

UK VISA SCREENING – DOCUMENT CHECKLIST AND GUIDANCE (2025)

Source basis: This guide is based primarily on the official UK government guidance for the Student visa “Documents you’ll need to apply” and related pages (tuberculosis testing, English language evidence, ATAS) together with checklists published by UK universities and advisory organisations. It is written in simplified language for learning and “visa screening” purposes and is not a legal document. Always cross-check with the latest guidance on GOV.UK before applying.

1. INTRODUCTION

When you apply for a UK Student visa, the decision maker (UK Visas and Immigration – UKVI) checks that you:

- are a genuine student with an unconditional offer;
- will study an approved course at a licensed sponsor;
- can support yourself financially and pay your tuition fees;
- meet health and character requirements; and
- have provided all mandatory supporting documents.

This checking process is often called visa “screening”. If any required evidence is missing or does not meet the format rules, UKVI can refuse the application even if you are otherwise eligible. This document is designed as a training resource for building a UK visa-screening system: it expands the official document list into a detailed, structured checklist that a system can use to verify whether the applicant has collected the correct evidence.

The guide focuses on the standard Student visa route (for courses longer than 6 months) made from outside the UK. Many of the requirements are also relevant to applications made within the UK, but some details differ.

2. CORE MANDATORY DOCUMENTS

2.1 Current passport or travel document

Every applicant must provide a valid passport or other travel document.

Key screening points:

- The document must be valid on the date you submit the application and when you travel to the UK.
- It should contain at least one blank page (front and back) so the visa vignette can be placed in it if an eVisa is not used.
- The personal details page must be clearly readable and not damaged.
- If the passport will expire very soon after arrival, applicants are strongly advised to renew it before applying, because replacing a passport from abroad can be difficult.

Evidence format:

- Original physical passport (for in-person biometrics) or electronic copy if applying using the UK Immigration ID Check app.
- If you hold more than one nationality, you may need to declare and provide details of all passports.

2.2 Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

The second mandatory document is a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) issued by a licensed Student sponsor (usually your university or college). The CAS is an electronic record, not a paper letter, but universities often provide a CAS statement for your reference.

Key screening points:

- CAS reference number: you must enter this correctly in the online application form.
- The CAS must be issued by a sponsor with a valid Student sponsor licence.
- The CAS must be for the course you intend to study and must not have been used in a previous visa application that was granted or is still pending.
- The CAS will contain key details such as course title, level, start and end dates, tuition fees for the first year or whole course, and any fees already paid.

System-level checks for visa screening:

- Validate that a CAS number has been entered.
- Confirm that the course level meets the Student visa rules (for example, RQF level 3 or above for further education, or degree-level study).
- Confirm that the course start date is within the permitted timeframe for applying.
- Record the tuition fee amount and any pre-paid tuition/accommodation fees because these affect the financial requirement.

3. FINANCIAL EVIDENCE (MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENT)

Official guidance says you may need to provide proof that you have enough money to support yourself and pay your tuition fees. The exact amount depends on course location, length and how long you have already lived in the UK.

3.1 What you usually need to show

For most first-time applications made outside the UK, the applicant must show:

- Remaining tuition fees for the first year of the course (or for the full course if it lasts 12 months or less), minus any fees already paid to the university and confirmed on the CAS.
- Living costs (also called “maintenance funds”) for up to 9 months, calculated using Home Office rates, e.g.:
 - a monthly amount for London;
 - a slightly lower monthly amount for cities outside London.

(Exact monetary values change over time and should be taken from the current guidance.)

