



### Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) Visa Guidance

The Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa allows non-European graduates to extend their stay in the UK after graduation to establish their business with the support of the University's Enterprise & Employer Engagement Team. You must meet the formal eligibility requirements to apply for the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa. This has 2 elements; firstly this relates to your business idea, and secondly to the Immigration Rules and therefore your visa application.

#### Who can apply?

The programme is open to University of West of Scotland recent graduates from any degree discipline and postdoctoral researchers who have Tier 2 immigration permission. Your UK degree means that you meet the English language requirements. You must be working on a business idea and be currently enrolled at UWS or have recently graduated to apply.

You cannot apply to the scheme if you have previously had a Tier 1 Post Study Work visa and endorsement through the International Graduate Scheme or Engineering Graduate Scheme. Time spent on a Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa will not count towards settlement in the UK.

#### When to apply?

Applications to the scheme are ongoing with the year running from April to April to ensure a strong business proposal and for administration purposes. Applicants must allow 3 months prior to their visa expiring in order to apply. To be endorsed for the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa, your business idea must be a genuine and credible idea, demonstrating innovation and high

growth potential. You must also show that you can demonstrate the necessary graduate entrepreneurial skill-set.

#### What funds do I need?

You must have relevant funds in your bank account of £945 if you are applying from within the UK and £1890 from outside the UK. This is to prove you can support yourself and you must have had this in your bank account for 90 days before you apply.

#### How long will the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa last?

Places are limited for the scheme and it is a competitive process. Leave is initially granted for 12 months, with a possible extension to 24 months if the sponsoring body, University of West of Scotland, confirms progress.

#### Entrepreneurial Skills

It is important you demonstrate an enterprising skill-set that enables you to think creatively, be innovative, take initiative and identify opportunities. Along with your passion and drive to succeed, these are integral to becoming a successful entrepreneur. Use the UWS Start-Up Guide to help you.

#### Business Plan

Follow the criteria below to help you consider your business idea and its potential. This will help you to assess your business idea and what to consider when writing your business plan. Use the UWS Business Plan template to help you.

What is required	How to work on this	How this is assessed
<p><b>A genuine, innovative and credible idea which has high growth potential.</b></p> <p>You must demonstrate that your idea has commercial viability and potential.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>You must show you are genuinely interested in progressing with your business idea and that your idea is achievable with the opportunity to develop.</p>	<p>Register your idea with Enterprise and Employer Engagement then make an appointment to discuss your idea at an Enterprise Clinic.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Utilise the UWS Start-Up Guide and Business Plan template.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Engage with start-up support opportunities such as workshops and events at UWS.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Get support from start-up organisations such as Business Gateway and Scottish Institute for Enterprise.</p>	<p>Through a one to one Enterprise Clinic.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>By submitting your business plan for feedback to Enterprise &amp; Employer Engagement.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>By providing a viable case for why you are applying for a graduate entrepreneur visa and what makes you suitable in your application.</p>

What is required	How to work on this	How this is assessed
<p><b>Serious intent to establish the business in the UK.</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>Demonstrating that you intend to dedicate the majority of your time developing your business idea in the UK.</p>	<p>Your business plan must demonstrate why and how your business will operate in the UK.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>You must have researched the market and its competitors and established Unique Selling Points for the business.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Outline your forecast for the business and the time and resources you need for your business to grow.</p>	<p>This will be discussed at your one to one Enterprise Clinic.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Although we recognise that you may need to work part-time to support yourself, you will need to dedicate the majority of your time to your business.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Prioritise any training and support events that you are required to attend.</p>

What is required	How to work on this	How this is assessed
<p><b>Genuine engagement and commitment to the programme.</b></p> <p>If successful, it is part of the conditions of the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa scheme that you complete the quarterly progress report.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>It is important you keep engaged with your Enterprise Adviser and International Adviser and that you actively engage with the programme of support including any workshops and events.</p>	<p>You must keep in contact with your Enterprise Adviser and the International Team.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Complete the quarterly progress report every 3 months to reflect on your progress and identify any skills gaps that you feel you need support with.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Actively engage with the university's start-up support workshops and events.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Get support from external organisations for networking and broadening your knowledge and expertise.</p>	<p>Keep in regular contact with Enterprise &amp; Employer Engagement and International Support.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Complete any relevant tasks on time.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Participate in workshops, networking opportunities and events and tell us about how these have helped you in your progress report.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Regularly revisit your business plan to make changes and ongoing developments.</p>

## Application Process

- To find out more about applying for the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa, students must contact the International Student Support Team (Student Services) to check if they are eligible to apply for this visa ([internationaladvice@uws.ac.uk](mailto:internationaladvice@uws.ac.uk)). A note of interest will then be forwarded to the Enterprise & Employer Engagement Team if the student meets the conditions to apply.
- Once a student has a genuine and credible business idea that they would like to take forward as part of their visa application, they should initially register their outline idea with Enterprise & Employer Engagement ([studententerprise@uws.ac.uk](mailto:studententerprise@uws.ac.uk)) then a Business Plan (template can be provided) should be developed for assessment.
- Approval of the Business Plan is authorised by Johnny Mone, Head of Enterprise & Employer Engagement and may go through a panel review process. Please allow 3 months for the business plan validation and approval process to ensure maximum potential success rate.
- If the business plan is approved by Enterprise & Employer Engagement or an independent panel organised by the team, then it will be signed off by the Head of Enterprise & Employer Engagement.
- References are then required to support the visa application from a relevant academic within the student's school.
- When the student has been awarded their degree and the business plan is approved, the endorsement letter can then be approved and signed off by the Dean of School. At this stage the student is required to give written consent to the University's Compliance Officer ([Alison.Devlin@uws.ac.uk](mailto:Alison.Devlin@uws.ac.uk)) to allow UWS to monitor their progress in establishing a business, and to request information from them as required.
- The student is able to make their visa application once they have their endorsement letter. The student is then advised to make an appointment with an International Student Adviser (ISA) in order to get their visa application form and documents checked. Students can also apply from their home country however would need higher funds.
- Documents required for Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa application:
  - Funds in bank account for 90 days (currently £945 within the UK and £1890 from outside the UK) – not more than 1 month old
  - Passport with valid immigration status
  - Endorsement letter (no need to submit evidence of academic qualifications)
- Once the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa application and supporting documents are checked you should pay the required immigration health surcharge <https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/pay> and then complete your online visa application.
- Once the application is submitted the student must check with an International Student Adviser (ISA) when they can start working on a self-employed basis.
- As soon as the documents are returned, ISA (or student) informs Enterprise & Employer Engagement, the School and Student Records of the new Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa expiry date.
- The student adheres to a contract agreed with the School for maintaining contact with UWS (endorsing body) at least once every 3 months during the year. You will need this support if you want to apply for a further 12 months' immigration permission as a Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur).
- The student is required to engage with Enterprise & Employer Engagement as part of their endorsement with UWS under the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa scheme. You are required to complete a short progress report on your business indicating developments on a 3 monthly basis and submitted at quarterly intervals agreed with your Enterprise Adviser.
- Although the student is expected to spend most of their time setting up the business, they will be able to work outside of the business in order to support themselves financially.

For further information on the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa please check up-to-date guidance on the following websites:  
UKCISA (UK Council for International Student Affairs) [www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Working-after-studies#layer-3796](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Working-after-studies#layer-3796)  
UKVI (UK Visas and Immigration) [www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applications-under-tier-1-graduate-entrepreneur](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applications-under-tier-1-graduate-entrepreneur)