



Student  
Services



International Student Support

# Travel Guide

Tier 4 visa holders' guide to  
travelling in the UK and overseas.

# Introduction

As a Tier 4 visa holder, your priority while you are in the UK is to study on the course that your visa has been granted for. However, you also have a great opportunity to travel around the UK, Europe or beyond during the official university vacation periods (or for research students, during vacation periods agreed with your Director of Studies).

You will need to plan travel around your course and are strongly advised not to take time out of your studies to travel. Immigration officials may question you on departure from the UK and on your return if you travel during term time (and not at the weekend). Term time means any period when you are supposed to be doing academic work. This includes periods when you should be preparing for exams, doing coursework, writing essays, a dissertation or thesis as well as periods when you have scheduled classes. Study weeks and examination periods are not classed as vacation periods, even if you are not required to sit any exams. Travel during term-time is generally not permitted (unless for a conference, etc directly related to your studies). It is therefore vitally important that any planned trips are made only during permitted vacation periods. You must therefore speak to your Programme Leader/Director of Studies and also contact the International Student Support team if you think you may need to travel during term-time as your attendance on your course is monitored for Home Office compliance purposes.

Before you travel, make a paper copy and photograph of your passport and Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) card and keep them separate to your travel documents. If your hostel or hotel has a safe, it is a good idea to leave your passport and BRP and spare money there. If you lose your passport or BRP or these are stolen you will have to apply for new permission to enter the UK from overseas before you can return – this process can take several weeks. Contact the International Student Support team immediately (see page 5 for contact details) if your passport and/or BRP are lost or stolen while you are travelling overseas and also see the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) website [www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Passport-visa-and-BRP-problems#RL](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Passport-visa-and-BRP-problems#RL) for information on how to apply for a temporary BRP from outside the UK (click on the link which says 'BRP lost or stolen outside the UK').

You are advised to take out travel insurance if you are travelling with valuables and to protect you if you need to cancel a trip or if your travel arrangements are cancelled or delayed by the travel operator.

**Please note that travel letters will only be issued if travel plans fully coincide with the university's official vacation periods.** The target processing time for issuing letters is 5 working days from the date all relevant information is received.



# Travel within the UK

HOST UK is a voluntary organisation which offers international students the opportunity to visit a UK home for a day, weekend or for a few days at Christmas. The purpose is to provide a unique experience of UK life as well as an opportunity for cultural exchange between the student and host. UWS students are not charged for HOST UK visits as the university will pay the administration fee on your behalf – you just have to pay your travel expenses. You can specify how much you can commit to spending on your travel expenses and you would then be offered a visit within your budget. You can also apply for a visit with a friend. See [www.hostuk.org](http://www.hostuk.org) for further information and to apply online.

Look out for **'Discover Scotland'** trips organised by UWS Student Services department, at the Scottish campuses. Trips are generally advertised on UWS social media and around campus. This is not only a good way to see some of the Scottish scenery and attractions but is also an opportunity to meet other students. Destinations include: Stirling Castle, Edinburgh, St Andrews and Loch Lomond.

You can of course make your own travel arrangements if you wish to visit another part of the UK. You will need either your passport or other photographic ID to travel within the UK by air. However, you can travel by train and coach/bus without this.

## Travel visas

If you plan to travel overseas (other than to your home country), check if you need to apply for a visa. Search online for the embassy or consulate of the country (or countries) that you wish to travel to – their website will tell you if someone of your nationality needs a visa to travel there and will detail the application process, including required documentation, visa fee, and target processing times. You may need to book an appointment with an embassy to apply for a travel visa. Please note that appointments can be booked up a few weeks in advance so it's worth planning ahead. You may find that the country you wish to travel to requires that visa applicants' passports are valid for at least 3 months after the date any travel visa would expire. Also, if you have a visa for the UK, you may find that a country that you'd like to travel to requires your UK visa to be valid for up to 6 months following the planned end date of your trip – it's therefore important to plan when is the best time to travel.

Many European countries are part of the Schengen Visa scheme. This scheme allows those wishing to visit certain countries to travel between those countries using only one visa. See the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) website [www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Living-in-the-UK/Travel-in-Europe#layer-5145](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Living-in-the-UK/Travel-in-Europe#layer-5145) for further information on the scheme including which countries are involved, how and where to apply for this visa and the supporting documentation required.

If you need to apply for a visa to travel overseas, you will be required to provide the embassy/consulate with a letter from UWS in support of your application. These letters can be requested through the 'international tile' on the Hub Portal at [hub.uws.ac.uk](http://hub.uws.ac.uk). You must ensure that your travel plans are fixed before requesting your letter.

# Visiting your home country

Returning to your home country during term-time is generally not permitted. This is not only so that you keep up with the demands of your course, it's also to protect your status as a Tier 4 visa holder. You must therefore speak to your Programme Leader/Director of Studies if you feel that you may need to return home during term-time.

You are advised to travel with a status letter, a copy of your CAS and a printout of your term dates in your hand luggage – you may need to show these to immigration officials both on departure from and on your return to the UK. These can be obtained through Self Service Banner or the Hub Portal [hub.uws.ac.uk](http://hub.uws.ac.uk).

Your attendance on your course is monitored for Home Office compliance purposes and you are expected to attend all classes at all times.

**Research Students** have an allocated amount of time agreed with their Supervisor when they can take annual leave during term time. Please contact the Graduate school to complete the 'Change of Circumstances' form for any travel out with the UK.

## International Student Support Team Contact Details

Telephone: 0141 848 3800

E-mail: [internationaladvice@uws.ac.uk](mailto:internationaladvice@uws.ac.uk)

Appointments: Telephone 0141 848 3800 to book an appointment on Paisley Campus or to arrange a telephone or Webex appointment.

Moodle: International Student Support

Quick Questions: (check campus availability)

Follow us on Twitter: @uws\_IntSupport

If you need urgent immigration advice and the International Student Support Team are not available, call the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) Student Advice Line on 0207 778 9214 from 1-4pm, on weekdays (except on bank holidays) for assistance.



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