

## Applying for a Standard Visitor visa for your graduation

If you, and any of your guests are not EEA nationals then you will need a visa to be in the UK for your graduation. Similarly, if you are outside of the UK and you used to have a Tier 4 visa which has expired or been curtailed, then you will need a new visa to be in the UK. You should apply for a Standard Visitor visa for your graduation ceremony.

### What is a Standard Visitor visa?

A Standard Visitor visa is valid for up to 6 months, although most people use it to come to the UK for much less than this.

To make a successful **Standard Visitor visa application**, you must demonstrate that:

1. You have a valid reason to come to the UK
2. You can afford your accommodation, living costs and return travel here while you're here
3. You intend to return home before your visa expires

Your application may be refused if you continuously apply for visitor visas for the UK and it is evident that you spend more time in the UK than in your home country.

### What evidence do I need to provide?

- Your current passport (with at least 1 page that's blank on both sides)
- Any expired passports that you have used to travel to the UK on previously
- One passport sized colour photograph. You can check photo guidance here: <https://www.gov.uk/photos-for-passports>
- A letter from the University inviting you to Graduation, email [informationpoint@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:informationpoint@staffs.ac.uk)
- Evidence that you have enough money to support yourself while you're in the UK, in the form of bank statements or pay slips for the last 6 months. There is no exact amount that you are required to show, but you need to demonstrate that you can meet the costs of travelling and being here – flights, accommodation, food and general living costs. As a guide, students coming to the UK under the Tier 4 visa category are required to show they have £1015 per month for their living costs. If you are staying rent-free with friends or family then you can provide evidence of this, and the UKVI will understand this will reduce your living costs.
- You can use financial evidence provided by your parents, family members or official sponsors (such as a government agency); please ensure that they also provide a statement that their funds can be used to support you.
- All documents must be original.
- Official translations, if any of your documents aren't in English.

- Evidence of your intention to leave the UK before your visa expires – if you are employed you could provide a letter from your employer stating that you're expected back at work on a certain date. Or if you have a tenancy agreement, you could provide a copy of your contract to show that you have strong ties to your home country that you have to go back for.

### Why do people get refused?

Some common reasons for refusing a Standard Visitor visa are that:

- **There is not enough money to realistically live on** - the Immigration Officer will apply common sense when assessing how much money is "enough". For example, if you are staying in a luxury hotel in London for 6 months they would expect to see more money than if you are staying on a friend's sofa for 1 week.
- **There is not a clear source of the funds available** - if your bank statements show you have no salary and very little money and then suddenly have a deposit in your account for thousands of pounds, with no explanation of where this came from, it would be reasonable to expect questions to be raised about the source of the money.
- **There are no obvious ties to your home country** – the Immigration Officer will want some assurance that you intend to leave the UK before your visa expires. If it seems like you don't have any strong ties to another country, it could be interpreted as a risk that you might try to stay in the UK. Good evidence of your ties to the home country can be employment, education, housing, family etc.

If you can provide evidence that these issues are not relevant to you, and if you complete the form correctly, you are putting yourself in the best possible position for a successful outcome.

### How do I apply?

This depends on your nationality, as the UK government treats applications from **visa nationals** and **non-visa nationals** differently. If you are a national of one of the countries below, then you are a **visa national**:

- |               |                            |                                    |
|---------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ○ Afghanistan | ○ Bolivia                  | ○ Comoros                          |
| ○ Albania     | ○ Bosnia and Herzegovina   | ○ Congo                            |
| ○ Algeria     | ○ Burkina Faso             | ○ Côte d'Ivoire                    |
| ○ Angola      | ○ Burundi                  | ○ Cuba                             |
| ○ Armenia     | ○ Cambodia                 | ○ Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| ○ Azerbaijan  | ○ Cameroon                 | ○ Djibouti                         |
| ○ Bahrain     | ○ Cape Verde               | ○ Dominican Republic               |
| ○ Bangladesh  | ○ Central African Republic | ○ Ecuador                          |
| ○ Belarus     | ○ Chad                     | ○ Egypt                            |
| ○ Benin       | ○ China <b>[1]</b>         | ○ Equatorial Guinea                |
| ○ Bhutan      | ○ Colombia                 |                                    |

