



Home Office

Short-term Student (English language)

Version 5.0

This guidance is based on Appendix Short-term Student (English Language) of the Immigration Rules.

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About this guidance

This guidance tells you about the Short-term Student (English Language) route and how to consider an application from a short-term student for entry clearance under [Appendix Short-term Student \(English language\)](#).

Contacts

If you are an accredited institution providing a course and you are also a student sponsor that holds a premium account, you can direct questions about this guidance to your Premium Account Manager. Otherwise you can contact the [educator's helpdesk](#).

If you are a caseworker and have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you, or you think that the guidance has factual errors, then email the Student Migration Policy team.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance, then you can email the Guidance Review, Atlas and Forms team.

Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- version **5.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **11 November 2025**

Changes from last version of this guidance

Page number	Changes
7	Replace reference to 'Part 9: grounds for refusal' with 'Part Suitability'
14	Replace reference to 'Part 9' with 'Part Suitability'
22	Replace reference to 'Part 9: grounds for refusal' with 'Part Suitability'
22	Replace reference to 'paragraph 9.14.1 of Part 9' with 'paragraph SUI 18.1 of Part Suitability'

Related content

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Short-term Students (English Language)

This page gives further information about the Short-term Student (English Language) route.

The Short-term Student (English Language) route is for people aged 16 or over who want to come to the UK to study an English language course with an accredited provider that will last longer than 6 months. Study of up to 6 months with an accredited provider is permitted as a visitor under [Appendix V: Visitor](#). Someone granted entry clearance under the Short-term Student (English Language) route can study on an English Language course (that does not cover any other subject areas) for up to 11 months.

People should use the Student or Child Student routes if they want to come to the UK to study:

- an English Language course that lasts between 6 and 11 months and are aged below 16
- an English Language course that lasts longer than 11 months
- any other course that lasts longer than 6 months (unless studying for a period of distance learning as a Visitor on a course otherwise taught overseas)

For more information on the Student and Child Student routes see [Appendix Student](#) and [Appendix Child Student of the Immigration Rules](#).

Recreational study for visitors

People who have been granted an entry clearance or permission to enter the UK as a Visitor (for example, for tourism or to visit family) can study on a recreational course for up to 30 days with any bona fide institution in the UK that is not a state funded school or academy, but this excludes English Language courses. All English Language study undertaken as a visitor must be with an accredited provider.

For more information see [Visitor visa guidance](#).

Related content

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Validity requirements for the Short-term Student (English Language) route

This page tells you what requirements an applicant under the Short-term Student (English Language) route must meet to make a valid application for entry clearance.

Validity requirements

In order to make a valid application under the Short-term Student (English Language) route, an applicant must:

- apply online using the form 'Short-term Student visa'
- pay any application fee and Immigration Health Charge
- provided any required biometrics
- provided a passport or other travel document that establishes their identity and nationality
- be outside the UK
- be aged 16 or over on the date of application

If an applicant does not meet one or more of these requirements, you should consider whether to reject the application. If you are unsure, you should speak to a senior caseworker. For more information, see: validation, variation and withdrawal of applications guidance.

Entry clearance requirement

A person seeking to come to the UK as a Short-term student must obtain entry clearance on this route before arriving in the UK. They cannot apply for permission to enter at the UK border.

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Suitability and Eligibility requirements for the Short-term Student (English Language) route

This section tells you what requirements an applicant under the Short-term Student (English Language) route must meet to be granted permission.

Suitability requirements

Applicants must not fall for refusal under the [Part Suitability](#)

Eligibility requirements

To be eligible to apply under this route applicants must:

- be a genuine Short-term Student
- have been accepted on an English Language course of study by an accredited institution and provide written evidence of this from the institution
- maintain and accommodate themselves out of funds available to them
- meet the cost of their onward or return journey
- have paid their course fees on the date of application, or hold enough funds to pay their course fees and be able to demonstrate these funds as specified in [Appendix Finance](#)
- hold a valid tuberculosis (TB) certificate where applicable

If the student is aged 16 or 17, they must also:

- show that suitable arrangements have been made for their travel to, reception and care in the UK
- have consent from both parents, a parent with sole responsibility, or a legal guardian to the arrangements for the applicant's travel, reception and care in the UK

