

If you hold a Tier 4 (Student) visa, then Imperial College London is your immigration sponsor whilst you are in the UK, and you are required to be in full-time attendance. This information sheet explains how your Tier 4 visa status will be affected if you are not in full-time study, either because of an Interruption of Study or due to a requirement to take resit examinations during your studies or at the end of your course. If you have any queries regarding the regulations governing Resit examinations or Interruptions of Studies then please contact the Registry: [records@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:records@imperial.ac.uk).

## 1. Interruption of Studies

Some students may decide (for personal, medical or financial reasons) to take a temporary break in their studies. At Imperial College, this is called an Interruption of Study and needs to be approved at an appropriate level within your academic department (e.g. Senior Tutor or Director of Postgraduate Studies). In most cases, you will need to leave the UK during the Interruption of Study, unless medical advice states that you are too ill to travel (please keep written evidence of this if it is the case). If the interruption results in a change to your course end date, the College is required to report this to the Home Office to let them know that you have deferred your studies with the intention of returning in future. This means that Imperial has withdrawn sponsorship of your visa during the interruption period. A withdrawal of sponsorship will normally result in curtailment of your visa and the need to apply for a new visa to return to the UK in order to resume studies at a later stage (see next page).

## 2. Resit with attendance

In some cases, the Examination Board will recommend that you resit a year of study “in attendance”. This means that you will have to re-register to repeat a full year of study, which will require a payment of full tuition fees for that same year again. The only visa implication in this case is that you will probably need to extend your visa for another year in the future, due to the repeat year. The International Office can help you with a student visa extension. Please be aware that the Home Office has set a limit of 5 years on the amount of time that can be spent in the UK at undergraduate level (with an exception for Medicine), so students with more than one resit year may be affected by this cap.

## 3. Resit without attendance (mid-course)

A more common situation is for students to be withdrawn from study due to failed exams, which means that you cannot progress to the next level of the course until you have re-taken some resit exams. In this case, you will be resitting without attendance. If you are in this situation you will need to leave the UK during the time when you are not attending classes. The College will report this to the Home Office, thus withdrawing sponsorship. The report to the Home Office will normally result in curtailment of your visa and the need for you to apply for a new visa to return to the UK in order to take the resit and proceed with the rest of your course (see overleaf). Students required to take summer resit examinations or SQTs will not be affected unless they are unsuccessful in those examinations.

## 4. Resit at the end of your course

Masters students and some final-year undergraduates may have to take some resits after their course end date and after their Tier 4 student visa has expired. In this case, as there is no further attendance on the course required, the College will not be able to sponsor you for a Tier 4 visa. Instead, you must leave the UK, and apply for a Short-term Study visa to return for the resit exam(s) (see overleaf).

## What happens when a visa is curtailed?

In situations 1-3 above, where you have outstanding leave to remain (a valid visa), the College must report your interruption / resit to the Home Office, which will result in the existing visa being curtailed. When your visa has been curtailed, the Home Office will send a letter to your last known address or to your sponsor institution to confirm this. You will usually have 60 days (from the date of the letter) to either leave the UK or obtain a CAS and apply for a new visa (eg to study full-time elsewhere, although there may be progression issues if you plan to do this). After 60 days, you no longer have the right to remain in the UK and become an 'overstayer'.

## IMPORTANT

In the past, the Home Office has not always been successful in notifying students that their immigration permission has been curtailed. To avoid accidentally staying in the UK illegally, we would strongly recommend that you leave the UK as soon as possible once your interruption or decision to resit an exam comes into effect.

## Applying for a new visa to return to the UK

### Tier 4

In situations 1-3 above, you will need to apply for fresh entry clearance (Tier 4 student visa) from your home country in order to return to the UK for your resit or to continue with your studies. In order to do this, please request a new CAS number by emailing [records@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:records@imperial.ac.uk). Where relevant, please include information about your resit date, or the date when you plan to continue with your studies. Please note that you cannot apply for a Tier 4 (student) visa more than 3 months before your resit date or planned return to full-time study and you will not be able to re-enter the UK more than 1 month in advance. Please refer to this webpage for guidance: [www.imperial.ac.uk/study/international-students/visas-and-immigration](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/international-students/visas-and-immigration) and do contact us if you require any assistance with your Tier 4 application.

### Short-term Study visa

In situation 4 above, you will need to apply for a Short-term Study visa to return to the UK. You can request a Short-term Study visa Letter by emailing [records@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:records@imperial.ac.uk). Please include the date / month of your resit so that this information can be included in the letter. Guidance on applying for a Short-term Study visa is available here: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/international-students/visas-and-immigration/short-term-study-visa/>. Please contact International Student Support if you have questions about applying for a Short-term Study visa.



International Student Support

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Email: [international@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:international@imperial.ac.uk), Website: [www.imperial.ac.uk/study/international-students](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/international-students)