Tier 4 work restrictions – types of work
All students should be aware of the following Tier 4 work restrictions:

- You cannot be self-employed or engage in business activity
- You cannot fill a full-time permanent vacancy
- You must not be employed as an entertainer or professional sports person (including coach)

Self-employment
Self-employment is not permitted on a Tier 4 visa. Further information on what constitutes self-employment can be found on the Gov.uk working for yourself

Engaging in business activity is defined by UKVI as ‘working for a business where you have a financial or significant beneficial interest in a capacity other than as an employee’. An example of this would be setting up a business as a sole trader, but please check the governments Tier 4 Policy Guidance

UKCISA has also written a detailed blog about this, which explains that trading online to make a profit, income owning from property, appearing on TV talent shows and even paid babysitting is viewed as self-employment and is therefore not permitted. If you are unsure, please contact the student visa team before starting any employment.

Volunteering and voluntary work
The restrictions on working hours explained above do not apply to volunteering but they do apply to voluntary work. If you want to volunteer to gain experience you need to be clear on whether you are volunteering or doing voluntary work. You should always check with the organisation which offer you a volunteering opportunity whether it can be regarded as unpaid employment.

The difference between unpaid employment (voluntary work) and volunteering is explained in the Tier 4 Policy Guidance but as an overview:

- **Voluntary work** is where the role involves specific tasks at specific times and the voluntary worker has contractual obligations. Voluntary work is unpaid employment and will count towards your maximum number of hours of work a week.
- **Volunteers** do not have a contract and are not paid, though reasonable travel and living costs can be reimbursed. Volunteers usually help a charity, voluntary organisation or public sector organisation. Volunteering does not count towards your working hour allowance.

If you are unsure, please contact the Student Visa and Immigration Team before starting any employment.