

Guide to...

Finding Work in the UK as an International Graduate

bathspa.ac.uk/careers

Contents

Introduction	3
Improving your employability	3
Career planning	4
Visa options	4
An overview	4
Tier 2 (General) visa: more detailed info	5
What's your job search strategy for a Tier 2 visa?	8
What's next?	8
What if I see an advertised vacancy with an employer not already on the T2 register of sponsors?	9
What if I see a role I really want but it's not the right skills level or salary?	9
Can I really approach employers speculatively?	9
When should I started looking for jobs?	9
Example cover letters	10
Summary	12
Further information & advice	12
Further support from Bath Spa Careers	12

Introduction

As an international (non-European Union) student you may be keen to remain in the UK after study to start your graduate career. Gaining employment in the UK can be challenging given the need to secure the appropriate type of work visa.

This guide is for international students (Tier 4) looking to secure graduate employment in the UK after their studies. But before we explain more about this, consider how to maximize your university experience and increase your chances of success by improving your employability alongside your studies.

Improving your employability

The worldwide job market is a competitive one. Employers will be keen to know what skills and experience you can offer, so it is important to make best use of your time while you are at university in the UK. There are a number of ways in which you can improve your employability while at Bath Spa University:

- **Part-time Jobs** – a part-time job will give you valuable work experience enabling you to develop your skills (make sure you check any work restrictions on your student visa).
- **Placements and work experience** – a placement or work experience can be a useful way to explore a particular type of sector and gain relevant experience (make sure you check and understand the difference between placements as part of your degree and those which are not, in the context of your student visa).
- **Volunteering** – helps you to develop new skills, work with other students or members of the local community you may have not otherwise had the opportunity to work with, and may give you a chance to gain experience in an area of work that interests you (make sure you check and understand the definition of ‘volunteering’ in the context of your student visa).
- **Bath Spa Societies** – being an active member of a university society can help you with developing your skills and show employers that you are able to balance extra-curricular activities alongside your degree.
- **Bath Spa Award(s)** - designed to recognise your skills, experiences and achievements outside of your degree programme, the Bath Spa Awards aim to increase your self-awareness of your key graduate skills and provide an opportunity for you to focus on areas you would like to improve. For further details go to: <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/students/careers-and-employability/>.

IMPORTANT: For legal reasons Bath Spa Careers do not provide visa advice. If you are a Tier 4 student with a visa query regarding working in the UK whilst studying and/or staying in the UK to work as a graduate please contact the **International Advice Team** to request a 1-to1 appointment or to check drop-in times and locations: immigrationadvice@bathspa.ac.uk

Further information can be found here: <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/international/support/>

Career Planning

The University of Warwick has put together two open resources specifically aimed at Chinese students coming to the UK to study, but the information is of equal relevance to ALL international students (and home students!):

- <http://www.prepare2getahead.co.uk/> - an e-learning resource that introduces career planning for (international) students and provides a step-by-step approach to enable you to develop and create your own career plan. The resource aims to help you to make the most of your time at university and to explore options that interest you, as well as gain relevant skills and experiences.
- <http://www.innovate2getahead.co.uk/> - an e-learning resource that provides international students with an introduction to innovation skills and developing an innovative mind-set. It is aimed at all students, as the activities and case studies can be applied to students looking to go on to work for organisations; for students wishing to develop their own family business; and for students looking to start or develop their own business.
- <https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/graduate-career-advice/choosing-a-career/visa-sponsor-international-students/> - Bright Network advice for international graduates

Visa Options

As an international graduate your first priority is to explore whether you are eligible for a visa to work in the UK. Visa requirements change frequently, so you must check for up-to-date information:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration> (UK Visa & Immigration)
- <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration> (UK Government)

UKCISA (The UK Council for International Student Affairs) is the UK's national advisory body serving the interests of international students and those who work with them. Clear and helpful information about working after your studies can be found at: <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Working-after-studies#RL>

An overview

Here is a brief overview of the main visa options for international students seeking to remain in the UK after their studies. **Please note:** this is intended as an overview and not a detailed summary. You are strongly encouraged to explore visa options for your own individual circumstances in detail and with the support of the International Student Advice Team here at BSU (immigrationadvice@bathspa.ac.uk).

Start-up Visa

- BSU graduates with an innovative, viable and scalable business idea they wish to put into practice in the UK
- Read more about the Start-up visa on <https://www.gov.uk/start-up-visa>.

