

# Graduate visa

## 1. Overview

A Graduate visa gives you permission to stay in the UK for at least 18 months after successfully completing an eligible course in the UK.

You must be in the UK when you apply.

## Eligibility

You can apply for a Graduate visa if all of the following are true:

- you're in the UK
- your current visa is a [Student visa or Tier 4 \(General\) student visa \(/student-visa\)](/student-visa)
- you studied a UK bachelor's degree, postgraduate degree or other eligible course for a minimum period of time with your Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa
- your education provider (such as your university or college) has told the Home Office you've successfully completed your course

You can ask your education provider if you're not sure whether they've told the Home Office you've successfully completed your course.

[Check if your course is eligible and how long you need to have studied in the UK \(/graduate-visa/course-you-studied\)](/graduate-visa/course-you-studied).

If you're not eligible for a Graduate visa, you may be eligible for [another type of visa to stay in the UK \(/check-uk-visa\)](/check-uk-visa).

## How long you can stay

A Graduate visa lasts for:

- 2 years if you apply on or before 31 December 2026
- 18 months if you apply on or after 1 January 2027

If you have a PhD or other doctoral qualification, it will last for 3 years.

Your visa will start from the day your application is approved.

## **If you want to stay longer in the UK**

You cannot extend your Graduate visa. However, you may be able to switch to a different visa, for example a [Skilled Worker visa \(/skilled-worker-visa\)](/skilled-worker-visa).

Check you can apply for [another type of visa to stay in the UK \(/check-uk-visa\)](/check-uk-visa).

## **How to apply**

You must [apply online for a Graduate visa \(/graduate-visa/apply\)](/graduate-visa/apply).

[Your partner and children \(/graduate-visa/your-partner-and-children\)](/graduate-visa/your-partner-and-children) can also apply to stay in the UK if they are eligible.

## **When to apply**

You must apply before your Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa expires.

You can apply after your education provider (such as your university or college) has told the Home Office that you've successfully completed the course you took with your Student or Tier 4 (General) student visa. You do not have to wait until you've graduated or have been given a certificate.

As part of your application, you'll need to prove your identity and provide your documents.

Your application may take longer if you need an appointment to do this. You'll find out if you need one when you start your application.

## **Getting a decision**

Once you've applied online, proved your identity and provided your documents, you'll usually get a decision on your visa within 8 weeks.

You can stay in the UK while you wait for a decision.

## **How much it costs**

When you apply for a Graduate visa, you'll need to:

- pay the £880 application fee
- pay the healthcare surcharge - this is usually £1,035 for each year you'll be in the UK

[Check how much it will cost \(/graduate-visa/how-much-it-costs\)](/graduate-visa/how-much-it-costs).

## **If you work in public sector healthcare**

If you're a doctor or nurse, or you work in health or adult social care, check if you're eligible to apply for the [Health and Care Worker visa \(/health-care-worker-visa\)](/health-care-worker-visa) instead. It's cheaper to apply for and you do not need to pay the annual immigration health surcharge.

If you get a job in public sector healthcare after you have paid the healthcare surcharge, you may be able to [get a refund \(/apply-immigration-health-surcharge-refund\)](/apply-immigration-health-surcharge-refund).

## **What you can and cannot do**

With a Graduate visa you can:

- work in most jobs
- look for work
- be self-employed
- [continue living in the UK with your partner and children \(/graduate-visa/your-partner-and-children\)](/graduate-visa/your-partner-and-children), if they're eligible
- travel abroad and return to the UK
- do voluntary work

Any voluntary work you do must be unpaid and for one of the following:

- a [registered charity \(/find-charity-information\)](/find-charity-information)
- a voluntary organisation
- an associated fundraising body (an organisation that raises money for a charity or voluntary organisation)
- a statutory body (a government-appointed body, for example Historic England)

You cannot:

- apply for most benefits ([public funds \(/government/publications/public-funds-2\)](/government/publications/public-funds-2)), or the State Pension

- work as a professional sportsperson

If your application is successful, you'll get a full list of what you can and cannot do with a Graduate visa.