3.2 Types of acceptable financial documents

Common types of evidence include:

a) Personal bank statements

- Must show the required funds held for a continuous period (often 28 days) ending no more than 31 days before the application date.
- Statement must include: account holder’s name, account number, financial institution name and logo, and all transactions/balances for the period.
- Screenshots or online print-outs are acceptable only if they contain all required details and are clearly from a regulated bank.

b) Fixed-deposit certificates or savings accounts

- Must be in an account that allows the funds to be withdrawn.
- Evidence should show that the deposit can be accessed immediately, not locked beyond the application date.

c) Parents’ or legal guardians’ finances

- Allowed if you are using a parent’s or guardian’s bank account.
- Must provide:
 - Bank statements in the parent/guardian’s name; and

- Proof of relationship (for example, birth certificate, adoption certificate or court document); and
- A signed letter from the parent/guardian confirming that the funds will be used to support your study and living costs in the UK.

d) Official financial sponsorship

- A letter from a government body, international scholarship agency, university, or international company confirming that they will cover some or all of your tuition fees and living costs.
- The letter must be on official letterhead, dated, signed and include:
 - Sponsor's name and contact details;
 - Applicant's name;
 - Duration of sponsorship; and
 - Amount or full coverage of costs.

3.3 Screening rules for financial documents

A visa-screening system should check:

- Is financial evidence required for this applicant?
 - Applicants extending their visa from inside the UK after 12 continuous months of lawful residence may not need to show funds.
- Are documents dated within the permitted period?
- Does the total balance meet or exceed the calculated requirement (tuition + maintenance minus allowed deductions)?
- Do the documents cover a full continuous 28-day period (or other period stated in current rules)?
- Are funds in a permitted currency and held in an acceptable financial institution?
- If using parents' funds, is relationship evidence and consent letter present?

- If the applicant received official sponsorship within the last 12 months and that sponsorship has ended, do they have written consent from the previous sponsor allowing them to remain and re-enter the UK?

3.4 Common financial refusal reasons

- Funds held for fewer than 28 continuous days.
- Evidence older than 31 days on the date of application.
- Using an account belonging to someone else without showing relationship and consent.
- Submitting financial documents from an unregulated or banned financial institution.
- Miscalculating the required amount, especially for dependants or London vs outside London.

4. ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ATAS EVIDENCE

4.1 Proving knowledge of English

For most Student visa applications, you must show that you can speak, read, write and understand English to a certain level. Evidence may include:

- An academic qualification taught in English and accepted by UKVI as meeting the requirement; or
- An approved English language test (for example IELTS for UKVI, PTE Academic UKVI or similar) at the level appropriate for your course; or
- Being a national of a majority English-speaking country listed by the Home Office; or
- Having completed a degree-level qualification in the UK previously.

Screening checks:

- Does the course require English evidence based on its level and whether it is below degree level?
- If a test certificate is used:
 - Is the test provider on the list of approved Secure English Language Test (SELT) providers?
 - Is the test still valid on the date of application?
 - Are the scores at or above the minimum for the CAS/course level?

4.2 Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

For certain postgraduate courses in sensitive subjects (mainly science, engineering and technology fields), students of specific nationalities must obtain an ATAS certificate before applying for a visa.

Key points:

- The CAS will normally state whether ATAS is required and include the relevant subject code.
- The ATAS certificate is issued as a digital letter. It must be valid (usually 6 months) when the visa application is submitted.
- If ATAS is required and not provided, the visa will be refused.

Screening checks:

- Check CAS to see if ATAS is required.
- Confirm that an ATAS certificate is attached and that:
 - The course details and institution match the CAS; and
 - The applicant's personal details match the rest of the application; and
 - The decision date on the certificate is within the allowed period.

5. TUBERCULOSIS (TB) TEST CERTIFICATE

Students coming to the UK for more than 6 months from certain listed countries must provide a tuberculosis (TB) test certificate from a Home Office-approved clinic.

Key information from the TB guidance:

- You need a TB test if:
 - You are coming to the UK for more than 6 months; and
 - You have lived in one of the listed countries for 6 months or more; and
 - You were living in that country (or another listed country) within the last 6 months.
- The test is usually a chest x-ray. If the x-ray is unclear, you may need a sputum (phlegm) test.
- If the test shows you do not have TB, you receive a certificate that is valid for 6 months from the date of the x-ray.
- Children must attend an approved clinic. Children under 11 usually do not need a chest x-ray, but a medical practitioner must complete a questionnaire and issue a certificate if the child is TB-free.
- There are separate options for pregnant applicants (shielded x-ray, sputum test, or postponing the test until after delivery).

