

Working conditions (self-employment) on TIER 4 visa

Below is a non-exhaustive list of working conditions attached to your TIER 4 visa:

If you need to check whether a specific activity is allowed under your Tier 4 work conditions, it all starts with [paragraph 6 of the compliance Rules](#) which defines "employment" for all types of visa. It says that "employment includes":

- "Paid and unpaid employment" is fine, within your 20 (or 10) hours per week restriction during term-time, and with no time limit in vacations.
- There is a prohibition on working as a Doctor or Dentist in training, in professional sports including coaching, and on working as an entertainer.
- "Paid and unpaid work placements undertaken as part of a course or period of study" are separate from "paid or unpaid employment", so you can do both at the same time.
- Being "self-employed" or being "engaged in business activity" is not allowed. Being self-employed normally means you are not on the payroll but rather you manage your own workload, pay and tax. If you are doing the work as a freelancer, contractor or consultant you are highly likely to be self-employed.

Below are some of the most common examples to clarify the self-employment and some uncommon employment.

- Setting up a shop or business on Ebay / Amazon Shop or any other online marketplace
 - You are allowed to sell a few things (personal belongings of no longer use/unwanted belongings) however if you open your own online shop and do regular business then it will be considered as self-employment.
- Online Tutoring
 - In becoming a private online tutor or an online tutor via a company, you will be classified as self-employed even if the online agency is based overseas and as your current status in the UK is TIER 4, you are not allowed to do this.
- Car boot sales, Online business, e-commerce
 - These also come under the same category as the online marketplace hence subject to the same rules
- "Gig economy" jobs: Uber, Deliveroo, DPD, MyHermes, etc.
 - Currently these jobs are considered as self-employment with someone on TIER 4 leave cannot do it.
- Passive income: affiliate marketing, clicks on your YouTube videos, sponsored Instagram, etc
 - While these are not included in the [TIER 4 policy guidance](#) as one of the 3 main examples of business activity however it will reasonably be defined as a business activity hence we will strongly advise that you do not do so while you are in the UK.

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- Working for an employer outside the UK
 - If you are doing a virtual internship for an employer overseas while you are physically present in the UK then you are subject to the 20 hour per week (during term time) rule. However if you are physically outside the UK, your TIER 4 work conditions will be irrelevant.
- Owning or dealing in shares, currencies and cryptocurrencies
 - If you are regularly buying and selling stocks, currencies for income then it will be seen as a business activity.
- Income from owning a property
 - If you rent out a property and earn come from the rent then this is will considered as a business activity.
- Television talent shows, media appearances and contests of skill
 - You will be allowed to work within the above categories if it meets the UKVI requirements and does not break any compliance rule.
 - The producers of Britain's got talent specific that this programme is a type of contest hence is not considered employment and winning the cash prize is not payment for employment. It is best to check with the organisers of the programme, whether they have the same view and if they do then there should be no problem so you to carry on with it, of course you will also have to check whether your academic schedule permits you the time to participate.
- Writing and publishing
 - When you formally publish your work, you are hoping that people will buy it and you can make income out of it, therefore this will also be seen as a business activity. If you want to publish something for leisure or just to share with the public then we will advise that you can do so using the non-monetised ways such as the use of social media, blogs and personal websites.
- Babysitting or dog-walking
 - You can do dog-walking or babysitting while you are in the UK, but under the Tier 4 work restriction you can only do it unpaid. This might seem disproportionate or overly strict, but remember that providing any service for payment, including babysitting, dog-walking or anything paid "cash in hand" is likely to be seen as self-employment or, at the very least, a "business activity".
- Professional sport
 - One of the TIER 4 compliance rules is that you cannot work as a professional sportsperson and it normally means someone who is working (paid or unpaid) for a professional or semi-professional sport.

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- Entertainer
 - You cannot work as an entertainer regardless of the fact if it is paid or unpaid. The business helpdesk of the UKVI has confirmed that as long as it done for personal enjoyment and not for a living, then it will be allowed as it will not be considered as working as an entertainer.
- Resident warden “on call”
 - You can work as long as the working hours do not go beyond of which it is allowed (20 hours per week during term time) however you should be aware that if you are going to be on call during sleep time as well then it will be included within the 20 hour per week condition hence you should seek advice from the Human Resources of the company you will be working for.

There is [guidance on the gov.uk website](#) to help ascertain if you are self-employed. For "business activity" the [Tier 4 policy guidance](#) for applicants gives three examples, including setting up as a sole trader. The three examples are “not an exhaustive list” but rather “examples of the types of circumstance in which you will be considered to be engaged in business activity.”