## Studying with a Graduate visa

You can only study with a Graduate visa if your chosen course is [not eligible for a Student visa \(/student-visa/course\)](#). If your course is eligible for a Student visa, you can [extend your Student visa \(/student-visa/extend-your-visa\)](#) instead.

You may need an [Academic Technology Approval Scheme \(ATAS\) certificate \(/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme\)](#) if you're studying or researching sensitive topics.

## 2. The course you studied

To be eligible for a Graduate visa, you need to have successfully completed the course you took with your current Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa.

Whether you can apply will also depend on:

- the education provider for your course, for example your university or college
- the kind of course you took
- how long you studied in the UK for

If your education provider allowed you to change course without applying for a new Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa, you only need to have completed the course you changed to.

## Your education provider

The education provider for your course must be a licensed sponsor with a 'track record of compliance'.

[Check if your education provider has a track record of compliance \(/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-students\)](#) - it will have 'Student Sponsor - Track Record' in the 'Status' column.

## Your course

You usually must have one of the following to apply:

- a UK bachelor's degree
- a UK master's degree
- a UK PhD or doctorate

You can also apply if you completed any of the following:

- a law conversion course approved by the Solicitors Regulation Authority
- the Legal Practice Course in England and Wales, the Solicitors Course in Northern Ireland, or a Diploma in Professional Legal Practice in Scotland
- the Bar Practice Course in England and Wales, or the Bar Course in Northern Ireland
- a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
- a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)

You may also be able to apply if passing your course made you eligible for a job that's regulated by UK law or a UK public authority. Your education provider can tell you if your course is eligible.

### **If you're on a Student visa because you're a Student Union Sabbatical Officer**

You can apply for a Graduate visa if you're on your current Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa because you're a Student Union Sabbatical Officer.

To be eligible, you need to have successfully completed one of these courses in the UK just before you started your current visa.

### **How long you studied in the UK for**

You need to have studied in the UK for either:

- at least 12 months, if your course's total length is more than 12 months
- the total length of your course, if its total length is shorter than 12 months

You must also be in the UK when you apply for a Graduate visa.

### **What counts as time spent studying in the UK**

Studying your course in the UK means that you were in the UK when your education provider needed you to be there - for example, to go to lectures or meet with a tutor.

## Example

If you were taking a 1 year master's degree, but left the UK during term breaks or on weekends, that would still count as studying in the UK for 1 year.

## **If you could not study in the UK because of coronavirus (COVID-19)**

The rules on how long you need to have studied your course in the UK may not apply if you needed to study outside the UK because of COVID-19.

### **Your Student visa or Tier 4 visa was for more than 12 months**

You can count any time spent studying outside the UK between 24 January 2020 and 30 June 2022 as time spent studying in the UK.

### **Your Student visa or Tier 4 visa was for 12 months or less**

You can apply if either of the following are true:

- you started your course before 21 June 2021 and you entered the UK on a Student visa on or before 27 September 2021
- you started your course between 21 June 2021 and 30 June 2022 and you entered the UK on a Student visa on or before 30 June 2022

## **3. How much it costs**

When you apply for a Graduate visa, you'll need to:

- pay the £880 application fee
- pay the healthcare surcharge - this is usually £1,035 for each year you'll be in the UK

You'll be told how much you need to pay when you apply.

## **Healthcare surcharge**

If you're eligible for a Graduate visa for:

- 18 months - it will cost £1,152.50
- 2 years - it will cost £2,070

- 3 years - it will cost £3,105

### **If you work in public sector healthcare**

If you get a job in public sector healthcare after you have paid the healthcare surcharge, you may be able to [get a refund \(/apply-immigration-health-surcharge-refund\)](/apply-immigration-health-surcharge-refund).

## **4. Documents you'll need to apply**

When you apply you'll need to provide:

- a valid passport or other travel document that shows your identity and nationality
- your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) reference number from when you applied for your Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa

To prove you have a valid Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa, you'll need to provide either:

- your biometric residence permit (BRP) - you can use it for 18 months after the expiry date printed on the card
- online proof of your immigration status if you have an eVisa - you'll need to [get a share code \(/view-prove-immigration-status\)](/view-prove-immigration-status)

Your CAS reference number was sent to you by your education provider when they offered you a place on the course you completed with your Student visa. If you cannot find it, ask your education provider what it is.

