

House of Commons: Written Statement (HCWS95)

Home Office

Written Statement made by: **The Minister of State for Immigration (James Brokenshire)** on 13 Jul 2015.

Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules

My rt hon Friend the Home Secretary is today laying before the House a Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules.

These new rules make a number of changes to the Tier 4 route of the Points-Based System to reduce net migration and to tackle immigration abuse, whilst ensuring we maintain an excellent offer for students who wish to study at our world-class universities.

New students at publicly funded colleges will be prevented from being able to work in the UK, in order to bring their working rights in line with those of international students at private colleges. In the autumn, college students will be unable to switch to a work visa or extend their study visa whilst they are in the UK, whilst protecting students at embedded colleges who will progress onto study at a higher education institution.

The rules around academic progression are being tightened so that university students are only permitted to extend their studies at the same academic level if the course they wish to study is linked to their previous course, or the university confirms the course supports the student's career aspirations. To help ensure international students are progressing academically the time limit on further education study will be reduced from three years to two years in the autumn.

The maintenance requirement for Tier 4 students is increasing, along with the maximum amount paid for accommodation which can be offset against the maintenance requirement, to bring them in line with 2015 rates. A rule around established presence which allowed students applying to extend their leave within the UK to show only two months' maintenance is being removed.

The application of the rules on time limits is being clarified so that the time a student has already spent studying in the UK is calculated using the full length of the leave they have previously been granted.

Changes are being made to allow a Tier 4 visa to be issued in line with a student's intended date of travel. This change to the date from which entry clearance can commence will help ensure a smooth roll-out of Biometric Residence Permits for overseas Tier 4 applicants.

Tier 4 migrants' conditions of study are being changed, to prevent them from studying at academies or schools maintained by a local authority. Those who wish to study a foundation course to prepare for entry to higher education are also being prevented from doing so under the Tier 4 (Child) route.

Where responsibilities of sponsor organisations and terminology have recently changed, the rules are being updated.

The Government is reforming the student visa system to reduce net migration and tackle abuse. These changes will help achieve this, whilst ensuring the UK maintains a highly competitive offer and continues to attract the brightest and best international students.

I am also taking this opportunity to make a number of smaller changes to the Immigration Rules:

- enabling South African diplomatic passport holders to travel visa free to the UK for the purpose of 'visit in transit'
- amend the eligibility requirements for transit passengers, aligning the period within which non-visa nationals must intend and are able to leave the UK with that of visa nationals (other than those using the Transit Without Visa Scheme)
- changes to administrative review, which have been identified as necessary during the early stages of implementation
- minor changes and clarifications relating to family and private life, mainly reflecting feedback from caseworkers and legal practitioners on the operation of the rules