Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur (GE) Visa

Am I eligible to apply?

In order to be eligible to make a visa application under the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) Scheme, you must meet the University of Dundee and Home Office requirements:

- Be a graduate of the University of Dundee;
- Engaged with and completed the Centre of Entrepreneurship’s Enterprise Challenge programme;
- The business idea must make good use of graduates’ skills and add to the UK economy, rather than a routine business which will merely compete with other local traders;
- Have received an endorsement by a UK Higher Educational Institution (HEI);
- Have been awarded a recognised bachelor’s degree, master’s degree or PhD within the UK, for which you studied in the UK. This must have been awarded before your endorsement date (this will be stated on your endorsement letter);
- Be able to show you have held the required maintenance funds in your personal account for 90 consecutive days at the date your application. See the section below on ‘maintenance funds’ for details;
- Have written permission to remain in the UK from your official financial sponsor if they are a government or an international scholarship agency and have paid all your course fees and living costs in the past 12 months.

How do I get a letter of endorsement?

The letter of endorsement must contain very specific information as required by the Home Office. The University of Dundee will ensure that the letter meets all of the necessary criteria. Full information can be found about this in the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) Policy Guidance: [http://uod.ac.uk/int-0053](http://uod.ac.uk/int-0053)

The University of Dundee’s International Advice Service will arrange your letter of endorsement once:

- The University of Dundee has agreed to endorse your business under the Tier 1 (GE) Scheme
- You have arranged an appointment with International Advice Service to assist you with your visa application
- You have confirmed that you have held the required amount of maintenance in your own bank account for 90 consecutive days, and that your bank statements meet the Tier 1 (GE) policy requirements.
- You have signed a letter of agreement, agreeing to the terms and conditions of taking part in this scheme

The letter of endorsement is valid for 3 months from the date it is issued - if you try to apply after this date your application will be refused. You must provide the original letter with your application. Please check your letter of endorsement carefully to ensure that your personal details and business details are correct.

Procedure for obtaining the Letter of Endorsement

1. If you have a viable business idea you should first connect the Centre of Entrepreneurship via email to discuss the merits of the business – entrepreneur@dundee.ac.uk
2. During this initial meeting you should provide any details, prototypes, research that you have already produced to the members of staff at the Centre of Entrepreneurship. The University of Dundee has a limited number of sponsorship licenses so it is a competitive process.
3. There are two Tier 1 (GE) visa panels a year. One in April or May and one in November or December. During the GE visa panel applicants will be asked to pitch their business idea as well as submit a full business plan in advance. There will be a 15 minute pitch and 20minutes of Question and Answers from the independent external panel of judges.
4. You will receive confirmation if your business pitch has been successful in 5 working days.
5. International Advice Service will be notified and steps will be taken to draft a letter of Endorsement.

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Where do I apply?

It is possible to apply either in the UK or from overseas.

What Maintenance Funds do I need to show when I apply?

You must evidence that you have personal savings of at least £945 if applying from within the UK or £1890 if applying from outside the UK. It is not possible to use relatives or friends bank statements to evidence this money. All funds must be in your own name.

You must have maintained the required minimum balance for a consecutive period of 90 days. The closing balance of your account must be dated no more than 31 days BEFORE the date of your application.

Your application will be refused if your balance drops below the required maintenance amount at any point during the 90 day period. Please pay particular attention to this as this is a common reason for visa refusals.

The Home Office require the evidence of funds to be in a particular format. You should read the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) Scheme Policy Guidance very carefully before making your application: - http://uod.ac.uk/int-0053

How long can I stay in the UK with this type of visa?

A Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa is valid for 12 months. You may be eligible to extend for a further 12 months if you still meet the criteria following a review on how the business has progressed. There is a maximum of two years under the Tier 1 (GE) visa.

N.B – The Tier 1 (GE) does not count towards your indefinite leave to remain, moreover, the Tier 1 (GE) represents a broke in your accumulation of indefinite leave to remain

Can I have dependants with me under the Scheme?

Yes, it is possible to have dependants with you under this Scheme. They must be able to show they have sufficient money available for the time they will be in the UK. The amount of money you need to show per dependant varies depending on your circumstances. You must have £1,260 for each dependant if you are applying from outside the UK or have been in the UK for less than 12 months. If you have been in the UK for more than 12 months, you must have £630 for each dependant. Details of the application process for dependants can be found on the Home Office website.

Making an application

When you apply you will need to provide the Home Office with the following documents:

- A completed on-line Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) application form http://uod.ac.uk/int-0054
- The application fee. This is currently £493 for applications made within the UK or £363 for applications made overseas.
- A current passport or other valid travel identification.
- 2 passport size colour photographs which meet the Home Office requirements.
- An original letter of endorsement from the University of Dundee.
- Evidence of finances showing you have held the required maintenance funds in your personal bank account for 90 consecutive days before you apply. See the ‘maintenance funds’ section above for details of the requirements.
- Proof that you meet the English language requirement, if applicable (if the University of Dundee is endorsing you and you were awarded your degree by University of Dundee, your endorsement letter is sufficient for this purpose).
- If you received official financial sponsorship for all tuition and living expenses, you should provide written permission from your sponsor giving their consent to you staying in the UK under the Scheme.

If any documents are not written in English you will need to provide a certified translation.

To extend onto the second year of the Tier 1 (GE) visa you must submit an updated full business plan, a 15 minute pitch, followed by a Questions and Answers from the independent external panel of judges. Additionally, you must meet the previous criteria from the Home Office, mentioned above, and the criteria below.

- You must keep in regular contact with the Centre of Entrepreneurship and provide updates on the progress of the business when required
- You must respond to emails and other forms of correspondents in a timely manner