UK Home Office Guidance on Immigration for short-term visa holders and students in the UK

The UK Home Office has published new guidance on immigration provisions for individuals affected by travel restrictions associated with COVID-19. In effect, visa extensions will be provided to those foreign nationals who are in the UK legally but who are unable to leave because of travel restrictions. As such, these individuals will not:

(i) be regarded as over-stayers,
(ii) suffer any immigration detriment in the future, i.e, red stamp on passport, etc…and,
(iii) be pursued during the crisis.

The temporary visa extensions will apply to all foreign nationals in the UK whose visa has expired since 24 January 2020. The UK Home Office will be extending your visa to 31 May 2020. This measure applies to both holders of short-stay/tourist visas (up to 6 months) and student Tier 4 visas.

Short-term/tourist visa

If your short-term visa has expired since 24 January 2020 or will expire before 31 May 2020 you must contact the UK Home Office Coronavirus Immigration Team to inform of your situation. You will be required to provide full details including:

- Full name (include any middle names),
- Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy),
- nationality,
- existing visa details and
- clearly state the reason that has required them to extend their stay (in the case of Mauritian nationals, the suspension of all flight to Mauritius).

Students on Tier 4 student visa

The UK Home office measure also concerns students enrolled on UK courses but who have been affected by closure of UK universities and are, as a result, either staying at home or have left the UK to return to their respective countries. Tier 4 student visa holders are not normally permitted to undertake distance learning courses. However, due to the current exceptional circumstances, the UK Home Office is now allowing
universities to offer distance learning to existing students in the UK or to those who have chosen to return overseas but wish to continue their current studies. As such, universities will withdraw sponsorship in these circumstances. However, this measure will not apply to students who have permanently withdrawn from, or formally deferred, their studies.

Contact details

Therefore, if your short-term / tourist visa has expired since 24 January 2020 or will expire before 31 May 2020, you need to contact the Coronavirus Immigration Team as soon as possible using the following contact details:

- Email: CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk
- Telephone: 0800 678 1767 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Please note the helpline is for immigration enquiries related to coronavirus only.

The UK Home Office advises to contact the Coronavirus Immigration Team by email first as the telephone helpline is likely to be very busy. Once you have initiated contact, the UK Home Office Coronavirus Immigration Team will update your relevant details on UKVI databases.

For more details, please check the URL below for more information:


You should also continue to refer to guidance from the NHS and Public Health England on COVID-19 and comply with UK Government advice, especially on staying at home and social distancing.

Mauritius High Commission
London
31 March 2020