

Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES) Visa Process Guide

Policy Guide and Background

1. The DES was introduced by UKVI to allow Tier 4 sponsored students, studying towards a PhD award or a similar listed qualification (e.g. DBA) to stay in the UK after achieving their award and seek skilled work in a related field.
2. The terms of the UWTSD DES scheme are detailed below. To qualify for a DES CAS a student:
 - must have current Tier 4 leave to study a specified doctorate level degree at UWTSD in the UK (e.g. PhD or DBA)
 - must not have an outstanding leave to remain application awaiting a decision by the Home Office
 - must have submitted their doctoral level thesis
 - must be capable of completing their VIVA and receive the outcome of that VIVA within the terms of their current tier 4 visa
 - must be capable of applying for DES leave to remain a maximum of 60 days before the expected end date of a course leading to the doctorate level award (as stated on the DES CAS issued)
 - must meet all the other tier 4 requirements for the DES scheme in regards to maintenance and English Language.
3. When a student demonstrates all of the above, the University may choose to issue a DES CAS. If the University decides to issue a DES CAS, it must do so before the student has successfully completed their doctoral award but when doing so must be confident the student will have the relevant award confirmed.
4. When issuing the CAS for a DES visa the University must state the anticipated date for completion. The University must then subsequently report to UKVI that the student has in fact successfully completed the award. Where a student has not successfully completed the award the University must report this fact to the UKVI who will then curtail any leave given under the DES / refuse any outstanding application for leave to remain.
5. When sponsoring a student under the DES scheme the University must ensure it remains in contact during the period of sponsorship (normally 12 months) and have a minimum of 2 expected contacts during this period. It is UWTSD policy that 3 such contacts will be undertaken during the 12 month period. These contact points are not academically lead but are instead focused on the economic activities of the student – i.e. are they in skilled employment / self-employment or seeking employment and also to confirm residential address details held on file. Should a student not attend any scheduled attendance point without prior agreement then

the University must report this to UKVI who will then curtail the leave of the sponsored student. The contacts must be face to face or by Skype and an appropriate record kept of the meeting and placed on the student's file.

Procedural Guide

6. In order to ensure all doctorate level students are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner the following procedure has been adopted by the University. This procedure applies to all SQF level 8 sponsored students across all campuses:

- The doctoral level student is responsible for making an application for a DES CAS at the appropriate time and using the appropriate form. Should they fail to do so a DES CAS may not be issued.
- The application for a DES CAS should be submitted to the University at international.registry@uwtsd.ac.uk no earlier than the submission of the relevant thesis and no later than a week before any related VIVA. Applications submitted outside of this timescale will be rejected.
- At the point of requesting a DES CAS the student should also include evidence that they meet the UKVI maintenance requirement and the University requirements for issuing a DES CAS (see point 2 above).
- On receipt of the DES CAS application form the International Registry team will contact the Academic Office to confirm the submission of the thesis and the date of the VIVA. Once these have been confirmed they will ensure the student has sufficient Tier 4 leave to undertake such actions and if they do issue an acknowledgement email. Should the student not have sufficient Tier 4 leave to undertake the VIVA and receive the formal outcome then they will be advised that a DES CAS cannot be issued.
- Once the VIVA has been completed the Academic Office will notify the Immigration Services Team to advise them of the recommended 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 the Immigration Services Team will issue a DES CAS with the course completion date of the next RDC meeting. The student may be asked to provide updated financial documentation to show they meet the UKVI maintenance requirements and will be advised they will need to submit their DES Leave to remain application before the date of the next RDC meeting.

- When the RDC meet and confirm the award the Academic Office will notify the International Registry team who will then report successful completion on the SMS.

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 be issued a DES CAS. The student must contact the International Registry team at the point to confirm a date for the submission of their corrections. Upon agreement of this date the International Registry team will check with the Academic Office of the subsequent date for the RDC and if this date is within 60 days of the end of the student's current tier 4 visa then a DES CAS may be issued. If the date of the RDC is more than 60 days beyond the end date of the student's current visa then a DES CAS cannot be issued.
- Once the award has been confirmed, the Academic Office will notify International Registry who will make the necessary report on the SMS.

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, a DES CAS will not be issued and the DES CAS request will then be rejected.

d) Doctorate level qualification is not to be awarded

- If the VIVA panel's recommendations is not to award the doctorate level qualification no DES CAS will be issued and the DES CAS request will then be rejected.

7. The above process is to be followed across all campuses and for all relevant Tier 4 sponsored SQF level 8 students who request a DES CAS.

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