DES sponsorship; the student’s Tier 4 visa will be reported and cancelled by the Home Office.

Am I eligible?

- To apply, you must be a PhD student coming to the end of your course but must not have completed your course (please see ‘When can I apply?’ below).
- You must hold a valid Tier 4 visa which allows study in the UK and sponsored by the University of Lincoln.
- You must have sufficient funds available and be able to demonstrate this.
- You must apply inside the UK.

When can I apply?

- You will only be eligible to apply after your viva has taken place, a ‘completion date’ has been established by the Tier 4 Compliance Team and all supporting documents have been reviewed by the International Advise Team.
- The ‘completion date’ will be based on the outcome of the viva as follows:
  - If following the viva there are no corrections, the ‘completion date’ will be the 1st of the month after the viva date (e.g. if the viva is on 16th May, the ‘completion date’ will be 1st June).
  - If following the viva there are minor amendments, the completion date will be the 1st date of the month 3 months after the viva date (e.g. if the viva is on the 16th May and minor corrections are needed, the completion date will be 1st September as this is the 1st day of the month 3 months later).
- If the viva is completed and you have major amendments or have to resubmit your thesis, you will not be eligible for the Doctorate Extension Scheme until you are near completion.
- Applications for Tier 4 under the Doctorate Extension Scheme must be made within 60 days of the ‘completion date’.

How to apply?

- Once you have completed your viva and have been advised that you have either no or minor amendments you will need to complete the DES CAS request form.
- Once you have submitted your DES CAS request form, you will be contacted by the Tier 4 Compliance Officer with a decision within 10 working days on whether you are eligible for the Doctorate Extension Scheme.
- If you are eligible for Doctorate Extension Scheme, the Tier 4 Compliance Office will confirm your ‘completion date’ and provide you with a CAS for your Tier 4 visa application for DES.
- The International Advice Team will be available to help you with your Tier 4 DES visa application. The team will be able to check your application and post it to UKVI Batch team on your behalf.
What documents do I need?

- Your completed DES CAS Request Form
- Your current passport
- Your BRP (if applicable) or visa stamp in passport
- A CAS
- Your bank statements (or other financial documents) covering 28 days
- A letter from your official Financial Sponsor consenting to the application (only applicable if you are currently sponsored by an official financial sponsor or have been in the last 12 months)
- 2 x passport size photographs
- Your Police Registration Certificate (if applicable)

Please note: UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) will only accept original documents, unless otherwise stated. You should keep a copy of all documents sent to UKVI including your completed application form.

CAS

- You will be issued a CAS if your DES CAS request form is successful and has been approved by the Tier 4 Compliance team.
- You will need the CAS statement before you can complete your Tier 4 visa application for the Doctorate Extension Scheme.

Funds

- You will need to show that you have the funds to support yourself whilst in the UK on the new Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme visa.
- As a current or recent student you may have an established presence and may be eligible to use the lower living cost. Please check with the International Advice team for how much you would need to in your bank statement to demonstrate the required maintenance funds to satisfy the UKVI.
- The amount of living costs must be held in your bank account for 28 days before you apply for the Tier 4 visa. The balance in your bank account must never fall below the required amount during the whole 28 day period.
- The bank statements you submit must meet the requirements of UKVI.

ATAS

- The Home Office states that students applying for the Doctorate Extension Scheme can continue to study on the course to which their ATAS Certificate applies to. You do not need an ATAS Clearance Certificate to cover your time on the Doctorate Extension Scheme after you have finished your course.

Application form

- If your request for a DES CAS is successful, you will be asked to pay for the Immigration Health Surcharge and provide proof of the payment and reference number (by email to tier4visa@lincoln.ac.uk) before the CAS is released to you.
- Because of the close timing between when you can apply for the DES Tier 4 visa and the ‘completion date’, you will need to prepare your supporting documents to ensure that you are ready to apply quickly.
- The Tier 4 (General) application is now an online application. This means that you must complete the form online, print the receipt and submit it along with your supporting documents to UKVI.
- The International Advice Team, located in the Student Support Centre at the Brayford Campus, will be able to help students apply for the Tier 4 visa for the Doctorate Extension Scheme.

Your obligations

During the term of the doctorate extension scheme you must understand and agree to:

- Notify the Tier 4 Compliance team (tier4visa@lincoln.ac.uk) once I have applied for my visa.
- Send a copy of my DES visa to the Tier 4 Compliance team to enable the University to comply with the Home Office sponsorship duties.
- Inform the Tier 4 Compliance team (tier4visa@lincoln.ac.uk) if I receive a visa refusal from the Home Office.
- I understand that the University will need to contact me at least three times a year to confirm that I
am still in the UK and seeking, or engaged in employment.

- Keep my student contact details (address, email and contact telephone numbers) up-to-date with the Tier 4 Compliance team (tier4visa@lincoln.ac.uk) at all times.
- Inform the Tier 4 Compliance team (tier4visa@lincoln.ac.uk) when I permanently leave the UK (the University will report this to the Home Office and your visa will be cancelled).
- I understand that failure to reply to email requests from the University could result in a report being made to the Home Office and my visa being cancelled.
- I understand that the University of Lincoln does not accept any liability in relation to the applications for the Doctorate Extension Scheme. The University only acts in an advisory and administrative capacity to facilitate the process (including the issuing of a CAS) but it is my responsibility to ensure that the CAS issued and the application submitted are correct and meet the Home Office’s requirements.

**Dependants**

- If you have dependants in the UK with you, they will be able to extend their stay by applying for a visa extension as a Tier 4 DES dependant.
- If your dependants are not currently in the UK, they will be able to join you by applying for a Tier 4 DES dependant entry clearance visa. More information and guidance can be found on the UK Visas & Immigration website at https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/family-members