

Student Visa: FAQ for international students

This document is prepared for you by the Student Advice team.

The Student Advice team at the University of Westminster provide advice about visa and immigration matters and you are welcome to [contact us](#) if you have questions relating to the visa application process.

It is extremely important that you take the time to read the information in this document and on [our website](#) to ensure your application and documents are correct to avoid a visa refusal. If you find that our website and FAQ do not answer your questions, please get in touch with us for further assistance.

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What documents do I need for the visa application?

You will need a **CAS**, a **valid passport** (which must be the same passport as the one listed on your CAS) and, usually, you will need **financial documents** in the correct format. Depending on your circumstances, you may also need other documents, such as a Tuberculosis (TB) certificate, evidence of financial sponsorship, or a consent letter.

See our website below for a full list of documents which you may need for your application:

[Documents required for a Student Visa | University of Westminster](#)

Any documents that are not in English must be accompanied by a [certified translation](#). You must provide both the original document and the translation.

Additional documents for applicants under the age of 18

You will need a written consent from your parents for your visa application. Please see the [Government website](#) for details.

How do I receive a CAS?

You will request your CAS online via CAS Shield. A link to CAS Shield will be emailed to you once you meet all the conditions to request your CAS. Before this is possible, you will typically need to accept an unconditional offer of study and pay the deposit (unless you're exempt). When requesting your CAS, you will need to provide any required documentation. If you are required to provide financial evidence, your evidence will need to be maintained for 28 days at the time of CAS request. You must keep an eye on CAS request deadlines.

See our [CAS webpage](#) for more information about this.

How do I prepare my financial documents?

You should think about this at least 1 month before requesting your CAS.

Your financial documents must meet very specific UKVI requirements. For example, you can usually only use bank evidence issued in your own name or your parents' names (there are some exceptions to this, but these are the most common formats). You cannot use business bank accounts or funds to which you don't have immediate access.

The details about how much money you need and what evidence you must provide are explained on our website: [Financial Requirements and the 28-day rule | University of Westminster, London](#)

Keep in mind that the money must be held in the account for 28 consecutive days before you can request your CAS. If you are not able to reach the 28-day count before the CAS request deadline, your CAS request will likely be rejected.

If you are relying on funds held in your parents' bank account, you will also need to provide your birth certificate and a letter of consent from your parents, confirming you are their child and that they allow you to use their funds.

Can my family members apply for Dependant visas?

Dependants are normally your partner and children joining you in the UK under a Dependant visa.

Only students studying at PhD level and some government-sponsored students can bring Dependants. Most undergraduate and Master's degree students cannot bring Dependants. For detailed information on who can bring dependants, please see the UKCISA website: [UKCISA - Dependants](#).

If you can bring dependants, you will need to show more money to meet the financial requirement, as explained on the link above.

When should I apply for my visa?

We advise you to apply for your visa **as soon as** you have your CAS and all the necessary documents ready. Make sure that your bank statement is still valid (not expired) at the time you submit your visa application (see: [Financial Requirements and the 28-day rule | University of Westminster](#)).

If [applying outside the UK](#): standard visa processing time is around 3 weeks from the date of your visa appointment or the date you submit your documents via an app on your phone, whichever applies to you. However, this can be significantly extended if the UKVI need to do additional checks on your documents or invite you to a [credibility interview](#).

If [applying inside the UK](#): only some students can apply inside the UK and it is very important that you check your eligibility before applying; if eligible, you must apply before your current visa expires; if your current visa is a Graduate Route visa, you must receive your new Student visa before your course starts (this is because you won't be able to enrol and start your course under the Graduate Route visa) – standard processing time for applications submitted inside the UK is 8 weeks.

We advise that you factor in additional time for any potential delays. You may choose to pay extra for priority processing service, but you need to decide this before submitting your visa application, as once you pay, you won't be able to change this.

Does it matter which country I am applying from?

Yes. You should apply from the country of your nationality or the country of which you are a legal resident (not a visitor), or – in some limited cases – you may be able to apply from the UK (this is only possible if you already have a valid UK visa, other than a short term or visitor visa, and if you meet all the criteria listed on [our website](#)).

If you are required to attend a visa application centre as a part of the application process, and your country does not have visa application centres open, you will be directed to attend an appointment at an alternative location if required; see: [Find a visa application centre - GOV.UK](#).

How do I apply for the Student visa?

You apply online. Most students will need to attend an appointment at a visa application centre after submitting the online application, but some students will be able to prove their identity using an app on their phone instead of going to a visa centre in person. This option is currently available to all nationals submitting their application in the UK, and to EU/EEA/Swiss nationals applying from outside the UK.

We prepared detailed step-by-step guides to the visa application process. Our guides explain how to start the application and show the questions you will be asked with explanatory notes to help you complete the form. Please access the visa guides on our website:

- [Students applying from outside the UK](#)
- [Students applying inside the UK](#)

How much will I pay for the visa application?

You will pay £524 for the visa application if applying for the standard service (additional fees are charged for priority services).

