Overview:  
ou can apply for a Student visa to study in the UK if you’re 16 or over and you:

have been offered a place on a course by a licensed student sponsor

have enough money to support yourself and pay for your course - the amount will vary depending on your circumstances

can speak, read, write and understand English

have consent from your parents if you’re 16 or 17 - you’ll need evidence of this when you apply

If you’re 16 or 17 and you want to study at an independent school in the UK, you may be eligible for a Child Student visa instead.

This visa has replaced the Tier 4 (General) student visa.

When to apply

When you can apply depends on whether you’re applying from inside or outside the UK.

Applying from outside the UK

The earliest you can apply for a visa is 6 months before you start your course.

You’ll usually get a decision on your visa within 3 weeks.

Applying from inside the UK

The earliest you can apply is 3 months before your course starts.

You must apply before your current visa expires. Your new course must begin within 28 days of your current visa expiring.

You’ll usually get a decision within 8 weeks.

How long you can stay

How long you can stay depends on the length of your course and what study you’ve already completed in the UK.

If you’re 18 or over and your course is at degree level, you can usually stay in the UK for up to 5 years. If it’s below degree level, you can usually stay in the UK for up to 2 years.

Read the guidance to find out exactly how long you can stay.

Staying longer in the UK

You may be able to:

extend your visa if you’re eligible, for example to continue your studies in the UK

switch to a Student visa from another visa if you’re already in the UK

switch to a Graduate visa to stay in the UK for at least 2 years after successfully completing your course

When you can travel to the UK

You can arrive before your course starts. This can be either:

up to 1 week before, if your course lasts 6 months or less

up to 1 month before, if your course lasts more than 6 months

You must not travel to the UK before the start date given on your visa, no matter when your course starts.

Fees

It costs:

£490 to apply for a Student visa from outside the UK

£490 to extend or switch to a Student visa from inside the UK

You must pay the visa fee for each person that joins you.

Healthcare surcharge

You’ll also have to pay the healthcare surcharge as part of your application.

How much you pay depends on how long your visa lasts. Check how much you’ll have to pay before you apply.

Your partner and children

You may be able to bring your partner and children (‘dependants’).

What you can and cannot do

You can:

study

work as a student union sabbatical officer

You may be able to work - how much depends on what you’re studying and whether you’re working in or out of term-time.

You cannot:

claim public funds (benefits) and pensions

work in certain jobs, for example as a professional sportsperson or sports coach

be self-employed

study at an academy or a local authority-funded school (also known as a maintained school)

If your application is successful, you’ll be told what you can and cannot do on a Student visa.

Money You Need:

You must have enough money to pay for your course and support yourself in the UK.

How much money you need depends on your circumstances and what you’re applying for.

Course fee

You need enough money to pay for your course for 1 academic year (up to 9 months). The amount you need to pay will be on your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS).

If you’ve been in the UK with a valid visa for at least 12 months, you do not need to prove you have this money for your visa application.

Money to support yourself (‘financial requirement’)

You’ll need to show you have enough money to support yourself - unless you’ve been in the UK with a valid visa for at least 12 months on the date of your application.

How much money you need depends on where you will be studying. You’ll need either:

£1,334 per month (for up to 9 months) for courses in London

£1,023 per month (for up to 9 months) for courses outside London

If you apply on or after 2 January 2025, you’ll need £1,483 per month to support yourself on a course in London and £1,136 per month outside London.

If you’re boarding at a residential independent school, you’ll need to pay boarding fees instead. The amount you need to pay will be on your CAS.

London means the City of London and the 32 London boroughs.

You’ll need to prove you have extra money for each family member you bring with you.

You must have this money for at least 28 consecutive days. The end date of the 28-day period must be within 31 days of the date you apply for your visa.

Example

If you submit your application on 1 January 2021, you’d have to show that the funds were in your bank account for at least the 28-day period ending on 1 December.

If you have a student loan or financial sponsorship, you’ll need to provide evidence of this from your loan or sponsorship company.

Read the guidance on finances for student applications for more information about the money you need and how to prove it.