## **Other documents you might need**

Depending on your circumstances, you might be asked to provide:

- proof of your relationship with [your partner or children \(/graduate-visa/your-partner-and-children\)](/graduate-visa/your-partner-and-children) if they're applying with you
- a letter from your scholarship or sponsorship provider approving your application, if they paid for both your course fees and living costs in the last 12 months

If your documents are not in English or Welsh you'll also need to provide a [certified translation \(/certifying-a-document\)](/certifying-a-document).

## **When you've got your documents ready**

You can [apply online for a Graduate visa \(/graduate-visa/apply\)](/graduate-visa/apply) once your documents are ready.

## 5. Apply

You must apply online for a Graduate visa.

Check which [documents you'll need to apply \(/graduate-visa/documents-youll-need-to-apply\)](/graduate-visa/documents-youll-need-to-apply).

Your [partner or children \(/graduate-visa/your-partner-and-children\)](/graduate-visa/your-partner-and-children) will need to apply separately.

## Proving your identity and providing supporting documents

As part of your application, you'll need to prove your identity. How you do this depends on where you're from and the type of passport or resident permit you have.

You'll either:

- use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to scan your identity document - you'll also create or sign into your UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account
- have your fingerprints and photo (biometric information) taken at a [UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services \(UKVCAS\) \(/ukvcas\)](/ukvcas) service point

You'll be told what you need to do when you apply.

If you do need to go to a UKVCAS service point, they may need to keep your passport and documents while they process your application.

You must not travel outside of the UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man until you get a decision. Your application will be withdrawn if you do.

## Apply for a Graduate visa

Once you've started your application, you can save your form and complete it later.

[Start now](#)



## Continue your application

You can sign back into your application if you've saved it.

[Find out how to sign in to your account \(/sign-in-visa\)](/sign-in-visa).

## Get help to apply online

You can [get help with completing the online form \(/assisted-digital-help-online-applications\)](/assisted-digital-help-online-applications) if you:

- do not feel confident using a computer or mobile device
- do not have internet access

You can only use this service if you're applying for a visa in the UK.

You cannot get immigration advice through this service.

## How long it takes to get a decision

Once you've applied online, proved your identity and provided your documents, you'll usually get a decision within 8 weeks.

## After you apply

You'll be contacted if your application will take longer, for example because:

- your supporting documents need to be verified
- of your personal circumstances, for example if you have a criminal conviction

You can ask to [cancel your application \(/cancel-visa\)](/cancel-visa). You'll only get your fee refunded if UKVI has not started processing your application.

## If your application is successful

You'll get an eVisa (a digital record of your identity and immigration status).

Your decision email or letter will tell you how to [get access to your eVisa \(/get-access-evisa\)](/get-access-evisa). You'll need to create a UKVI account.

# 6. Your partner and children

If your partner and children joined you in the UK as 'dependants' on your current Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa, they can apply to stay as dependants on your Graduate visa.

If your child was born in the UK during your current Student or Tier 4 (General) student visa, they can also apply.

If their application is successful, their visa will end on the same date as yours.

A dependant partner or child is any of the following:

- your husband, wife, civil partner or unmarried partner
- your child under 18 - including if they were born in the UK during your stay
- your child over 18 if they currently have permission ('leave to enter' or 'leave to remain') to be in the UK as your dependant

## **Your partner**

Your partner needs to have been a dependant on your Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa to apply. You'll also need to show that they're still your partner.

