

UWTSD Tier 4 / Student Visa CAS Extension Guide – Doctoral Level Students

Policy Guide and Background

1. International students who hold a tier 4 or student visa sponsored by UWTSD may require an extension of their visa to complete their current Doctoral level studies.
2. The University may in certain circumstances issue a further CAS under the student visa route. It should be noted that a new / further CAS is not automatically granted and students will need to demonstrate they have met the criteria as set out below. The final decision as to whether to issue any further CAS rests with the University. It should be noted that an approval by the University of an extension of candidature will not automatically mean a visa extension will be issued.
3. Whether a further CAS is issued and how long that CAS may be issued for will depend upon the circumstances under which the further CAS is being sort. The University as a matter of UK visa policy may not be able to issue a further CAS in certain circumstances. It is therefore vital that all doctoral level students ensure they are aware of when a further CAS can be issued and conversely when it cannot when planning the submission of their research thesis.
4. In addition, doctoral students are also required to ensure they continue to meet all of the general grounds for a student visa CAS extension. These general grounds have been set out below:
 - must have a current valid Tier 4 or Student visa BRP that was issued on the basis of a CAS issued by the University for the same doctoral level course.
 - must be seeking to apply for an extension no sooner than 3 months before the expiry date of their current visa
 - must be able to gain such an extension under the terms of the University's academic regulations.
 - must not have a current outstanding leave to remain application awaiting a decision by the Home Office
 - must have made satisfactory academic progress to date on their course
 - must be capable of completing their course within the time of the extension sort
 - must be required to attend qualifying academic attendance / engagement points throughout their extended period of study
 - must not have received a final warning for attendance / engagement under the relevant attendance policy in the previous 12 calendar months

- must not have undertaken an interruption of studies of longer than 28 days during the time of their current BRP.
- must have no outstanding debts for tuition fees on the course
- must meet all the other student visa requirements as set out in the UK Immigration Rules and accompanying guidance for the student route. .

In addition to the above, there are also specific grounds that exist for Doctoral students and the below guidance has set out such grounds. These specific grounds are based on the interaction of the doctoral level academic process with the UK visa regulations.

Extension for submission of thesis

- UWTSD's academic regulations specify that a doctoral thesis must be submitted within 4 years of registering onto the relevant doctoral programme. As such UWTSD will not sponsor an international students for immigration purposes for more than 4 years for this purpose. Should a student require more time than 4 years to submit their thesis it is unlikely further sponsorship will be provided save in exceptional circumstances. In such circumstances students are likely to be required to complete their studies remotely from overseas and provision will be made to do so.

Extension for undertaking a VIVA

- **UWTSD is unable to sponsor a student for a further period of time solely for the purpose of undertaking a VIVA.**
- Where a student has submitted their thesis but has not undertaken their VIVA before their current visa / BRP expires, no further sponsorship can be provided.
- In such a case a student may need to attend the VIVA remotely from overseas, arrange an alternative visa to remain in the UK and attend the VIVA or return overseas and return to the UK on a General visit visa to undertake the VIVA in question. **Please note if any of these options are undertaken then the student will not subsequently qualify for a graduate work visa.**
- Doctoral students should be aware that the date for a VIVA cannot be set until the thesis has been formally submitted. However, on average it normally takes up to 12 weeks for a VIVA to take place from the date of submission of the thesis. In addition, it may take a further 4-6 weeks for the formal outcome of the VIVA to be communicated after the date of the VIVA. Only once the outcome of a VIVA is known can a further extension (if needed) be considered.
- Students who are a Tier 4 or student visa holder should ensure they take the above timelines into account when submitting their thesis.

Extension after a VIVA outcome has been communicated

- Once the VIVA has been completed the Academic Office will notify the student of the outcome. This will be one of three scenarios:

a) Outcome A – Doctorate Level qualification to be awarded

- If the VIVA panel recommendations are to award the doctorate level award (outcome A) then no further visa extension will be needed or available. Students who are planning on applying for the graduate work visa should ensure they meet the requirements of that scheme and may then apply for that visa.

b) Outcome B – Doctorate level qualification to be awarded subject to undertaking and submitting corrections

- If the VIVA panel recommends an award following corrections (outcome B) the student may apply for a further student visa CAS provided they meet all the general grounds for the issuing of a further CAS (see above).
- Any new CAS will be issued in line with the maximum time afforded for the submission of those corrections.
- Students will not receive a further visa extension beyond this date and so if planning on applying for a Graduate Work visa should ensure they factor in the time taken for the confirmation of award following the submission of any corrections.
- Upon submission of corrections any confirmation of award by the Research Degree Committee can take up to 12 weeks after the submission of any corrections.

c) Outcome C – resubmission of DBA thesis in 12 months

- If the VIVA panel's recommendations is that the student should resubmit their thesis within 12 months the University will consider whether a further CAS can be issued for that period of time.
- Applicants who are issued a further CAS under this outcome should ensure they factor in time needed not only for the submission of their thesis but also for any subsequent VIVA process (see above).

d) Doctorate level qualification is not to be awarded

- If the VIVA panel's recommendations is not to award the doctorate level qualification as stated on the original CAS but to issue no award or an exit award no further visa extension will be approved.
- Please note in these circumstances the Home Office is unlikely to approve any application for a Graduate Work visa either.

Whilst the university actively monitors student visa expiry dates it is the responsibility of each student to request an extension CAS in plenty of time and in accordance with the above process. This can be done by emailing the university at international.registry@uwtsd.ac.uk no sooner than 3 months before the extension is required.