When you do not need to prove you have money to support yourself

You do not need to prove the financial requirement if:

you’ve had a UK visa for 12 months prior to the date of your Student visa application - you must currently be in the UK

you’re applying as a student union sabbatical officer

you’re applying as a postgraduate doctor or dentist on a recognised foundation programme

If you’re from a country listed under the ‘differential evidence requirement’

You do not need to prove you have enough money to support yourself if you’re a British national overseas or from one of the following countries or territories:

Australia

Austria

Bahrain

Barbados

Belgium

Botswana

Brazil

Brunei

Bulgaria

Cambodia

Canada

Chile

China

Croatia

Republic of Cyprus

Czech Republic

Denmark

The Dominican Republic

Estonia

Finland

France

Germany

Greece

Hong Kong

Hungary

Iceland

Indonesia

Ireland

Italy

Japan

Kazakhstan

Kuwait

Latvia

Liechtenstein

Lithuania

Luxembourg

Macao

Malaysia

Malta

Mauritius

Mexico

Netherlands

New Zealand

Norway

Oman

Peru

Poland

Portugal

Qatar

Romania

Serbia

Singapore

Slovakia

Slovenia

South Korea

Spain

Sweden

Switzerland

Taiwan

Thailand

Tunisia

United Arab Emirates

United States of America

However, you might be asked to provide this evidence before you get a decision on your application.

If you do need to provide it, you’ll be contacted by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) after you’ve submitted your application.

Read the guidance on finances for student applications for more information about the money you need and how to prove it.

Knowledge of English:

You must prove your knowledge of the English language when you apply.

You can prove your knowledge of English by:

passing a Secure English Language Test (SELT) from an approved provider

having a GCSE, A level, Scottish National Qualification level 4 or 5, Scottish Higher or Advanced Higher in English, gained through study at a UK school that you began when you were under 18

having a degree-level academic qualification that was taught in English - if you studied abroad, you’ll need to apply through Ecctis (formerly UK NARIC) for confirmation that your qualification is equivalent to a UK bachelor’s degree, master’s degree or PhD

Level of English

You must prove you can read, write, speak and understand English to a certain level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale.

What you’re studying

Level

Degree level or above

Equivalent to CEFR level B2

Below degree level

CEFR level B1

If you’re studying with a Higher Education Provider

If you’re studying at degree level or above, your Higher Education Provider (HEP) can assess your level of English themselves. This means they may ask you to do a different test.

This must still be equivalent to a CEFR level B2.

Who does not need to prove their knowledge of English

You do not need to prove your knowledge of English if you’re from one of the following countries or territories, or you’ve completed a qualification equivalent to a UK degree in one of them:

Antigua and Barbuda

Australia

the Bahamas

Barbados

Belize

the British overseas territories

Dominica

Grenada

Guyana

Ireland

Jamaica

Malta

New Zealand

St Kitts and Nevis

St Lucia

St Vincent and the Grenadines

Trinidad and Tobago

UK

USA

You also do not need to prove your knowledge of English if one of the following applies:

you’re a national of Canada

you’re applying to come to the UK for a study abroad programme as part of a university degree course in the USA

you proved your level of English in a previous visa application

Documents you'll need to apply

When you apply for your Student visa you must provide:

a current passport or other valid travel documentation

a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) from your course provider

You may also need to provide:

proof you have enough money to support yourself and pay for your course - this will vary depending on your circumstances

a valid ATAS certificate if your course and nationality require it

proof of parental or other legal guardian consent if you’re under 18

proof of your relationship to your parent or guardian if you’re under 18

your tuberculosis test results

written consent for your application from your financial sponsor if you’ve received sponsorship for your course fees and living costs in the last 12 months

You may need to provide additional documents depending on your circumstances. Read the guidance for the full list of documents you’ll need to provide.

You need a blank page in your passport for your visa if you need to give your fingerprints and a photo (biometric information) at a visa application centre. You’ll be told if you need to do this when you apply.

If you’re under 18

If you’re under 18 you’ll need written consent from both parents or legal guardians (or one parent if they have sole responsibility).

This must include their consent for:

your visa application

your living and care arrangements in the UK

your travel to the UK

You’ll also need to provide a copy of your birth certificate (or another government issued document) that shows the names of your parents.

**Apply online**

You must apply online for a Student visa.

Check which documents you’ll need to apply.

Apply outside the UK

As part of your application, you’ll need to prove your identity. How you do this depends on where you’re from and what type of passport 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 visa application centre

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

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

Start now

How long it takes to get a decision

You’ll usually get a decision within 3 weeks.

You may be able to pay to get a faster decision.

Apply inside the UK

You may be able to apply to:

extend your Student visa

switch to a Student visa from another type of visa

You may be able to pay to get a faster decision .

After you apply

You’ll be contacted if your application is complex and will take longer, for example because:

your supporting documents need to be verified

you need to attend an interview

of your personal circumstances (for example if you have a criminal conviction)

If you need to change something in your application after you’ve sent it contact UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

You can ask to withdraw your application by contacting UKVI. Your fee will only be refunded if UKVI has not started processing your application.

If your application is successful

You’ll get an eVisa (an online record of your immigration status).

Your decision email or letter will tell you how to get access to your eVisa. You’ll need to create a UKVI account.

Find out how to get your biometric residence permit (BRP) if you were told you’d get one when you applied.