Last updated: 06/04/2017

International Student Support

[isa@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:isa@staffs.ac.uk)

- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Fiji
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Georgia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Jamaica
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Korea, Democratic People's Republic of
- Kosovo
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Libya
- Macedonia
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Moldova
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar
- Nepal
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Oman [3]
- Pakistan
- Peru
- Philippines
- Qatar [3]
- Russian Federation
- Rwanda
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Sierra Leone
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Sudan
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Surinam
- Swaziland
- Syria
- Taiwan [2]
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- Togo
- Tunisia
- Turkey\*
- Turkmenistan
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates [3]
- Uzbekistan
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Yemen
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

**[1]** Except those Chinese nationals holding passports issued by Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and by Macao Special Administrative Region.

**[2]** Except those nationals of Taiwan who hold a passport by Taiwan that includes the number of the identification card issued by the competent authority in Taiwan in it.

**[3]** Except those nationals of Oman, Qatar, or the United Arab Emirates who hold and use an Electronic Visa Waiver (EVW)

If you are a national of a country **not** on the above list, and you hold a valid passport for that country, then you are considered a **non-visa national**.

The difference between being a visa national and a non-visa national is how and where you apply:

### Visa nationals

- **Visa Nationals** will need to apply for a Standard Visitor visa in advance before they travel to the UK.
- You apply online here: <https://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/>
- Select these options at the beginning of the form:

Reason for Visit	Visit	*
Visa Type	Tourism	*
Visa Sub Type	Visit - tourism - 6 months	*

- The fee for applying is **£89**.
- Once you've submitted online, you will have to go to the Visa Application Centre for an appointment and to give your documents.
- You can check the processing times in the country where you're applying here: <https://www.gov.uk/visa-processing-times>
- You should carry the documents you used to make your application in your hand luggage, just in case the Immigration Officer asks to see them when you arrive in the UK.

### Non-visa nationals

- **Non-visa nationals** can choose to apply online in advance, in the same way as a visa-national

**Or**

- You can apply on entry when you arrive at the airport in the UK.
- This isn't a traditional application process, but a conversation with the Border Force Officer at the airport. They will want to know why you are coming to the UK, and for how long.
- You must have all of the original evidence listed above in your hand luggage to request entry as a Standard Visitor.
- Applications made on entry are **free**, and are a quick and easy option for non-visa nationals. Most of our non-visa national students who are coming to the UK as Short-term students apply this way.
- However, if you have a complicated immigration history or have had a visa refused before it would be cautious to apply online in advance.

### How can I help my friends or family get a Standard Visitor visa to visit me?

If you are also applying for a Standard Visitor visa at the same time as your family, then you can request a graduation letter from the Information Point, for them to use in their application.

If you currently have valid Tier 4 immigration permission, then you can also provide to your visitors:

- A photocopy of your passport ID page and current visa
- Your student status letter, and/or graduation letter from the Information Point to confirm why you are here in the UK
- An invitation letter from you. This should be a formal, typed letter in English, addressed to the Entry Clearance Officer at the Visa Application Centre where your guest is applying. It doesn't have to be particularly long, but should include:
  - The full name and date of birth of your visitor
  - How you are related (e.g. brother, friend, parent etc.)
  - Why they want to visit you (e.g. for your graduation, for a holiday etc.)
  - How long they will be staying in the UK for. If possible, also give their proposed arrival and departure dates
  - Where they intend to stay – if it will be with you, give your full address in the UK
  - What type of visa you have to be in the UK, and how long it is valid for.

### How do I get more information?

For most applicants, this guidance covers everything they need to make a successful Standard Visitor visa application. However, you can find more information on the government's webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa>

You can also contact us with questions or for further information.

**Telephone:** 01782 29 4639, 01782 29 4539, 01782 29 4711

**Email:** [isa@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:isa@staffs.ac.uk)

**Skype Chat:** iss.staffs