



# Graduate visa

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## 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 \(/graduate-visa/course-you-studied\).](#)

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

## 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 \(/skilled-worker-visa\)](#).

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

## How to apply

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

[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 \(/health-care-worker-visa\)](#) 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 \(/apply-immigration-health-surcharge-refund\)](#).

## 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 \(/graduate-visa/your-partner-and-children\)](#), 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 \(/find-charity-information\)](#)
- 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 \(/government/publications/public-funds-2\)](#)), 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.

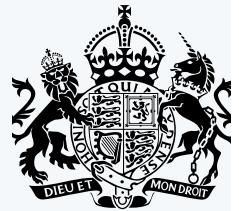
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[The course you studied \(/graduate-visa/course-you-studied\)](#)

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

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