Tier 2 (General)

- One of the most common visa routes, for skilled workers who hold a job offer with a Tier 2 sponsor. See Tier 2 (General) Visa section on the following pages of this guide.

Tier 5 (Temporary Worker)

- Has five sub-categories, the **Government Authorised Exchange (GAE)** sub-category is for graduates who wish to do a period of work experience or training in the UK (e.g. internship, volunteering, job shadowing), in a field related to their degree subject.
- The schemes usually last for a period of up to 12 months (maximum of 24 months).
- The role must not fill an existing vacancy and must be paid minimum wage.
- The visa is organised through a GAE sponsor on behalf of the graduate and employer.
- Check directly with sponsoring bodies to find out more about their internship programmes, how to apply and costs.
- See **Approved Tier 5 government authorised exchange schemes** list here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-n-authorised-exchange-schemes>.
- Some of the most relevant organisations on this list are:
 - AIESEC 'Access Tier 5' Scheme: <https://www.accesstier5.com/>
 - GTI 'Tier 5 Intern Programme': <https://tier5intern.com/>
 - BUNAC 'Intern in Britain' Scheme: <https://www.bunac.org/usa/intern-abroad/professional/britain>

Tier 5 (Youth Mobility Scheme)

- Allows you to work in the UK for up to two years if you are aged 18 to 30, and are a national of Australia, Canada, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Republic of Korea or Taiwan.
- Also open to British overseas citizens, British Overseas Territories citizens and British nationals (overseas).
- Other criteria apply, for further information please read the following and speak to the International Student Advice Team if you have further questions:
 - UKCISA: <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Working-after-studies#layer-3819>
 - UK Government: <https://www.gov.uk/tier-5-youth-mobility>

Doctorate Extension Scheme (Tier 4)

- For PhD students only, gives you an additional 12 months of leave to seek skilled work or develop plans to set up as an entrepreneur in the UK.
- You must apply before completing your course. Read more here: <https://thehub.bathspa.ac.uk/international/international-advice-and-support/post-study-options>

Tier 2 (General) Visa: More Detailed Info.

The following information regarding the Tier 2 (General) visa route has been provided by Bath Spa University International Student Advice Team:

Tier 2 is the main immigration route for working in the UK and is for skilled workers with a job offer. Visa sponsorship is required by an employer and the visa is linked to a specific job. There are different categories within Tier 2 and the most relevant for international graduates is Tier 2 (General).

Switching from Tier 4

Eligibility

- You can only switch if applying from inside the UK.

- You can apply if you have completed a relevant course or be about to complete it less than 3 months after you make your Tier 2 application.
- Relevant courses are:
 - A UK recognized Bachelor's or Master's degree
 - A UK Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
 - A UK Professional Graduate Diploma of Education (PGDE)
- You can also apply if you have completed at least 12 months of study in the UK towards a UK PhD.
- Employer must be on the **register of Tier 2 sponsors**: (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-workers>) and issue a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS).
- Job offer must be at a certain skill level. For most occupations, this is as NQF level 6 'graduate level' as outlined in the **Immigration Rules Appendix J: codes of practice for skilled work**: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-j-codes-of-practice-for-skilled-work>.
- The only exception to this skill level rule is where you:
 - Will be sponsored under Tier 2 (General for a job in a shortage occupation in **Appendix K**: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-k-shortage-occupation-list>)
 - Will be sponsored in one of the following creative sector occupations at RQF level 4 in table 3 of the **Immigration Rules Appendix J: codes of practice for skilled work**:
 - 3411 – Artists
 - 3412 – Authors, writers and translators
 - 3413 – Actors, entertainers and presenters
 - 3414 – Dancers and choreographers
 - 3422 – Product, clothing and related designers
- Minimum salary of £20,800, or *industry equivalent if higher* as outlined in the **Immigration Rules Appendix J: codes of practice for skilled work**. A graduate switching between a Tier 4 to Tier 2 visa can meet the 'new entrant' salary rate.