In addition to this, most students must pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS).

IHS is £776 per year. The application form will calculate the amount which you should pay. This will be for the length of your course + additional post-study period. See our website for exact calculations of the amount you will be asked to pay: [Immigration Health Surcharge \(IHS\) | University of Westminster](#).

Do I have to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge even if I have health insurance?

Yes, if you are coming to the UK for more than 6 months, you must pay the IHS. The IHS payment is mandatory for most applicants, including EU/EEA/Swiss nationals. If you are an EU/EEA/Swiss national, in some circumstances, you may be able to [claim reimbursement](#) of the IHS payment later, but you will still need to make the payment with the application.

If you are studying a pre-sessional course on a single CAS or a one-semester study abroad course, you may not pay IHS and will need to rely on private health insurance for any costs of medical treatment (it is for you to arrange your insurance).

What if I have technical issues whilst making the payment?

If you are having issues with making the visa fee or IHS payment, it may help to refresh the webpage, try a different browser, try a different payment method, or log out and log back in again. If the issue persists, you may need to contact your bank.

What happens after I pay the Student visa application fee?

If you used the **ID Check app**, you must complete the 'document upload' stage, even if you do not have documents to upload; you must read the information carefully and, when ready, click 'confirm and upload' to send your application for processing. This is a very important stage, and your application may not be considered in time if you don't complete it.

If you did not use the ID Check app to confirm your identity, you must book and attend a biometrics appointment at a visa application centre. Follow the instructions given to you on the screen after the payment stage.

Your application will only be sent to the UKVI to consider after you complete the relevant steps above.

When waiting for the decision on your application, check your emails (including spam) regularly. The UKVI may contact you to ask for additional information, documents, or to invite you to a [credibility interview](#). They will give you a deadline for responding and you must take action before that deadline passes.

How do I receive my visa?

If you applied from outside the UK and attended a visa appointment, you will receive a decision letter or email confirming the outcome of your application. It will instruct you to [activate an e-visa](#), which will be your actual visa going forward (we no longer use physical visa cards – all Student visas are accessed electronically).

If you applied for your visa using the ID Check app, you will receive an e-visa right away: an email will be sent to you confirming the outcome of your application.

You will be able to see your e-visa here: [View and prove your immigration status - GOV.UK](#).

Some students may receive a visa vignette (a sticker in their passport) valid for 90 days, or for the entire length of the course, if the course is shorter than 6 months. Visa stickers and other physical documents are being discontinued, and many students will no longer receive them. Even if you receive a visa sticker, you will also need to activate an e-visa, unless your course is shorter than 6 months.

How long will my Student visa be valid for?

The length of your visa depends on the length of your course. The earliest your visa can start is 1 month before your course starts. Your visa will usually end 1, 2, or 4 months after your course ends, as demonstrated by the table below:

Course length	Additional period at the end of the course
12 months and longer	4 months
Over 6 months but under 12 months	2 months
Under 6 months (not pre-session)	7 days
Under 6 months pre-session course	1 month

The full length of your permission should be recorded on your [e-visa](#), which most students will need to activate once their visa application is successful.

When can I travel to the UK?

You can travel to the UK once you have your visa **and** once the visa becomes valid (on or after its start date).

You must not travel to the UK before your visa start date. If you travel to the UK without a visa, or before your visa start date, you will either be **refused entry** or enter the UK as a visitor (if you are a non-visa national) and will need to leave the UK and enter again once you have a valid Student visa. You cannot apply for a Student visa in the UK if you are here as a visitor and you cannot enrol on your course as a visitor if you need a Student visa for your course.

What if I arrive late for my course?

There is a deadline to enrol on your course ('the latest date to enrol') which is listed on your CAS. If you do not receive your visa and do not enrol on your course by that date, you will typically not be able to start your course. Your visa (if subsequently granted) will be cancelled. You will not be able to use this visa to study another course or a

course at a later date. You will not be able to claim refunds on the visa fees you paid. If you are worried you will miss the enrolment deadline, please speak to your Admissions Officer about deferring your course.

If you defer your course, you will need a new CAS and you will need to apply for a new Student visa from outside the UK before starting the course. If you choose to defer your course and your visa application is still pending, you are advised to [withdraw the application](#). If the UKVI allows you to withdraw your application, you should receive a refund on the IHS fee paid when applying.

Can you help fast-track my application?

We cannot fast-track your application. You choose to pay the standard, priority or super-priority service when submitting your application. If you have already applied, you cannot change the service. When submitting your application, you should consider whether you have enough time to receive your visa and travel to the UK before the enrolment deadline. Although the UKVI advertises certain timeframes for processing applications, sometimes there are unforeseen delays which may result in a longer waiting time.

What should I do if there is an error on my eVisa?

If you spot any errors on your visa, for example, an incorrect name, photo, expiry date or other details, you will need to report this via an online form here: [Report an error with your e-visa - GOV.UK](#)

More information about the visa application process

[Student visa | University of Westminster, London](#)

[UKCISA - international student advice and guidance](#)