



STUDYING IN THE UK

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

This guide is for students from outside the European Economic Area who want to come to the UK to study.



You can apply for a student visa up to 3 months in advance of your intended date of travel to the UK. The student season runs from May to September so you should prepare and apply early.

This guide provides information on:

- Tier 4 (points-based system)
- Student visitors
- Extended student visitors
- How to apply

TIER 4 (POINTS-BASED SYSTEM)

There are 2 points-based categories under Tier 4. These are:

General student – this is for students aged 16 years and above.

Child student – this is for children aged 4 to 17 years.

You can apply for a visa under Tier 4 of the points-based system if:

- Your course and stay in the UK is generally longer than 6 months, although it can be shorter.
- You want to work in the UK while you are studying (restrictions apply)
- You may want to extend your student visa while in the UK – subject to your place of study confirming that your new course represents genuine academic progression.

Requirements – Tier 4 (General)

You must meet the full requirements of the UK Immigration Rules, have 40 points to qualify and provide us with evidence to support your application.

- 40 points to qualify - 30 points from a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) and 10 points for showing that you have enough money to study in the UK (known as financial maintenance)
- Provide supporting documents with your application
- Meet the English language requirements (if necessary)

Requirements – Tier 4 (Child)

You must meet the full requirements of the UK Immigration Rules, have 40 points to qualify and provide us with evidence to support your application.

- 40 points to qualify – 30 points from a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) and 10 points for showing that you have enough money to study in the UK (known as financial maintenance)
- Provide supporting documents with your application
- Prove that there are suitable arrangements in place for your travel, reception and care in the UK

Children between 4 and 15 years of age may only be educated at independent fee paying schools.

The UK Border Agency has a [Code of Practice for Keeping Children Safe from Harm](#) and has produced guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children called [Every Child Matters](#) which can be found on the UK Border Agency website.

You can find the [Tier 4 policy guidance](#) on the UK Border Agency website.

Go online: Why not use [points-based system calculator](#) on the UK Border Agency website to calculate your points.

Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) – 30 points

Your confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) is completed online by your chosen place of study (sponsor) and contains details on you, your course, qualifications and confirmation, where necessary, of your English language skills. Your sponsor will give you a unique CAS reference number which you should write on your visa application form.

Your sponsor must have the correct licence and be on the sponsor register. The [sponsor register](#) is available on the UK Border Agency website.

Your CAS will only be valid for 6 months after it was issued and it can only be used for the course you have applied for. If you decide to change courses, reapply at a later date, or have been refused your visa then you cannot use your previous CAS reference number again and you will need to reapply for another CAS.

Financial maintenance – 10 points

You must show that you have enough money to pay for your course fees for the first period of study (or for your next period of study, if you are applying to continue a course) and your living costs for **up to 9 months**. You should provide your original bank statements showing that you have enough money to cover your UK living costs of:

- **£1000** each month if you are studying in inner London for the majority of your course
- **£800** each month if you are studying in outer London or anywhere else in the UK for the majority of your course

The money should have been held in your bank account for 28 consecutive days and the bank statement should be dated within 1 month of your application. The statement should give the account name, number and balance. You will need to show the closing balance in pounds sterling. To calculate the official exchange rate, please use www.oanda.com/convert/classic. Shares, bonds, overdrafts, credit cards and pension funds are not acceptable.

Money from your parent(s) or legal guardian(s)

If you are relying on money held in your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) bank account you must provide:

- A bank statement from their account
- A letter from them confirming your relationship and confirmation that they have given you consent to use their money to study in the UK.

You must also show that you are related to your parent(s)/legal guardian(s). You must provide one of the following:

- Your birth certificate showing the names of your parents(s)
- Your certificate of adoption showing the names of both parent(s) or legal guardians(s)
- A court document naming your legal guardian.

Go online: Check the [financial institutions](#) whose financial statements we **cannot** accept before you submit your bank statements.

You will be asked to sign a declaration on your visa application form confirming that the money is genuinely available to you. We may refuse your visa application and entry into the UK if we suspect that you have provided false information.

Streamlined application process: Nationals from low risk countries who have a passport from that country do not necessarily need to provide bank statements or education certificates with their visa application, unless they are exceptionally asked to do so. See the [UK Border Agency](#) website for more information.

Supporting documents

It is important that you provide original documents, with translations if necessary, to support your visa application and that you complete your visa application form correctly. We will not accept scanned, photocopied, printed duplicates or faxed copies of your documents.

If you want to study a course leading to a postgraduate qualification you may need to apply for an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate. You may also need an ATAS certificate if you wish to carry out research here for longer than 6 months. Please see the [policy guidance](#) on the UK Border Agency website and visit the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#) website for more information.

