Switching from Tier 4 Visa to a Tier 2 general Visa in the UK

This visa enables you to remain in the UK to take employment. There are a number of different routes to obtain a Tier 2 visa but the most common route for graduates is described below.

**You can switch in the UK if:**

- You have a valid tier 4 visa.
- You have finished your course successfully AND been notified of your final degree result in writing or email.
- If you are a PhD student you must have completed at least 12 months of study in the UK towards a UK PhD.

If you apply in the UK and you still have leave remaining on your student visa, your employer will not have to pass the Resident Labour Market Test. This means that your employer will not have to search the UK and EU job market and prove that you were the most suitable applicant, before they can offer you the job. Furthermore, your application will not affect the restricted numbers of non-EU applicants that your employer can offer a job to. This will make it much easier for an employer to offer you a position in their company. It is worth including this in your cover letter.

*The shortage occupation list is mainly for jobs in medicine and engineering. You can read the list and the list of graduate level jobs defined by the Migration Advisory Committee on the Home Office website.*

In addition to being exempt from the RLMT requirements, applicants switching into Tier 2 from a Tier 4 student visa are considered to be 'New Entrants', rather than 'Experienced Workers', and as a result the two salary thresholds which must be met (that specific to the job type, and the Tier 2 minimum threshold) are lower:

The Tier 2 minimum salary threshold for a 'New Entrant' is £20,800 minimum per annum significantly lower than the 'Experienced Worker' threshold of £30,000 per annum.

* Please note, however, that if a Tier 2 CoS is being issued for longer than three years the applicant is considered to be an 'Experienced Worker', and the higher salary thresholds apply, even if they would otherwise be considered to be a 'New Entrant'.

Reading the employers guide for Recruiting International Graduates will be useful it’s aimed at employers, but it highlights some of the concessions made for new graduates switching into this category and looks at misconceptions employers have. Make sure your prospective employer understands the rules as they apply to you as a current Tier 4 visa holder switching in the UK. Just search “Recruiting-International-Graduates-A-Guide-for-Employers” you will find this information on the The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) website.
Documents needed for your application:

1. A CoS (Confirmation of Sponsorship) you will get this from your employer
2. Original Degree Certificate. If the certificate has yet to be issued, you must submit an original academic transcript or an academic reference on official headed paper from the university stating you have successfully completed your course (and, if you haven’t yet graduated, that your degree certificate will be awarded in due course. UG results are usually published in June/August and PG results in November/December. You can request this letter from the Student Support Services. Or provide a letter that you completed the first year of your PhD.
3. If you received a full scholarship for both tuition fees and living expenses during your course from a government or international scholarship agency you will need a letter from your scholarship provider stating that they consent to you remaining in the UK.
4. Maintenance funds: You currently need to present original bank statements proving that you have a minimum daily balance of £945 (if applying in the UK or overseas) for a continuous 3 month period.
6. Application Fees: (£ up to 3 years) £677 via post or £1,267 premium service. (up to 5 years) £1,354 via post or £1,944 premium service.
7. You’ll also have to pay the £200 per year healthcare surcharge as part of your application. Check how much you’ll have to pay before you apply.

Applying from outside the UK

If you want to benefit from the concessions of being a student, you must apply for Tier 2 from inside the UK before your current visa expires. If you can only apply from outside the UK, your employer will have to pass the Resident Labour Market Test and they will have to use a 'restricted' COS to sponsor you

Dependants

You can include your dependants with your application and they will need to apply online. The PBS dependant application form and PBS dependant guidance notes for dependants applying from within the UK are available at:


Savings

- You must show that your dependants can be supported while they’re in the UK.
- Each dependant must have £630 available to them whether they apply with you or separately. This is in addition to the £945 you must have to support yourself.
- You must have proof you have the money, and that it’s been in your bank account or your dependant’s bank account for at least 90 days before you or they apply.