Duration

A CoS (Certificate of Sponsorship) can be issued for up to 3 years on the basis of being considered a 'new entrant'. To extend beyond a 3 year period, you will require a new CoS from your employer. At this stage, you will be considered an 'experienced worker, and you should be earning the appropriate 'experienced worker' salary. This will be stated on your new CoS. It is advisable to speak to potential employers about salary progression and to read the **Tier 2 guidance for sponsors and Policy Guidance**: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsor-a-tier-2-or-5-worker-guidance-for-employers>

Visa application

Requires you to obtain 70 points as below:

50 points for Attributes:

- 30 points for Switching from Tier 4 (General)

You will be awarded 30 points if you have a Certificate of Sponsorship and are applying to switch into Tier 2 from Tier 4 and you have completed a relevant course or be about to complete it less than 3 months after you make your Tier 2 application OR you have completed a minimum of 12 months study in the UK towards a UK PhD during your current leave. The specified evidence you must provide to demonstrate you meet this requirement is:

- Your certificate of award. If your certificate is not yet issued, you must provide:
 - academic transcript or an academic reference on official headed paper, issued by an authorised official which confirms the date you completed your course, having sat all exams

and papers OR the date you are expected to complete the course OR confirmation of 12 months study if you are studying a PhD course.

Full detail of what these 2 documents must contain can be found in point 18 (pg.11) of the **Tier 2 Policy Guidance**:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/726265/Tier_2_Policy_Guidance_07_2018_Revised.pdf

- 20 points for minimum level salary of £20,800 or industry equivalent
- 10 points for English Language - fulfilled using Bath Spa University degree
- 10 points for Maintenance – £945 minimum held for a consecutive 90 day period ending no more than 31 days before you make your application OR certification from sponsor on CoS that they will provide this sum for you should you require it. You will need to discuss this with the recruiting company/organisation.

Please note: If you received a full scholarship for both tuition fees and living expenses during your course from a government or international scholarship agency you will need a letter from your scholarship provider stating that they consent to you remaining in the UK.

If you apply for your Tier 2 visa after you have successfully completed your course and received the award, you can commence permanent full-time employment in the role for which the CoS is assigned while the visa application is being processed. You should still discuss this with your employer, as they may prefer that you wait until you have received your Tier 2 leave before starting the job.

Advantages to switching in the UK from Tier 4

If you are switching from a valid Tier 4 visa within the UK, the following concessions currently apply:

- Employers are exempt from having to carry out the Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT), which requires a job to be advertised in a particular way and for sponsors to demonstrate that there are no suitable settled workers to fill the post.
- The issuing of the CoS is not subject to the national annual limit and so does not require prior approval from UK Visas and Immigration. Therefore, you are likely to have the CoS issued to you within a shorter timeframe.
- Employers are exempt from paying the Immigration Skills Charge.

Applying from outside the UK

If you apply for Tier 2 from outside the UK, there are additional requirements to be sponsored:

- The issuing of the CoS is subject to a national annual limit and requires prior approval from UK Visas and Immigration. This adds an additional timeframe to the issuing of the CoS. If you are outside the UK, the only exception is if the salary will be £159,600 or more.
- Employers must carry out the Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT), which requires a job to be advertised in a particular way and for sponsor to demonstrate that there are no suitable settled workers to fill the post. Exceptions to this are:
 - If the job is on the shortage occupation list OR
 - The salary will be £159,600 or more OR
 - The job is for a supernumerary research position (this usually only applies to individuals who are named on a grant or Fellowship).
- Employers must pay the Immigration Skills Charge, unless the job is at PhD-level as outlined in the **Immigration Rules Appendix J: codes of practice for skilled work**.

What's your job search strategy for a Tier 2 visa?

You'll need to familiarise yourself with UK job hunting and recruitment practices, which may not be entirely different from those in your home country, although it's better not to make any assumptions and to research this fully. Please see our full range of careers resources on our Bath Spa University webpage:

<https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/students/careers-and-employability/resources/>.

This includes:

- **Guide to...Finding Graduate Job & Opportunities**
- **Guide to...CVs**
- **Guide to...Cover Letters**
- **Guide to...Completing Job Application Forms**
- **Guide to...Preparing for Interviews**
- **Guide to...Making Speculative Applications**
- **Careers Sectors Guides** (sector specific links to help you identify relevant employers and jobsites)

This article by TargetJobs also provides a helpful overview: <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/international-students/668677-guide-to-job-hunting-for-international-students>.

The main two approaches to secure employment can be either to apply for an *advertised vacancy*, or by making a *speculative application* (this involves you contacting the company, usually by sending a CV and cover letter, to ask if they would consider you for any opportunities). In order to improve your chances of securing employment it is advisable to explore both strategies, however, there is an added complication in that you will also require your future employer to be on the **Tier 2 register of sponsors**:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-workers>.

What's next?

