

## Tier 4 student visa guide: Working restrictions on Tier 4

The Home Office restricts the number of hours a student can work in the UK on a Tier 4 visa and the type of work that can be undertaken. It is very important you understand the working conditions on Tier 4, and check with the relevant Academy department with whom you plan to work, or the Registry, if you are unsure **before commencing any work**.

### You must adhere to the Academy's restrictions on working during your studies

A Tier 4 visa allows you to work for up to 20 hours per week during term-time and full-time during official vacation periods. This includes paid work, unpaid work **and bursary hours** (though it is acknowledged that the maximum number of bursary hours any student would be required to complete in a year is 21). The Home Office defines a 'week' as any seven-day period, so a week is not necessarily running from Monday to Sunday or from any other specific day.

Undergraduate and Postgraduate term and vacation dates for the current and following academic year are published on the Academy's website: <http://www.ram.ac.uk/study/term-dates>

All students can work full-time during the Christmas and Easter breaks as these are outside term time. Undergraduate students and students in the first year of a two-year Masters programme can also work full-time during the summer break.

If you are on a one-year MMus or in the second year of a two-year MMus programme, you do not benefit from a summer vacation exemption from the 20 hours restriction, because you are still academically engaged with the programme in preparation for the submission of your Project in September. For all research students, vacations are the Christmas and Easter breaks, however you are considered to be continuing your studies during the summer vacations.

There are also restrictions on the **type** of work that can be undertaken on a Tier 4 visa.

You must not:

- Be self-employed
- Engage in business activity
- Take a permanent full-time job
- Be employed as a professional sport person including as a sports coach
- Be employed as an entertainer
- Work as a doctor or dentist in training

### Working for the Academy

The Academy provides various opportunities for students to undertake paid work in different departments such as the Front of House and Stewarding teams, Box Office, in the Museum and Galleries and occasionally for your own department, as an accompanist, for example. This is also open to Tier 4 students, but with some additional restrictions.

If you are signed up to work for an Academy department you will be asked to complete a short contract and compliance declaration form prior to starting work, which will ask you to confirm that you understand the restrictions on working under your visa. You must also confirm that you will not work more than 20 hours per week both in and out of the Academy. If we become aware that you have worked more than 20 hours in a week, it is our duty to report this to UKVI under the terms of our Tier 4 sponsorship licence.

### **External Bookings and placements**

Students are required to undertake performance opportunities and other related placements as part of the Professional Development Activity requirements of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. We make provision for these as placements via the External Bookings Manager, Open Academy Administrator and Head of Professional Development. These bookings are undertaken in accordance with the Tier 4 Student Work Placement Policy, which is published on AIR.

### **Self-employment**

A Tier 4 visa does not allow you to be self-employed, for example as a freelance music teacher. If tax will not be deducted automatically from your wages, it is likely that any work being offered is on a self-employed basis.

This means in order to undertake work you should be given a formal document by the employer such as a 'contract of employment' or a 'worker's agreement' or some other written statement confirming your employment status. This includes where you will be undertaking work for the Academy. Please note you may find that other students (who are not on a Tier 4 visa) may not need to have the same documentation in place.

### **Engaging in Business Activity**

A Tier 4 visa does not allow you to engage in business activity. The Home Office defines this as working for a business in a capacity other than an employee in which you have a financial or other significant beneficial interest. You would not be permitted, for example, to set up a business that is trading or has a trading presence, be employed by a company in which you hold shares of 10% or more or work for a company where you hold a statutory role, such as a director. This is not an exhaustive list but provides examples of the types of circumstance in which you would be considered to be engaged in business activity.

### **Programme completion**

Once you have completed your programme, until your visa remains valid, the Home Office allows you to work full-time but the restrictions on the type of work, as outlined above, continue to apply. For PhD students, completion means receiving the official notification of unconditional approval of degree. For Masters and undergraduate students, completion means the programme end-date as stated on your CAS as long as you have completed all required assessment by this date.

### **No recourse to public funds**

On a Tier 4 visa you are not eligible to claim access to public funds, this includes local authority housing benefits and welfare benefits.

### **Can I volunteer?**

Whilst there is a legal distinction between volunteering and paid or unpaid work, to avoid any problems, you should consider volunteering in the same way as part-time work and not volunteer any more than 20 hours in any seven day period. If you also have a part-time job you must be careful to work no more than 20 hours between volunteering and paid work.

A musical performance as a volunteer has the same restrictions as a normal performance engagement. The UKVI does not make an exemption for unpaid performances because you are still considered to be working as an entertainer, as a voluntary worker. Please refer to the Tier 4 Student Work Placement Policy for further details.