Screening checks:

- Is the applicant applying from a TB-listed country, or have they recently lived there?
- Is the course longer than 6 months (Student visa normally is)?
- If yes, has the applicant provided a TB certificate issued by an approved clinic?
- Is the certificate:
 - Less than 6 months old on the date of application?
 - Clearly matching the applicant's identity details?

- For dependants applying with the student, each dependant from a TB-listed country must also provide a TB certificate.

6. APPLICANTS UNDER 18 – PARENTAL CONSENT AND RELATIONSHIP EVIDENCE

If you are under 18 at the time of application, you must provide extra documents to show that your parents or legal guardians consent to your study and living arrangements in the UK.

6.1 Parental or guardian consent

You normally need written consent from both parents, or the one parent who has sole legal responsibility, or your legal guardian(s). The consent letter must:

- State that they consent to your Student visa application;
- Confirm that they agree with your living and care arrangements in the UK; and
- Confirm that they consent to your travel to and from the UK.

For screening, check that:

- The letter is signed and dated.
- The names in the letter match the names on your birth certificate or guardianship documents.
- The letter clearly mentions all three areas of consent (application, living/care arrangements, and travel).

6.2 Proof of relationship

You must also provide evidence of your relationship to your parent(s) or guardian(s). Typical documents include:

- Birth certificate showing the names of both parents;
- Adoption certificate;
- Court order or legal document confirming guardianship.

These documents must be original or properly certified copies. If they are not in English or Welsh, an official translated version must also be provided.

7. PREVIOUS SPONSORSHIP CONSENT

If, in the last 12 months, you were financially sponsored by a government or an international scholarship agency for both tuition fees and living costs, and that sponsorship has ended, you must provide a letter from that sponsor giving you unconditional consent to remain or re-enter the UK for further study.

The consent letter should:

- Be on official letterhead;
- Include your full name and, ideally, your date of birth or passport number;
- Confirm that the sponsor supports your new course in the UK and has no objection to your visa application; and
- Be signed, dated and include contact information of an authorised official.

Screening rule:

- If an applicant declares previous full sponsorship, the file must contain this consent letter. Without it, the visa can be refused even if financial funds are otherwise sufficient.

8. ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Depending on your level of study and nationality, you may be required to submit academic qualifications listed on your CAS.

8.1 When qualifications are required

- If you are studying below degree level and are not from a “differential evidence” country, you must normally submit the qualification documents used to obtain your offer (for example, school certificates, college transcripts).
- If you are from a differential evidence country or studying at degree level or above, you may not have to upload documents with your application, but you must keep them ready because UKVI can request them during screening.

Common types of academic evidence:

- Certificates of qualification (for example, 12th grade mark sheet, bachelor’s degree certificate);
- Official transcripts of results, stamped or sealed by the institution;
- Printouts of results from an awarding body’s secure online verification system.

Screening checks:

- Do the qualification names and grades match the details in the CAS?
 - Are documents genuine-looking (correct logos, spelling, signatures, seals)?
 - If any document is not in English or Welsh, is a certified translation attached?
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9. TRANSLATIONS AND DOCUMENT FORMAT

Any supporting document that is not in English or Welsh must be accompanied by a fully certified translation. The translation must:

- Be done by a professional translator or translation company;
- Include confirmation that it is an accurate translation of the original document;
- Include the date of translation;
- Include the translator's or translation company's full name and contact details; and
- Bear the translator's signature.

Screening checks:

- For every non-English/Welsh document, confirm that a corresponding translation is present and meets the above requirements.
- Verify that the information in the translation matches the original document (names, dates, numbers).

10. DEPENDANT FAMILY MEMBERS

Some students are allowed to bring dependants (partner and children) to the UK. The current Student visa rules restrict who can bring dependants, and these rules change over time, so they must always be checked against the latest official guidance.

Typical evidence for dependants includes:

- Marriage or civil partnership certificate (for partners);
- Birth certificate for each child;

- Evidence that the relationship is genuine and subsisting (for example, joint bank accounts, joint tenancy agreements, photos, communication history), if requested;
- Additional financial evidence to show that you have enough money to support each dependant for the required number of months, on top of your own maintenance requirement;
- TB test certificates for dependants from listed countries.

