Details of the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa scheme as run by the University of Manchester

Thank you for your interest in the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneurship scheme which was launched in April 2012 by the UK Border Agency (UKBA).

The scheme is run by the UKBA and the application process can be found at https://www.gov.uk/tier-1-graduate-entrepreneur-visa/overview

It is your responsibility to comply with the requirements laid out in the application form. Guidance to help you complete the form can be found at: http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/t1-geguidance.pdf.

The University’s role in this process is that of sponsor. This means that the University must fulfil certain responsibilities which extends to assessing additional requirements related to you and your business idea.

The UKBA requires that we are able to assess that you have a genuine and credible business idea, and that you will spend the majority of your working time on developing that business venture.

To ensure that these requirements are met the University of Manchester will follow the process outlined below which will be run on the University’s behalf by the Manchester Enterprise Centre (MEC) and by UMi³. While there is some flexibility in the process in order to allow for variations in the experience of the graduate entrepreneur, we will expect to see certain elements in place and requirements fulfilled.

Initially we will want to establish your level of commitment and experience which we will assess through your CV, through interview and through an entrepreneurial track record whilst you have studied at the University of Manchester. This could include any enterprise course units you have taken, enterprise workshops/events attended, enterprise competitions entered or your involvement with student enterprise societies.

The test as to whether you have a genuine, credible and innovative business idea will be established through the submission of a pitch-deck, CV and application form. In the following stage, shortlisted candidates would be invited to present their case to a panel of enterprise experts and staff drawn from UMi³ and MEC.

If the University, as a UKBA Tier 1 licence holder, is able to sponsor your application and it is accepted by the UKBA, you will be expected to commit to a number of requirements namely that:

1) You will become a tenant in an incubator known and approved by MEC and UMi³. The cost of this will be around £2 - £5k per year and you will be expected to provide for these costs yourself and to prove that you can pay those fees for at least for the first year prior to your application being submitted to the UKBA. The payment of this fee will not only demonstrate a level of personal buy-in to your business idea but will also represent a significant step in increasing your chances of business success. MEC and UMi³ will provide a list of approved incubators on request. You will also be required to provide evidence on request as to continued tenancy within your approved incubator.

2) You will agree to proactively provide monthly reports to named representatives of MEC and UMi³ for the purpose of monitoring progress to agreed objectives and early detection of problems. This will begin with a more detailed plan which will set out the timeline and objectives for the first year which will be supplied once notice has been received from the UKBA that a Tier 1 licence had been awarded. Templates will be provided for these reports and will form the basis of agreed meetings between you, MEC and UMi³. These will be monthly for the first few months and then quarterly. Please note that should the situation warrants it the quarterly meetings could revert back to monthly meetings.

3) You will sign up to an approved mentoring scheme. Many of these are free and again with the right mentor, this can help to increase your chances of success by offering another line of expertise that can help to
resolve problems, clarify goals and provide access to essential resources. UMI³ can provide a list of approved incubators on request.

Attached to this letter is the form which you need to complete and to then return to us along with your CV and the names of at least two referees from within the University of Manchester. We will need to evaluate this first set of information before deciding if we are able to take your application through to the next stage. We will also check to see if there are any reasons as to why the University wouldn’t be able to sponsor your application, e.g. contravening the terms of your immigration permission, poor academic record, outstanding fees or issues of misconduct.

The current scheme runs until 26 February 2018 but this is subject to availability of endorsable places as the University of Manchester has only 20 places available under this scheme. We will therefore exercise high standards of diligence throughout this process and it is therefore expected that each potential applicant takes care to establish that they will meet all requirements laid out in this letter and in the UKBA’s guidance note prior to making an application.

If you have any specific non-business questions related to your proposed application please contact the University’s Student Immigration Team (visa@manchester.ac.uk); they have trained immigration advisers based in the Student Services Centre (Burlington Street) who provide immigration advice to students without charge.

Yours sincerely

Manchester Enterprise Centre
Manchester Business School
University of Manchester