Dear Dr Porter,

Thank you for your letter of 23 July about student migration policy and the planned changes to the maintenance requirements in Tier 4 of the points-based system. I apologise for the delay in responding to your correspondence, unfortunately it was not received in my office until 29 September.

International students are greatly valued by the UK. It is recognised that they make an important contribution to the UK during their time here, and to making our education system one of the best in the world. We have an excellent offer for international students, and as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) concludes in its recent International Migration Outlook 2015 report, the UK's large number of international students makes us one of the most globally attractive destinations in the world. The UK's share of the global market has grown constantly since 2000, more than that of any other OECD country over the same period.

All international students are required to show they hold adequate funds to pay their course fees and support themselves while they are in the UK. The level of funds that Tier 4 (General) students must evidence to cover their living costs and meet the maintenance requirement is set at the same level as the combined maximum maintenance loan and grant available to English students living away from home. In July, the Government updated the Immigration Rules to reflect the new rates for students starting courses from September 2015.
In addition, from 12 November, Tier 4 students applying to extend their leave in the UK will be increased, in line with the requirements for those applying for a visa for the first time. It is important to ensure that students have sufficient funds to support themselves throughout the duration of their study, regardless of whether they have studied in the UK before. However, having read the points you have made in relation to the unusual position of postgraduate doctors on the UK Foundation Programme, I have asked my officials to look carefully at the issue in order to consider whether any adjustments should be made.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon James Brokenshire