Applicants must not:

- intend to study a course that lasts longer than 11 months
- intend to study at an academy or state-funded school (for example, one which provides free education and is funded mainly from public funds)
- make the UK their main home – for example by using the route to live in the UK for extended periods through frequent or successive periods as a short-term student
- intend to take employment, become self-employed, or undertake any business activity

This table gives further information about Short-term Students and their conditions:

Requirement	Short-term Student (English Language)
Entry clearance mandatory	All applicants
Entry clearance application form	Access UK application .
Age requirement	16 or over on date of application
Entry clearance endorsements	Cat D: short term student
Biometric Residence Permit	Required
Entry clearance endorsements	Code 3: 11 months: short-term student
Length of permission	Maximum 11 months
Conditions of entry clearance	Study only on the course for which permission is granted No work No recourse to public funds
Are dependants allowed?	Not permitted
Is switching into this category permitted?	No
Is the Immigration Health Surcharge payable?	Yes
Can you apply for further permission to stay (in country) after this visa?	No
Does police registration apply?	Yes, for further information see: police registration

Cost of application

The application fee for the Short-term Student (English Language) route is listed at [UK Visa fees](#).

Related content

[Accredited institutions](#)

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Short-term students: applications for entry clearance

This page tells you how to consider applications for entry clearance under the Short-term Student (English Language) route.

Border Force staff must refuse permission to enter to an individual who arrives at the UK border without holding entry clearance on the Short-term Student (English Language) route and applies for permission to enter for the purpose of undertaking English Language study of between 6 and 11 months in length. Students studying a course of under 6 months in length can enter as a Visitor to study at an accredited institution.

When you consider an application, you must check that:

- the application is valid, see [paragraphs STS 1.1 to STS 1.4](#) of the Short-term Study rules
- the applicant's passport or travel document is genuine
- the applicant meets all suitability and eligibility requirements of the route
- there are no grounds for refusal

All applicants will be required to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge at the reduced rate for students when they make their application for entry clearance. See: [immigration health surcharge](#) for more information.

The Immigration Rules do not allow short-term students to extend their stay. You must refuse any application for permission to stay.

Related content:
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TB certification

This page tells you who will need to obtain a Tuberculosis (TB) certificate.

TB certification

The applicant will need to obtain a TB certificate if they are coming to the UK for over 6 months and have been present in one of the countries listed in [Appendix Tuberculosis \(TB\)](#) of the Immigration Rules for a continuous period of 6 months or more, which includes a period (of any length) within the 6 months immediately preceding the application.

Information on how an applicant can obtain a TB certificate can be found in the [Tuberculosis tests for visa applicants guidance](#).

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English language courses up to 11 months

This page tells you about English language courses that an applicant can be granted permission to study on the Short-term Student (English Language) route.

For the purpose of this route, 'English language study' is a course that teaches English as a foreign language only and does not include other subjects. An applicant cannot study mixed courses under this route. You must refuse any other applications for any other type of course.

You must check that the applicant has been accepted for a course of study at an accredited institution. They must provide an acceptance letter from the institution with details of the course.

Students are able to extend their course up to a maximum of 11 months, provided the student is studying at the same institution. For example, if a student originally applies for an English Language course of 7 months in length, but once they have been granted permission wishes to extend that course to 11 months with the same provider, this is permitted. A student is not permitted to switch to a different provider, or switch onto a different course with their current provider.

Applicants for entry clearance on the Short-term Student (English Language) route must meet all the requirements of paragraphs [STS 3.1 to STS 7.2 of the Immigration Rules](#), see: [Eligibility requirements for Short-term Student \(English Language\) route](#).

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Accredited institutions

This page tells you what an accredited institution is, how to decide if an institution is accredited for the purpose of Short-term Student (English Language) applications and how to check the accreditation.

A short-term student must be accepted on and study an English course provided by an accredited institution.

