How many hours a week can I work?

The maximum hours you can work during term-time are normally printed on your visa sticker or Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), and will depend mainly on when you made your most recent immigration application. If your visa sticker or BRP is not clear, select the date you applied from the list below.

The date on which you applied means:

- the date on which you paid the immigration fee if you made an entry clearance application outside the UK
- the date on which you submitted an online (not a print and send) leave to remain application in the UK
- the date on which you posted your application if you sent it in the UK (this is the date on which you sent your documents if you applied using the print and send application form)
- the date on which you attended a premium service centre if you applied in person in the UK using the paper or print and send application form.

If you will need to make a Tier 4 student immigration application on or after 3 August 2015 in order to complete your course, your course must meet the requirements explained in 3 August 2015 to present.

You might need to make an immigration application so that you can study a course at a higher level or at a different type of institution. In this case, you must comply with the work conditions you have from your original immigration permission until you receive a decision on your immigration application.

If your employer is outside the UK, your hours of work undertaken in the UK still count towards your limit of 10 or 20 hours a week in term time. You should also check with HMRC whether you are required to pay National Insurance contributions in the UK.

Last modified: 15 July 2015

3 August 2015 onwards

During term time you can work for a maximum of

- 20 hours a week if you are studying at degree level or above at a higher education institution
- 20 hours a week if you are on a study abroad programme at an "overseas higher education institution" in the UK
• 10 hours a week if you are studying a course that is below degree level at a "higher education institution"
• 10 hours a week if you have immigration permission as a Tier 4 (Child) Student.

The Home Office defines a higher education institution as a Recognised Body or as an organisation that receives public funding as a higher education institution from specific funding bodies. You should check with your college or university if it meets this definition, or the Home Office's definition of an "overseas higher education institution" if you are on a study abroad programme.

If you are not covered by any of these provisions, you will not be able to work in the UK during term time or in your vacation periods unless you are doing a work placement, or you have been elected as a Sabbatical Officer or you are on the Foundation Programme for postgraduate doctors and dentists. This is likely to affect you if you are studying at a college in the private sector or a publicly-funded further education college.

Always check what the sticker in your passport or your biometric residence permit (BRP) says and make sure that you do not work more hours a week than it allows. It should specify whether you are allowed to work 10 hours or 20 hours a week in term time. It will say if you are not allowed to work.

If you have permission to work, you should not work more than the maximum number of hours (20 or 10) in any one week in term time, even if you sometimes work under the maximum number of hours a week in other weeks.

If you have permission to work, you can work full time during vacation periods, before your course starts and after your course has ended.

**Work placements**

If you apply for your leave on or after 3 August 2015, you might be able do a work placement as an assessed part of your course, even if you are not otherwise allowed to work.

Work placements can be part time or full time, paid or unpaid, but you can do them only if

• your Tier 4 sponsor has Tier 4 Sponsor status, or
• your course is at degree level or above, or
• you have immigration permission as a Tier 4 (Child) Student and you are at least 16 years old.

If you can do work placements, the time you spend doing them depends on the level of your course and your education provider.

You will be able to spend up to half of your course doing work placements, or longer if there is a legal requirement for this, only if you have Tier 4 (Child) immigration permission or if:

• you have Tier 4 (General) immigration permission and
• your course is at degree level and
• your education provider meets the Home Office's definition of a higher education institution.

If you do not meet all of these requirements, your work placements can take up a maximum of one third of your total course.

Check with your Tier 4 sponsor if it has Tier 4 Sponsor status or if it meets the definition of a higher education institution. If you do not know whether your course is at the right level for doing work placements, ask your Tier 4 sponsor.

If you are allowed to work for 10 or 20 hours a week, you can carry out this work in addition to time spent on a work placement. This is confirmed in Home Office guidance for employers.

6 April 2012 - 2 August 2015

During term time you can work for a maximum of

• 20 hours a week if you are studying at degree level or above at a higher education institution
• 20 hours a week if you are on a study abroad programme at an "overseas higher education institution" in the UK
• 10 hours a week if you are studying a course that is below degree level at a "higher education institution"
• 10 hours a week if you are studying a course at any level at publicly-funded further education college
• 10 hours a week if you have immigration permission as a Tier 4 (Child) Student.

The Home Office defines a higher education institution as a Recognised Body or as an organisation that receives public funding as a higher education institution from specific funding bodies. You should check with your college or university if it meets this definition, or the Home Office's definition of an "overseas higher education institution" if you are on a study abroad programme.

If you are not covered by any of these provisions, you will not be able to work in the UK unless you are doing a work placement, you have been elected as a Sabbatical Officer or you are on the Foundation Programme for postgraduate doctors and dentists. This is likely to affect you if you are studying at a college in the private sector.

Always check what the sticker in your passport or your biometric residence permit (BRP) says and make sure that you do not work more hours a week than it allows. It should specify whether you are allowed to work 10 hours or 20 hours a week in term time. It will say if you are not allowed to work.

If you have permission to work, you should not work more than the maximum number of hours (20 or 10) in any one week in term time, even if you sometimes work under the maximum number of hours a week in other weeks.
If you have permission to work, you can work full time during vacation periods, before your course starts and after your course has ended.

