



Important Update on UK Visa Regulations

Dear Colleagues and Partners

Ahead of the busy peak season in the coming weeks in summer, we are writing to you to ensure that you are aware of the new UKVI immigration rules introduced since earlier this year that may impact your students.

1. **Short Term Study visa (11 months)** for students joining an English language course for up to 11 months has lowered its age requirement from 18 years old to 16 years old.
2. **Tier 4 General maintenance requirement** for Residential Independent School applicants has been revised to include accommodation fees. This may impact any students joining CATS/CSVPA colleges who are opting for college accommodation. We have revised the CAS template to provide clear information on maintenance requirements in the CAS statement. For full details please refer to the examples provided in the updated [Evidence of Your Finances: CATS/CSVPA](#) for Tier 4 General applications.
3. From 6th July 2018, there are 11 new '**low risk**' countries to be added to [Appendix H](#) of the Immigration Rules. These new countries/territories are:

- 1) China
- 2) Cambodia
- 3) Indonesia
- 4) Thailand
- 5) Bahrain
- 6) Kuwait
- 7) Maldives
- 8) Dominican Republic
- 9) Mexico
- 10) Serbia
- 11) Macau

Oman, which is currently on the list of Appendix H, is to be removed from 6th July 2018.

Appendix H nationals are able to take advantage of differentiation arrangement when they submit visa applications from their country of citizenship or country of domicile, as well as in the UK.

4. **Academic evidence for Tier 4 applications:** From 6th July 2018, applicants may provide a 'print out' of a qualification or transcript from the awarding body's online checking service. It must include specified information and the Home Office reserves the right to request a hard copy.

5. **UK online visa application portal:** We are informed that Visa4UK website is to be formally replaced by Access UK around August 2018. Therefore we strongly advise our partners to start using the [Access UK](#) website for their new applications so as to familiarise themselves with the new online system.
6. **Electronic Visa Waiver scheme:** The waiver can be used in electronic form so applicants need no longer print it out. This currently applies to passport holders from Kuwait, Oman, Qatar or the United Arab Emirates. See full details on [Home Office website](#).

We hope the summary above provides a useful reference but if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the Immigration Compliance team via e-mail: visahelp@ceg-uk.com

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Question: Are students from 'low risk' countries exempt from taking UKVI IELTS test?

Answer: No. Low risk country students are not automatically exempt from taking UKVI IELTS. The differentiation arrangement only allows low risk nationals the option not to submit original academic documents, financial evidence and English language documents with an aim for faster and smoother application process. This does not however waive the requirement for SELT for Tier 4 General applications automatically. Tier 4 sponsors will require the UKVI IELTS in order to assign Tier 4 General CAS where applicable. Students may qualify for SELT exemption as per the rules in Tier 4 guidance - please visit CEG [visa info website](#) for further details.

2. Question: Is the 28-day requirement for bank statements no longer applicable to 'low risk' country applicants?

Answer: The differentiation arrangement for low risk nationals provides easier application process with an aim to faster application process. Home Office however still have the right to request those documentations. Therefore students are advised to ensure they still meet the relevant requirements, such as ensuring sufficient funds being held for a consecutive 28 days before submitting their visa application, to avoid delay in the visa process or potential refusal in the case of failure to provide relevant documents upon request by UKVI.

3. Question: Will students from 'low risk' countries be able to provide less documents for other visa applications such as short-term study visa application?

Answer: The 'low risk' country list (Appendix H) only applies to Tier 4 applications so visa nationals still need to follow the same documentary requirements as per current requirements of other visa routes such as Short-term study visas or other points-based system visa routes (e.g. Tier 1 or Tier 2).

4. Question: Under what circumstances will CEG request additional documentations for applicants from 'low risk' countries?

Answers: CEG may request additional documents for applicants from 'low risk' countries if there's a potential risk of visa refusal. Below lists some examples of such increased risks:

- Students who have had previous refusal
- Students from identified 'high risk' regions within 'low risk' countries such as Fuqing & Changle in Fujian province, China
- Students with unexplained source of funds

CEG will adopt a different CAS issuance process for students with a profile of increased refusal risk in order to ensure students have the best chance of visa success.

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