

Full details about applying for Tier 2 are available in the Home Office's Tier 2 Policy Guidance.

It is at the employer's discretion. Even if an employer holds a sponsor licence, it is not guaranteed that they will be able to sponsor you.

Unless you have completed at least 12 months of a PhD, you can only apply to switch from Tier 4 to Tier 2 from within the UK once you have completed your degree. This means you must have sat all exams and submitted all academic papers. You can also choose to wait until your degree has been awarded to apply. For details of publication results see here.