A visa-screening system should be able to:

- Detect when an application includes dependants;
- Calculate extra maintenance funds required for each dependant; and
- Verify that relationship documents and TB certificates are present for each dependant, if relevant.

11. IDENTITY VERIFICATION, BIOMETRICS AND INTERVIEW

Although not “documents” in the traditional sense, identity verification steps are part of the screening process.

11.1 Biometrics appointment or ID Check app

Most applicants must either:

- Attend a visa application centre, where fingerprints and a digital photograph are taken; or
- Use the UK Immigration ID Check app to scan their passport chip and upload a selfie.

The data collected is used to:

- Confirm your identity;
- Produce a visa vignette or eVisa record; and

- Cross-check against immigration and security databases.

11.2 Credibility interviews

In some cases, UKVI may invite you to a short interview, often via video link. You may be asked about:

- Your course choice and knowledge of the university;
- How you will fund your studies and living costs;
- Your previous academic background; and
- Your plans after completing the course.

While these are not documents, they are part of the overall “screening” of a Student visa application. Your answers should be consistent with the documents you provided.

12. HIGH-LEVEL CHECKLIST FOR A UK STUDENT VISA SCREENING SYSTEM

Below is an example of how an automated or semi-automated screening checklist might be structured. Each item corresponds to one or more documents and rules described earlier.

A. Identity and course details

1. Valid passport or travel document uploaded and readable.

2. CAS reference number provided and valid.

3. Course level and start date meet Student visa requirements.

B. Financial requirement

- 4. Tuition fee amount and any pre-payments recorded from CAS.**
- 5. Living-cost requirement calculated according to location and duration.**
- 6. Financial documents provided in an acceptable format (bank statements, sponsor letters, etc.).**
- 7. Funds held for at least the required continuous period and are recent enough.**
- 8. If using parent/guardian funds: relationship evidence and consent letter present.**
- 9. If previously officially sponsored within the last 12 months: sponsor consent letter attached.**

C. English language and ATAS

- 10. Appropriate English language evidence provided where required.**
- 11. If course requires ATAS: ATAS certificate attached and valid.**

D. Health requirements

- 12. TB certificate provided if applicant or dependants meet the criteria.**
- 13. Certificate issued by a Home Office-approved clinic and still within validity.**

E. Age and parental consent

- 14. Applicant's age verified.**
- 15. If under 18: parental/guardian consent letter(s) attached.
- 16. Relationship evidence (birth/adoption certificate, court order) attached.

F. Academic and course-related evidence

- 17. Academic qualification documents provided where required by CAS and rules.
- 18. All non-English/Welsh documents accompanied by certified translations.

G. Dependants (if applicable)

19. For each dependant:

- Relationship evidence attached (marriage/birth certificate);
- TB certificate attached if required;
- Extra funds included in financial calculations.

H. Process completion

20. Biometrics or ID Check app process scheduled/completed.

21. Application form submitted with consistent information across all sections.

22. Application fee and Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) paid.

13. CONCLUSION AND BEST PRACTICES

The UK Student visa process is rule-based and document-heavy. Many refusals arise from missing, inconsistent or incorrectly formatted documents rather than from ineligibility. A robust visa-screening system should therefore:

- Mirror the official GOV.UK structure: “Check if this visa is right for you”, “Prepare the evidence you need”, “Apply”, and so on.
- Provide dynamic checklists based on the applicant’s circumstances (age, nationality, where they apply from, dependants, previous sponsorship).
- Guide applicants step by step to upload each required document in the correct format.
- Highlight high-risk areas, such as financial evidence and TB certificates, where refusals are common.
- Store structured metadata (for example, document type, issue date, issuing authority, currency, balance) so that automated validation rules can be applied.

For real visa applications, applicants must always rely on the most recent Home Office guidance and, where necessary, professional immigration advice. However, this document gives a comprehensive, structured view of the evidence typically needed for UK Student visa screening and can be used both as a learning aid and as source material inside a Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) system for query answering.