Our advice is to start your job search by researching into employers who are already on the register of sponsors (link above), but there is no guarantee they will be advertising a role that meets the requirements of the Tier 2 process (e.g. appropriate skills level or salary requirements) or your own career interests.

The register is alphabetical by employers' name and details the town or city the employer is based in and the visa category they're registered to sponsor. The list of registered sponsors is extensive, with thousands of employer names. If you identify employers from this list that interest you, use the internet to look at their website and find their 'Careers' or 'Jobs' pages to see what opportunities they are recruiting for.

Many large, multinational companies are featured on the register of sponsors and may offer graduate training schemes. Graduate training schemes are a specific type of graduate job, please see our '**Guide to Graduate Schemes**': <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/students/careers-and-employability/resources/>.

These types of employers and opportunities can be very attractive but also very competitive, a well-planned and strong approach to your initial application and the stages that follow is essential to increase your chances of success. They are also highly likely to be well versed in the Tier 2 visa process, often employing international students from the UK and providing detailed advice for such applicants e.g. <https://www.pwc.co.uk/careers/student-jobs/apply/work-permit.html>

Some other useful top tips for finding appropriate roles:

- <https://studentcircus.com/> - A jobs website created by two international graduates.
- <https://www.indeed.co.uk/Sponsorship-Visa-jobs> - Use Indeed, searching for 'sponsorship visa'.

What if I see an advertised vacancy with an employer that is not already on the Tier 2 register of sponsors?

It is possible that an employer would be willing to undertake the process of joining the register for the right candidate – particularly if the skills and expertise you bring are of particular value to their business and/or you have built up a relationship with them already. For this reason, use your time at university to develop your professional network as this could bring longer-term benefits.

Additionally, seeking part-time work alongside your studies may enable you to develop a professional relationship and prove your value, which in turn may increase your chances of an employer being willing to consider joining the register, to make it possible to recruit you under the Tier 2 visa regulations.

What if I see a role I really want but it's not the right skills level or salary?

It's probably a better investment of your time by only applying for positions where the skills level and salary requirements of the Tier 2 visa criteria will be met – to not do so may be wasted time and energy. It is of course possible that you could negotiate a higher salary to meet the conditions of the Tier 2 visa requirements – although remember that you must meet the 'new entrant' rate or £20,800 – whatever is HIGHER.

Can I really approach employers speculatively?

Of course! This is an important part of any job-seekers strategy. Again, you may want to start by targeting those on the **Tier 2 register of sponsors**, but should you wish to approach others be prepared to talk confidently and positively about the benefits of becoming a Tier 2 sponsor. The following resource has been developed to support you in having this conversation:

- *Recruiting International Graduates – A Guide for Employers (by AGCAS):*
<https://www.pearltrees.com/s/file/preview/183287331/Recruiting%20International%20Graduates%20-%20A%20Guide%20for%20Employers%20May%202017.pdf>
- If an employer needs advice in recruiting an international graduate they can contact the UK Visa and Immigration 'Sponsorship, Employer and Education' helpline on 0300 123 4699
<https://www.gov.uk/uk-visa-sponsorship-employers/apply-for-your-licence>.
- There is also advice about sponsoring a Tier 2 or Tier 5 worker on the Direct Gov Guidance for Employers webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsor-a-tier-2-or-5-worker-guidance-for-employers>.

When should I start looking for jobs?

Researching suitable employers and preparing strong applications takes time, so start the process as soon as possible after your arrival in the UK!

Example Cover Letters

Advertised position (Tier 2):

12th April 2015

Recruiting Manager
Royal Pearl
The Granary
47 Oltmer Walk
London
WR1 9HH

Job reference: Graduate account manager vacancy

Dear Recruiting Manager,

I write with reference to the graduate account manager position at Royal Pearl, as advertised in September's edition of *Graduate Recruit*. I enclose my CV for your information.

The advert for this post mentions the pre-requisite for a degree in a marketing-related subject. I am currently studying for a BA in Marketing at the University of Birmingham and will be graduating in July.

You will note from my CV that I also have relevant work experience in this area, having undertaken an internship as an account manager at Qui Cosmetics, Shanghai, in 2013. Qui Cosmetics is also a high-end, world-recognised, luxury brand akin to Royal Pearl. In this role, I learned more about developing customer accounts through maximising client relationships and exceeding expectations. It was an experience that complemented my theoretical knowledge in this area.