An accredited institution is defined as an institution that meets one of the following requirements:

- is a licensed Student sponsor listed on the [Student sponsor register](#)
- holds valid accreditation from:
 - [Accreditation UK](#)
 - the [British Accreditation Council \(BAC\)](#)
 - the [Accreditation Service for International Colleges \(ASIC\)](#)
- holds a valid and satisfactory full institutional inspection by one of the following bodies:
 - [Estyn](#)
 - [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education](#)
 - [Education Scotland](#)
 - [Office for Students \(OfS\)](#)
 - [the Independent Schools Inspectorate](#)
 - [Ofsted](#)
 - [the Education and Training Inspectorate Northern Ireland](#)
- is an overseas higher education institution which offers only part of its programmes in the UK

To check that an overseas institution is an overseas higher education institution, as defined in paragraph 6 of the Immigration Rules, you must check that it offers programmes equivalent to UK degrees, by checking the [Ecctis \(formerly UK NARIC\) website](#).

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Evidence

This section gives information on how to make a decision on a Short-term Student (English Language) application.

Standard and burden of proof and evidence

When assessing whether the applicant meets the requirements of the Short-term Student (English Language) rules, the burden of proof is on the applicant to show they meet the validity and eligibility requirements. However, when considering suitability, the burden of proof may shift to the Home Office.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they provide sufficient evidence to satisfy you that they meet the Short-term Student (English Language) rules, including the genuine Short-term Student requirement.

The standard of proof you must apply is the balance of probabilities (which means it is more likely than not).

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for you to contact the applicant to clarify existing documentation or to provide further supporting information. For when to apply evidential flexibility, see guidance: evidential flexibility.

Supporting documents should be consistent with statements made on the visa application form. For example, where the applicant has provided a bank statement demonstrating their financial circumstances this should not contradict statements made regarding the applicant's income and sources of funds for their studies stated on their application form.

If you have concerns about the genuineness of a document, you should try to verify it at source. See guidance: document verification checks.

When making a decision on a Short-term Student application, you must assess the applicant's credibility and intentions from which you must be satisfied that the applicant is a genuine Short-term Student. See guidance: genuine Short-term Student requirement.

You must assess all the information provided by the applicant as well as any other evidence that may be relevant to the application. This should include any locally held information. You must make an overall assessment of the application considering all factors relevant to the application.

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Genuine Short-term Student requirement

This section tells you how to decide whether an applicant meets the genuine Short-term Student requirement of the Short-term Student (English Language) rules in [paragraph STS 5.1](#).

To consider an applicant as having met the genuine Short-term Student requirement, you must be satisfied that they meet all of the criteria listed in [paragraph STS 5.1](#) as follows:

- they are genuinely seeking entry for the purpose of undertaking the course of study which they have demonstrated they have been accepted onto as per paragraph STS 4.2 (the course must also be provided by an accredited institution – see: Accredited Institutions)
- they will not study in the UK other than for the course of study which they have demonstrated they have been accepted onto as per STS 4.2
- they will not study at an academy or state-funded school
- they will leave the UK within 30 days of the end of their course, or at the end of 11 months, whichever is sooner
- they will not make the UK their main home
- they will not work in the UK
- they will not engage in any business or professional activities in the UK
- they have relied upon funds to meet the Financial Requirement in STS 6.1-STS 6.4, which are genuinely available to them for the purposes of undertaking their course of study

Where you are not satisfied that the applicant has met all of the criteria set out in STS 5.1, you must refuse their application. If an applicant is assessed as not meeting the requirements of being a genuine Short-term Student under STS 5.1, this is distinct and separate from suitability under Part Suitability.

When refusing the application under the genuine Short-term Student requirement, you must refer to each of the individual criteria in STS 5.1 that you are not satisfied has been met. You must also clearly set out why you are not satisfied that each criteria quoted on the refusal notice has been met by the applicant.

For example, you may not be satisfied that the person intends to leave the UK within the required time frame. You must set out clear reasons why you are not satisfied that the applicant will leave within the required time frame, on the balance of probabilities.