You must be able to prove one of the following:

- you're in a civil partnership or marriage that's recognised in the UK
- you've been living together in a relationship for at least 2 years when you apply
- you've been in a relationship for at least 2 years when you apply but you cannot live together, for example because you're working or studying in different places, or it's not accepted in your culture

If you're not living together, you'll need to prove that you have an ongoing commitment to each other, for example by providing evidence that you:

- communicate regularly with each other
- support each other financially
- care for any children you have together
- spend time together as a couple, for example on holiday or at events

## **Your child**

Your child must:

- live with you, unless they're living away from home in full-time education - for example, at boarding school or university
- not be married or in a civil partnership

You'll need to provide evidence of their address such as:

- a bank statement
- credit card bills
- driving licence
- NHS registration document
- an official letter from their university or college

### **If your child is under 18**

Your child usually needs to have been a dependant on your Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa to apply.

They do not need to have been a dependant if both of the following apply:

- they were born while you were in the UK on your current Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa
- they were born in the UK

You'll need to provide proof that they're your child - for example, a UK birth certificate or a special guardianship order from a court.

New dependants may be able to join you from outside the UK if you switch to a different visa, for example a [Skilled Worker visa \(/skilled-worker-visa/your-partner-and-children\)](https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa/your-partner-and-children).

### **If your child is 18 or over**

They must have been a dependant on your Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa.

## **Apply**

Your partner and children must either:

- [apply online as your partner \(https://apply-to-visit-or-stay-in-the-uk.homeoffice.gov.uk/sort/start/graduate\\_pbs\\_dependant\\_partner\\_in\\_uk\)](https://apply-to-visit-or-stay-in-the-uk.homeoffice.gov.uk/sort/start/graduate_pbs_dependant_partner_in_uk)

- [apply online as your child \(https://apply-to-visit-or-stay-in-the-uk.homeoffice.gov.uk/sort/start/brp\\_reuse\\_pbs\\_dependant\\_child\\_in\\_uk\)](https://apply-to-visit-or-stay-in-the-uk.homeoffice.gov.uk/sort/start/brp_reuse_pbs_dependant_child_in_uk)

Each family member will need to complete a separate application and [pay the visa fee \(/graduate-visa/how-much-it-costs\)](#).

They'll need to provide a valid passport or other document that shows their identity and nationality.

To prove they're dependants on your Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa, they'll need to provide either:

- their biometric residence permit (BRP) - they can use it for 18 months after the expiry date printed on the card
- online proof of their immigration status if they have an eVisa - they'll need to [get a share code \(/view-prove-immigration-status\)](#)

They'll also need your application number - you'll get this when you apply. This number is called a Unique Application Number (UAN). You'll find it on emails and letters from the Home Office about your application.

If your scholarship or sponsorship provider paid your partner or child's living costs in the last 12 months, your partner or child will need a letter from the provider approving their Graduate visa application.

## Proving their identity

As part of their application, your partner and children will need to prove their identity. How they do this depends on where they're from and the type of passport or resident permit they have.

They'll either:

- use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to scan their identity document - they'll also create or sign into their UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account
- have their fingerprints and photo (biometric information) taken at a [UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services \(UKVCAS\)](https://www.gov.uk/ukvcas) (<https://www.gov.uk/ukvcas>) service point

They'll be told what they need to do when they apply.

The UKVCAS service point may need to keep your partner's and children's passport and documents while processing their application.

They must not travel outside of the UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man until they get a decision. Their application will be withdrawn if they do.

## How long it takes to get a decision

Once they've applied online, proved their identity and provided their documents, they'll usually get a decision within 8 weeks.

## If their application is successful

They'll get an eVisa (a digital record of their identity and immigration status).

Their decision email or letter will tell them how to [get access to their eVisa \(/get-access-evisa\)](#). They'll need to create a UKVI account.

## Children born in the UK

If you have a child while you're in the UK, they do not automatically [become a British citizen \(/british-citizenship\)](#).

You must [apply for your child's dependant visa \(https://apply-to-visit-or-stay-in-the-uk.homeoffice.gov.uk/sort/start/pbs\\_dependant\\_child\\_in\\_uk\)](https://apply-to-visit-or-stay-in-the-uk.homeoffice.gov.uk/sort/start/pbs_dependant_child_in_uk) if you want to travel in and out of the UK with them.

You'll need to provide a full UK birth certificate for each child, showing the names of both parents.