During my studies I have also taken part in a range of extracurricular activities that have developed my skills and confidence. As an international student ambassador I have enjoyed meeting new people, building relationships and supporting students who are new to the university. These will be important transferable skills to the account manager role as I begin to develop client relationships and build trust in the brand.

I work well in multinational environments and speak three languages fluently. This will be of immense benefit to the company's agenda of developing its international clientele. I believe that I have a lot to offer Royal Pearl and hope I have sufficiently conveyed my potential for the role. Given that I do not have the right to work in the UK without company sponsorship, I hope Royal Pearl will consider my application and sponsor me, in light of the unique skills and experience that I can offer.

I look forward to hearing from you, if indeed this is a possibility.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed)

Address line 1
Address line 2
Postcode

Name
Company address 1
Company address 2

Date

Dear Ms/Mr ...

Project / Internship 2014:

Introductory section- example below

I am currently a final year Mechanical Engineering student at The University of Sheffield and expecting to achieve a 2:1 when I graduate in July this year. I am keen to apply the knowledge gained from my studies into a practical work environment and am therefore writing to enquire about the possibility of undertaking a graduate internship with your company.

Section explaining about what you have to offer -example below

As you will see from my attached CV, I have specialised in the area of... completing modules in... all giving me a thorough knowledge of... My dissertation applied this knowledge and focused on.... Having enjoyed these aspects of my course I am therefore keen to apply my knowledge to an engineering project in industry. As... is a company that specialises in this particular industry sector I would be keen to undertaking a project of benefit to you that would also provide me with the first stepping stones on my way to achieving my longer term career goals.

Section explaining about why you have applied to the company -example below

I am particularly impressed by.... involvement in... and your innovation into... Ultimately I aspire to work for a successful and driven company such as... which is expanding into international markets. Hence why as an international student from China fluent in Mandarin and English, with strong technical skills and knowledge of my home country's culture and working practices, I would relish the opportunity to work within ... and support your mission to expand into international markets.

Paragraph section explaining about the Tier 5 visa-example below

Ideally I am seeking a placement of up to ... months and am eligible to legally undertake this experience under a Tier 5 Governments Authorised Exchange Scheme offered by a Sponsoring Organisation (further details attached*). The conditions of this programme are that I work for up to 12 months, am paid at least minimum wage and am appointed into a supernumerary temporary appointment.

Concluding section explaining -example below

I hope that you will consider me for a potential internship within your company as I believe that I will bring not only technical skills but also enthusiasm, commitment and an international perspective to the role and am keen to apply my skills to address world-leading engineering innovations.

Yours sincerely

Summary

There are many things to consider when deciding to find work in the UK as an international graduate:

- Firstly, spend some time reviewing the visa options and carefully consider each of the eligibility criteria so you are clear about how an opportunity may be granted a work visa.
- Review the visa sponsor list to see if there are employers already identified as visa sponsors that you are interested in and regularly check their opportunities on their company websites.
- Spend time researching other employers that interest you, including those you might choose to send speculative applications to.
- Make sure your CV is updated and can be edited to match the opportunity you want to apply for. Also make sure that you are clear about how to market your qualifications, skills and experience on application forms and cover letters. The structure and content of application processes in the UK may differ from that in your home country so make sure you access support from Bath Spa Careers if you feel this will be of benefit.
- Consider how you can improve your employability to give you the best chance possible of securing work in the UK as an international graduate. In particular, ensure you have UK based work experience and can demonstrate strong English language skills.

Further information and advice

For legal reasons Bath Spa Careers do not provide visa advice – if you would like to discuss your individual visa options, please contact the International Student Advice Team who will be happy to help. You can email them at: immigrationadvice@bathspa.ac.uk.

Further Support from Bath Spa Careers

If you would like further support from Bath Spa Careers & Employability go to bathspa.ac.uk/careers to see the ways in which you can access our service, including workshops and events, appointments and to access our extensive range of resources.

You can also contact Careers Reception on 01225 875525 or at careers@bathspa.ac.uk.

Please note that Bath Spa Careers does not endorse particular organisations.

(This guide was last updated in Summer 2019).

GET A HEAD START

We're here to help you get a great start to your career. We're open all year round, so come and visit us in the Careers Space, book an appointment, or get in touch.

Careers Space, SL.G04
Steward's Lodge

careers@bathspa.ac.uk
01225 875525

www.bathspa.ac.uk/careers

Follow [/bathspacareers](#)



Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this leaflet is accurate but we recommend that you check all details carefully.

Published September 2019

Copyright Bath Spa University Careers