**Work placements**

If you applied for your leave on or after 6 April 2012, you might be able do a work placement as an assessed part of your course, even if you are not otherwise allowed to work.

Work placements can be part time or full time, paid or unpaid, but you can do them only if

- your Tier 4 sponsor has Tier 4 Sponsor status, or
- your course is at degree level or above, or
- you have immigration permission as a Tier 4 (Child) Student and you are at least 16 years old.

If you can do work placements, the time you spend doing them depends on the level of your course and your education provider.

You will be able to spend up to half of your course doing work placements, or longer if there is a legal requirement for this, only if you have Tier 4 (Child) immigration permission or if:

- you have Tier 4 (General) immigration permission and
- your course is at degree level and
- your education provider meets the Home Office's definition of a higher education institution.

If you do not meet all of these requirements, your work placements can take up a maximum of one third of your total course.

Check with your Tier 4 sponsor if it has Tier 4 Sponsor status or if it meets the definition of a higher education institution. If you do not know whether your course is at the right level for doing work placements, ask your Tier 4 sponsor.

If you are allowed to work for 10 or 20 hours a week, you can carry out this work in addition to time spent on a work placement.

**31 March 2009 - 5 April 2012**

If you made your Tier 4 immigration application on or after 31 March 2009 and before 6 April 2012, you can remind yourself of your work conditions in Table 2 of a Home Office document for employers called [Frequently asked questions about the illegal working civil penalty scheme](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Study-work--more/Working-during--...).

**Before 31 March 2009**
If you made your most recent application for student immigration permission before 31 March 2009, your work conditions are explained in Home Office guidance for caseworkers about 'pre-Tier 4' students.

What is term time?

For most students, regardless of when you applied for your leave, term time and holiday or vacation dates are defined by your institution's calendar. These dates are usually based around the academic year with holidays at Christmas, Easter and in the summer. Where courses do not follow the usual August/September to June pattern, term time means any period when you are supposed to be doing academic work. For example, when you should be

- attending classes and lectures
- preparing for exams
- doing coursework
- writing essays, a dissertation or thesis.

Your vacation periods, when you can work full time, are the period when you are not required to be studying. This will be different depending on the type of course you are doing. For example, if you are supposed to research and write a dissertation or thesis while other students are on holiday, this is term time for you and you should restrict your work to 20 (or 10) hours a week during this time.

From 16 May 2014, employers have a legal obligation to check your term dates before you can start work. You must provide your employer with one of the following:

- a printout from your institution's website showing the term and vacation dates for your course
- a copy email or letter from your institution to you confirming your term and vacation dates
- a letter from your institution to your employer confirming these dates.

Home Office guidance for employers confirms that you can work full time during the additional periods of immigration permission you are granted before your course starts and after it ends.

Working if you leave your course before it has ended

You should not work at all if you leave your course or take a break from it before you have completed it. This is because your permission to work depends on your following a course of study that has work rights attached to it. This is confirmed in the Home Office guidance for employers.

Working after studies have ended
Most students have immigration permission that extends beyond the end of their studies. You can work full time for this extra period once you have completed your course. The student policy team at the Home Office confirmed to us on 20 August 2013 that it regards the period after your course has ended and before your immigration permission expires as 'vacation'. This information is now included in the Home Office's publication An employer's guide to right to work checks.

If you finish your course early, your Tier 4 sponsor will report this to the Home Office. If you have more than 60 days' leave when your early completion is reported, the Home Office will contact you to let you know that your immigration permission will be cut short (curtailed). Leave is usually curtailed to the new end date plus the additional period you were originally granted, for example one month, two or four months after the new end date. Full details of curtailment are in the Home Office's modernised guidance. You can work full time between the new end date of your course and the new expiry date of your immigration permission. Employers need to see confirmation from your university or college that you have now completed your course.

Although your student work conditions allow you to work full time after your course has ended, some Home Office staff do not always accept this. Be careful about leaving the UK during this period if you want to come back with your student immigration permission. A border force officer can decide that you no longer meet the requirements of the student Immigration Rules and cancel your permission. This is particularly important for you if you want to stay in the UK as a student or if you want to make an application in a work category of the Immigration Rules. It is safer if you either make your next immigration application:

- in the UK before you leave, or
- while you are outside the UK, in the country where you usually live if you need to make a work application.

If at the end of your course you apply to stay in the UK under a work route, for example Tier 2, you can work full time until your work application is decided.

You must not take work that is in breach of your student conditions. For example, you must not do a job that is a permanent vacancy or take work as a professional sportsperson or entertainer. However, if you have Tier 4 leave, and you have completed a course of degree-level study at a recognised body or institution in receipt of public funding as a higher education institution, the Immigration Rules allow you to start your Tier 2 job after you have applied for Tier 2 leave and before the Home Office makes a decision on that application, even if the job is a permanent vacancy. Check with your Tier 4 sponsor if it is a recognised body or an institution in receipt of public funding as a higher education institution.

Similarly, if you have applied for Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) leave, you can start your business before you receive a decision from the Home Office on your application. If you have applied for further Tier 4 leave under the doctorate extension scheme, you can undertake a permanent full-time job, be self-employed or work as an entertainer before
you receive a decision on your application as long as your university or college has confirmed to you that you have completed and passed your doctorate.

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