Go online: You can find a list of [supporting documents](#) that you should submit with your Tier 4 (General) visa application on the UK Border Agency website.

English language requirements

You do not need to provide a SELT certificate if you are from a majority English-speaking country or if other exemptions apply to you. Please see the UK Border Agency website for more information.

For courses below degree level (National Qualification Framework (NQF) level 3 to 5), including English language courses – a minimum B1 level on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is required.

You will need to provide a Secure English Language Test (SELT) certificate with your visa application to show you are able to speak English to this standard. The SELT must be taken with a UK Border Agency approved provider before you apply for your CAS from your chosen place of study. A list of [SELT approved](#) providers can be found on the UK Border Agency website.

For courses at **degree level and above** (NQF 6 and above) – a minimum B2 level on the Common European Framework of Reference is required.

If you are going to study at a Higher Education Institution (HEI) they may choose their own method of assessing your English language ability. If you plan to study a degree or above at a non-HEI, you will need to provide a Secure English Language Test (SELT) certificate to prove your B2 level ability.

We may refuse your entry into the UK if you are unable to communicate without using an interpreter.

Bringing partners and children with you

Only the following students will be able to bring their partners and children (known as dependants) to the UK:

- Postgraduate students at higher education institutions on courses lasting 12 months or more.
- Government sponsored students on courses lasting longer than 6 months.

If you are bringing your dependants with you, you will need to show you can provide for them financially. An application will need to be made for each dependant, and they will need to meet the requirements.

Your dependants will be able to work while they are in the UK.

Working in the UK

Only the students listed below are allowed to work during their studies.

You can work up to a maximum of **20 hours each week** during term time and full time during the holidays if you are:

- A student sponsored by a Higher Education Institution (HEI) following a course at degree level or above.
- A student taking a short-term study abroad degree programme at an overseas recognised body or higher education institution.

You can work up to a maximum of **10 hours each week** during term time and full time during the holidays if you are:

- A student sponsored by a Higher Education Institution (HEI) who are following courses below degree level.
- A student at a publicly-funded further education college studying at any level.

How long can I stay in the UK

Your visa will be granted for the whole length of your course. The maximum amount of time you can spend studying at degree level and above is 5 years with exceptions for some courses and PhD students. The time allowed does not include the time spent studying as a child student.

Staying in the UK after my course

You can stay in the UK while your visa is still valid. If you want to stay in the UK after your visa has expired you must have an offer of a skilled job from a licensed sponsor and be paid at least £20,000 or the minimum appropriate rate set out in the relevant Code of Practice. If you have such an offer you must apply for a Tier 1 or Tier 2 visa before your Tier 4 visa expires.

Study to work placements

If you are a new student and your sponsor is not a UK higher education institution, or you are not on a short-term study abroad programme from an overseas higher education institution then you will be able to spend a maximum of one-third of your time on a work placement.

What to do if your visa is refused

If the UK Border Agency refuses your Tier 4 points-based visa application and you think an error has been made, you can ask the UK Border Agency to check their decision. This is known as an administrative review. The administrative review is free of charge. You must ask for an administrative review within 28 days from the date you receive the refusal notice.

STUDENT VISITORS

You can apply for a student visitor visa if:

- Your course of study in the UK is for 6 months or less
- You do not want to work in the UK or take a course-related work placement
- You have no intention of extending your stay in the UK.

You will need to apply for a visa if you are a 'visa national' - a citizen from a country that would normally need a visa to enter the UK. If you are a [non visa national](#) you will **not** need to apply for a student visitor visa but at the UK border you may need to provide evidence to support your visit. This includes your return ticket, evidence that you intend to leave the UK at the end of your stay, that you have enrolled on a course and that you have enough money to pay for your stay and your accommodation.

If you are unsure whether you need a visa please use the '[Do I need a visa](#)' tool on the front page of UK Border Agency website.

EXTENDED STUDENT VISITOR

You can apply for an extended student visitor visa if:

- Your course is over 6 months but not exceeding 11 months
- You will only be taking an English language course and no other courses on other subjects
- You have no intention of extending your stay
- You do not want to work in the UK

You will need to apply for an extended student visitor visa regardless of whether you are a visa national or non visa national.

HOW TO APPLY

You should be clear about the type of visa you are applying for and read the information on it. You will need to:

- Complete a visa application form.
- Pay your visa application fee.
- Prepare all your supporting documents.
- Visit the visa application centre to give your biometric information (fingerprints and photograph).

Further guidance for [students](#) and information on how to apply in your country can be found on the UK Border Agency website.

You are strongly advised not to confirm your travel arrangements to come to the UK until you have received your visa.

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

This information is for applicants who are resident outside the United Kingdom. More comprehensive guidance is available on the UK Border Agency website, which is the definitive version, and in the event of any discrepancy overrules the information provided here.