Student Visitor Visa or Tier 4 student visa?
If you are intending to study with us for only one semester and not take any form of employment (paid or unpaid, this includes work placements/service learning) you can come to the UK as a **Student Visitor**.

If you plan to take a job, internship or work-placement, or will be studying for longer than 6 months, you will need to obtain a **Tier 4 Student Visa**.

**Student Visitor – how to apply**
If you are a **visa national** you will need to apply for a Student Visitor Visa. You can apply online at [http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/visiting/student/apply/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/visiting/student/apply/) Entry clearance as a Student Visitor can be applied for from within any country outside of the UK (it does not have to be the country where you normally live).

If you are a non-visa national, you can either apply via the link above or apply at the airport when you arrive in the UK. St Mary's will issue a Student Visitor letter prior to your departure, please bring this letter with you in your hand luggage and present it to the Immigration Officer on arrival. If you are planning to go on any trips during the semester you will need to take this letter with you for re-entry into the UK.

Please see the Student Visitor information sheet for more details.

**Tier 4 General Student Visa – how to apply**
You will not be able to make your visa application in the UK, please see the [UKBA website](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/) for information about how and where to make your application.

Before you can apply for a visa you will need a “Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies” (CAS). This is a unique identification number that is generated once St Mary's sends information about your programme of study to the UK Border Agency. Before we can issue a CAS we will require the following:

1. **Confirmation of your intention to apply for a Tier 4 student visa** – email [studentvisas@smuc.ac.uk](mailto:studentvisas@smuc.ac.uk)
2. **Copies of:**
   - the ID page from your passport
   - English language scores (if applicable, see below)
1. If you have evidence you have sufficient money for tuition and living costs (see information below)
2. Your most recent academic transcript

3. If you are a [low risk national](#) (see below) we will only need a copy of your passport.

Once we have received the necessary information, St Mary’s will email you your CAS. It is your responsibility to check the information is correct, and you should use the CAS information to complete the Tier 4 visa application form (available on the [UKBA website](#)).

The UKBA charge an application fee of £298, paid as the equivalent in your local currency.

**English language requirements**

If you are not from a [majority speaking English country](#) or your degree is not taught in English, you will need to show you have met the UKBA’s English language requirements (e.g. IELTS score of 5.5 overall and no less than 5.5 in any component). You should send a copy of your English test result to St Mary’s and we can assess if it sufficient.

**Proof of funds (money)**

Not showing enough money, or showing incorrect evidence of your money, is the most common reason for Tier 4 visa refusals. You must therefore ensure that you read this information carefully and that your documents meet the UKBA’s requirements.

You need to demonstrate that you have sufficient funds to pay for the course and support yourself during your stay. The UKBA need evidence of accommodation and living costs in the form of £800 for each month of your course, up to a maximum of nine months. For single semester students, this amounts to £3200 if you are coming in semester 1 and £4000 for semester 2. With the tuition fee included, you will need to show you have a total of £7700 (semester 1) or £8500 (semester 2) available to you. If you have paid part of your tuition fee already this can be deducted from the final amount you need to show. This money will need to have been held in your account for a minimum of 28 days prior to the application being made. This means that the account must not have dropped below the amount that you need to show at any time during the 28 day period. The Tier 4 section of the [UKBA website](#) has more information about maintenance funds.

**Documents that you need to submit with your visa application**

You will need to submit original documents of:

1. Academic transcript
2. Proof of English language (if applicable)
3. Proof of the necessary funds (money) in the form of a recent bank statement, the final date of this 28 day period must not be more than 31 days old on the date that you submit your application. For example, if you submit your visa application on 1st November, the earliest final date of the bank statement is 1st October
4. Passport
5. Two passport photographs: in colour, no obstructions and a neutral expression
6. Documents not in English: If any of your documents (e.g. transcript or bank statements) are not in English, you must also provide a certified translation. You must provide the translator's credentials, along with their official confirmation that the translation is accurate.

When completing the application form be sure to match all information with what we have provided with your CAS. The UKBA will reject any incomplete or incorrect applications.

'Low risk' applicants

Some nationalities are considered by UKBA as “low-risk” and will not normally need to provide all the supporting documents stated above (only 4 and 5). However, they may still ask for the documents, and have the right to refuse your visa application if you do not have them, therefore you should prepare the documents as if you were presenting them with your application.

The nationalities where this applies are:

- Argentina
- Australia
- Botswana
- Brunei
- Canada
- Chile
- Croatia
- Hong Kong
- Japan
- Malaysia
- New Zealand
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Taiwan (if you hold a passport issued by Taiwan that includes the number of the identification card issued by the competent authority in Taiwan)
- Trinidad and Tobago
- USA

How to apply

Applications can be made online, and you will need to enrol your fingerprints and facial image (known as 'biometric information') at a visa application centre. More information about how to apply can be found here.

Once you have received your CAS, you should make your visa application as early as you can, but no earlier than 3 months before your course start date.

If you have any queries, please contact studentvisas@smuc.ac.uk

For additional information please see the UKBA's Tier 4 policy guidance and the UK Council for International Student Affairs website.