Assessing personal circumstances

The following factors will help you assess if an applicant is a genuine Short-term Student:

- their previous immigration history - this includes [previous travel](#) to the UK / other countries as well as:
 - prior refusals
 - overstays
 - other breach of visa conditions

the duration of previous visits to the UK and whether they were significantly longer than they originally stated on their visit visa application or on arrival - if this is the case, you should not automatically presume that the applicant is not genuine, but this may be a reason to question the applicant's overall intentions as-well as:

- their financial circumstances
- relevant aspects of their family
- social and economic background
- relevant employment and educational history
- their personal and economic ties to the UK
 - including family resident in the UK
- their personal and economic ties to their country of residence
- the cumulative period of time the applicant has visited the UK and their pattern of travel over the last 12-month period and:
 - whether this amounts to 'de-facto' residence in the UK
- whether the information included in their application form - their supporting documents on the balance of probabilities is credible and corresponds to their personal / family / social and economic background

Assessing genuine intention to undertake study

Under STS 5.1(a) the applicant must genuinely be seeking to enter the UK, as a Short-term Student, with the purpose of undertaking and completing study on the Short-term English Language course which they have been accepted onto.

While not exhaustive, the following list of considerations may altogether help you determine whether the requirement at STS 5.1(a) has been met.

- why the applicant is intending to undertake this course and how it relates to their personal circumstances in their home country
- the prospective level of English Language proficiency the applicant will obtain at the end of the proposed course - particularly in comparison to their current English language ability or:
 - the previous qualifications attained in English Language
- how much of the total course fees have already been paid
- the distance between the applicant's intended accommodation and the education provider's address
- whether the cost of the course and stay in the UK is commensurate with the applicant's plans after they leave the UK
- whether the cost of the course and stay in the UK is commensurate with the applicant's declared current income and expenditure as well as the wider financial circumstances of the applicant and their immediate family

Assessing the genuine availability of funds

Under STS 5.1(h) you must be satisfied that the funds relied on by the applicant to meet the financial requirements in STS 6.1-STS 6.4 are and will remain genuinely available to the applicant, for the purpose of covering the costs related to undertaking their studies in the UK.

The financial documents provided by the applicant to meet the requirements at STS 6.1-STS 6.4 should be reflective of the information provided on their application form (such as their income and expenditure in their country of residence, their savings, and if they have received financial support from anyone else – such as family or friends towards the cost of their stay).

Where the source of funds relied upon by the applicant, as demonstrated in their financial documentation, is not credible, indicates an intention to settle in the UK, or is otherwise inconsistent with what has been declared on their current application form or recent previous applications or other documentation provided by the applicant in their current application (such as employment contracts or payslips), an applicant is unlikely to meet this requirement.

Previous travel

You must consider the applicant's travel history in their passport or travel document and that are listed on the application form. A pattern of travel that shows the applicant has previously complied with UK immigration law may indicate the applicant is likely to be a genuine Short-term Student, as might travel to other countries, especially the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland or Schengen countries. However, the Short-term Student (English Language) visa must not be used to make the UK the applicant's main home. You must also consider whether the applicant's previous pattern of travel from visits to the UK amounts to 'de-facto' residence in the UK.

If an applicant has previously failed to comply with another country's immigration law, for example if they have been removed from another country, or if they have been refused entry to another country, this may suggest that an applicant is not likely to be a genuine short-term Student (depending on the circumstances).

Travel history should not be the only consideration in deciding whether you are satisfied an applicant is a genuine short-term Student. There may have been a change in circumstances since previous travel. You should consider all relevant information for each application including any social and economic factors and any locally held information.

Where the applicant is a first-time traveller, you will need to rely on other evidence to satisfy you they are a genuine Short-term Student.

Frequent or successive study

A student is likely to be considered as intending to study in the UK for extended periods through:

- successive use of the route if, for example:
 - the student is seeking a second period of 11 months permission under the Short-term Study (English Language) route where less than 1 year has passed since they last left the UK / having last visited the UK for the purposes of short-term study
- frequent use of the route if, for example:
 - the student is applying for multiple periods of permission under the Short-term Student (English Language) route within a 5-year period

Where an application meets either of the above criteria, this will not automatically result in a refusal. You must consider the evidence as a whole to decide if the applicant is a genuine Short-term Student. You must be satisfied that, where the student seeks to spend multiple periods in the UK as a Short-term Student, the frequent or successive study periods do not mean they are studying a course that lasts longer than 11 months. If a student is looking to utilise the Short-term Student (English Language) route on multiple occasions, a student would generally be expected to be studying towards a higher level of English Language proficiency against the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) such as B1 level on the first instance then B2 level on the second instance. However, there may be circumstances where an applicant requires a further period of study at the same level, for example a student who hasn't achieved the English proficiency in the previous application.

