



FAQs regarding international medical graduates and COVID-19 (updated 31 July 2020)

My Tier 5 visa will be expiring soon and I can't leave due to borders being closed, what should I do?

All MTI Tier 5 participants who have inadvertently been impacted by the pandemic will be granted a **one year time visa extension** and not just those whose visas expire by 1/10/20. This will apply to all those in post in April/July 2020 and their dependents.

The Home Office is not able to cover the cost of this visa extension, so it will be for the doctors and trusts to consider this cost.

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) will be providing the Home Office with the list of relevant doctors.

I would like to extend my Tier 5 visa, can I do this?

Please see the guidance above.

I have returned to my home country for the time being but intend on returning to the UK at a later date once the situation allows to resume my MTI post for the remainder of my current Tier 5 visa, what should I do?

We are aware that some MTIs may have decided to return to their home countries for the present, either for personal reasons or at the request of their home government. There is no rule against this though you will need to contact the MTI team (mti@rcplondon.ac.uk) to advise us that you have done so.

There is no time limit on the period you may be absent before you return. You can return as long as you have valid leave and that it is not cancelled at port. If you don't have valid leave, you will be able to apply for the automatic 1 year extension being offered to all MTIs.



What is the current situation regarding the immigration health surcharge (IHS) that the government has agreed to abolish for NHS workers?

Given the IT changes required, it has not been possible for the Home Office to make MTI doctors exempt from the IHS at the point of application, however they will continue to pursue this. In the meantime, MTI doctors will need to seek reimbursement from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) scheme due to launch in October. The reimbursement will be paid in arrears of six-month increments.

If MTI trainees extend a further year, would they remain as MTI trainees or move on to be trust grade doctors after the initial two years has been completed?

The extensions will be on identical leave conditions as the leave about to expire for each worker. If an applicant wishes to change route or job role a new application would be required. UKVI are currently identifying processes as to how to progress applications under the current reduced service they are operating.

Is there any obligation on a trust to extend the contract for MTI doctors who receive the automatic 12 month visa extension?

No, the extension only applies to those individuals who the Trusts wish to continue sponsoring. If the training is complete, AoMRC can stop sponsoring them and the leave will be curtailed. During this process, however, the doctor is free to seek alternative employment and then apply for new leave.

I need to make an application to switch between different types of visa, but cannot return to my home country to make the application, what should I do?

Please visit the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk) for the latest information.

At the time of writing the UKVI has confirmed:

- *If you decide to stay in the UK, you should apply for the necessary leave to remain in the UK. You'll also be able to submit an application form from within the UK where you would usually need to apply for a visa from your home country.*
- *You'll need to meet the requirements of the route you're applying for and pay the UK application fee. This includes those whose leave expires before 31 August 2020.*
- *The terms of your leave will remain the same until your application is decided. If you are switching into [work](#) or [study](#) routes you may be able to commence work or study whilst your application is under consideration.*

If I am currently working from home as a result of the pandemic do I need to notify the UKVI?

The UKVI has provided the following guidance to Tier 2 and 5 sponsors regarding homeworking:

We are aware that many workers sponsored under the Tiers 2 and 5 immigration routes are now working from home rather than their normal workplace due to the coronavirus pandemic. Tiers 2 and 5 sponsors are normally required to notify us of such changes of circumstances. However, due to the current exceptional situation, we will not require sponsors to do so if



working from home is directly related to the pandemic. Other changes must still be reported as usual.

I feel I am not getting the training I require, what should I do?

You are participating in the Medical Training Initiative (MTI) scheme at a time of unprecedented challenge. We understand that this may mean that you are not receiving the clinical training that you had anticipated upon application to the scheme. All doctors in the UK at the current time are being asked to work in new and sometimes unexpected ways. You should still expect to receive adequate supervision in your post and please let us know if this is not the case. We are not at this time able to guarantee that you will be able to complete the training you expected to receive in the UK, but please be assured that we will do our utmost to support you receiving the training you were/are expecting and we are investigating possible options to address this situation with other royal colleges, the General Medical Council (GMC) and UKVI.

Do we need to notify UKVI of doctors who have returned home temporarily or those unable to return following a period of annual leave prior to the pandemic?

There are no additional reporting duties required as a result of COVID-19.

I have applied for and started the MTI process but would like to defer my training, is this possible?

Please speak to the UK hospital you had been offered a post at in the first instance and then contact the MTI team (mti@rcplondon.ac.uk) to seek advice on how to proceed.

I have completed my GMC registration and been invited to an ID check but would like to defer, will I have to restart the GMC process?

The GMC has extended deadlines for ID checks from 3 to 6 months, so as long as your new start date falls within the 6 month period you will be able to defer. If you intend to defer for more than 6 months then you might need to restart the GMC process later on. Contact information for the GMC can be found on their [website](#).

I have applied for and received my Tier 5 visa, but I am unable to travel to the UK before my 30-day vignette visa expires, what should I do?

UKVI has announced that if an individual's 30-day visa to travel to the UK for work, study or to join family has expired, or is about to expire, individuals can request a replacement visa with revised validity dates free of charge until the end of this year.

To make a request, UKVI has advised that individuals should contact the Coronavirus Immigration Team (CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk) and include their name, nationality, date of birth and their GWF reference number with 'REPLACEMENT 30 DAY VISA' in the subject line. If they have already contacted the team about this, please let the team know in the email.



Such individuals will be contacted when Visa Application Centres (VACs) re-open to arrange for a replacement visa in their passport. Individuals will not be penalised for being unable to collect their BRP while coronavirus measures are in place and this process will remain in place until the end of 2020. UKVI has advised that in these circumstances, individuals will still receive a BRP card with revised dates to cover the full visa duration originally requested.

I have applied for and received my Tier 5 visa but I would like to defer my training, is this possible? Will I need a new certificate of sponsorship?

Yes it is possible to defer your training. You will not require a new certificate of sponsorship. The UKVI will consider it to be valid beyond the expiration date in these circumstances and will handle each case individually with those affected. Please contact the NHS team inbox (UKVINHSTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk) with details of your situation, role and employer and you will be advised on the best course of action depending on your particular circumstances.

I would like to continue my application and take up my post in the UK.

The RCP MTI scheme will continue to run but please note that there will be some delays in the process due to hospitals being very busy so it might take longer than you would like for us to obtain the paperwork needed from them.

It is important to note that some visa application centres are closed, and this may impact your ability to come to the UK. Please check the [VFS Global website](#) to be sure that you can complete your application.

My MTI application is almost complete, and I intend on arriving in the UK soon, will I be required to self-isolate for 14 upon arrival?

Previously, MTI doctors were included in the quarantine exemptions list which overrode any other requirements, but this has now changed. Healthcare workers are now no longer included in this list of exemptions <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules>

As of 31/7/20, a new policy is in force:

Health and care workers to self-isolate on return to England from high-risk countries

Registered health and care professionals travelling to the England from high-risk countries will be required to self-isolate for 14 days, the government has confirmed.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/health-and-care-workers-to-self-isolate-on-return-to-england-from-high-risk-countries>

Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) advised on 31/7/20 that: *“Anyone coming from a country that is not on the approved list of [travel corridors](#) will be required to self-isolate for 14 days. We encourage employers to consider this as part of recruitment and not bank on being able to have staff in post in the first fortnight after they arrive, especially as countries can be added or removed at very short notice (as we saw last week with Spain and today with Luxembourg).”*