



Part of

## Study in the UK on a Student visa

(/study-uk-student-visa)

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# Student visa

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## Overview

You 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](#)  
(/student-visa/course)
- have enough [money to support yourself and pay for your course](#) (/student-visa/money) - the amount will vary depending on your circumstances

- can speak, read, write and understand English ([/student-visa/knowledge-of-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 ([/child-study-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.

### 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.

### How long it takes to get a decision

You'll usually get a decision on your visa within:

- 3 weeks, if you're outside the UK
- 8 weeks, if you're inside the UK

You may be able to pay to get a faster decision ([/faster-decision-visa-settlement/applying-outside-the-uk](#)) - you'll be told if you can when you apply.

## 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 \(/government/publications/points-based-system-student-route\).](#)

## Staying longer in the UK

You may be able to:

- [extend your visa \(/student-visa/extend-your-visa\)](#) if you're eligible, for example to continue your studies in the UK
- [switch to a Student visa \(/student-visa/switch-to-this-visa\)](#) from another visa if you're already in the UK
- [switch to a Graduate visa \(/graduate-visa\)](#)

A Graduate visa will allow you to stay in the UK after successfully completing your course for:

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

It will allow you to stay for 3 years if you completed a PhD or other doctoral qualification.

## 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:

- £524 to apply for a Student visa from outside the UK
- £524 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 \(/healthcare-immigration-application\)](#) as part of your application.

How much you pay depends on how long your visa lasts.

## Your partner and children

You may be able to [bring your partner and children \('dependants'\) \(/student-visa/family-members\)](#).

## 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 \(/government/publications/public-funds--2\)](#) (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.

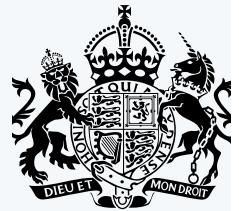
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[Your course \(/student-visa/course\)](#)

[View a printable version of the whole guide \(/student-visa/print\)](#)

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