Examples which may raise doubt of the applicant's genuineness

This is not an exhaustive list but may help with your overall assessment of a Short-term Student application:

- the supporting documentation and the reasons for undertaking the course stated by the applicant are not credible
- there are discrepancies between the statements made by the applicant and their submitted documentation, locally held information or their previous applications
- there is evidence to suggest that the applicant intends to take up work / self-employment / professional business activity / additional studies outside of the course included on their application in the UK – for example:
 - when mentioned by the applicant in an interview / on the application form, or in supporting documentation such as employment / character reference letters / business documents
- the applicant's previous immigration history application form or documentation indicates they are likely intending on staying in the UK beyond 30 days from their course completion date or a period of 11 months- whichever is sooner

- it has not been possible to verify supporting information provided by the applicant despite attempts to do so
- the applicant has few or no family and economic ties to their country of residence and has several family members in the UK - for example:
 - a person with most of their family in the UK and no job or studies in their own country may be considered to have few ties to their home country
- there are large sums of funds deposited in the bank statements relied upon to meet the financial requirement, without a reasonable explanation and without which the financial requirements would not have otherwise been met

Related content

[Accredited institutions](#)

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Financial requirement

This section tells you how to decide whether an applicant meets the financial requirement of the [Short-term Student \(English Language\) rules](#).

How to meet the financial requirement

Applicants must show they meet the financial requirement using evidence as set out in [Appendix Finance](#).

Evidence requirements

Appendix Finance guidance sets out what specific evidence must be provided in their Short-term Student application. For example: the acceptable bank account types, acceptable forms of official financial sponsorship, or proof of relationship evidence relying on parental funds. The applicant will be asked to provide this evidence as part of the application process. The caseworker can find out what type of evidence the applicant is relying on by checking the application form. If the applicant is relying on funds from a third party, then the caseworker should check the relationship between the applicant and the third party and if it is unclear, consider contacting the applicant to ask for further information. Caseworkers should also take a fair and proportionate approach to the assessment of evidence.

Requesting more information

If the caseworker is in need of more information, or the clarification of certain details, to be able to consider granting an application, then they should refer to Evidential Flexibility guidance.

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Travel, reception and care of Short-term Students aged 16 or 17

This section tells you about suitable care arrangements for Short-term Students aged 16 or 17.

The Home Office has a statutory duty of care towards children under [section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009](#), and it is mandatory for staff to complete the e-learning course on this duty. For more information, see: safeguard and promote child welfare.

The applicant must show that suitable arrangements have been made for their travel to, and arrival and care in, the UK if they are aged 16 or 17. You must make every reasonable effort to make sure the documents presented to you are genuine.

The applicant must show that suitable care arrangements are in place by providing written consent with the applicant from:

- both parents
- one parent if that parent has sole legal responsibility for the applicant
- the applicant's legal guardian

The written consent must confirm support for all the following:

- the application
- the applicant's living and care arrangements in the UK
- the applicant's travel to, and reception arrangements in the UK

If a foster carer or relative, who is not a parent or guardian, has responsibility for their care, the letter of consent from their parent or parents or legal guardian regarding arrangements for their travel to, and reception and care while in the UK should include either

- the name and date of birth of the intended foster carer or relative
- the address where the applicant will be living
- the relationship of the foster carer or relative to the applicant
- authority from their parent or parents or legal guardian allowing the foster carer / relative to care for the applicant during their stay in the UK
- a letter from the education provider to include details of the foster care arrangements and confirming they have or will notify the local authority - they should include the reply from the local authority if they have one

There is a separate legal requirement that private foster care arrangements must be notified to the relevant local authority by:

- the parents or other carer of the child
- other parties to the arrangement, for example: the education provider

- unless there is cause for concern, the evidence of consent relating to care arrangements in the UK can either confirm:
 - they will be accompanied by a parent or parents (the parent or parents should have or be able to obtain permission in a suitable category that enables them to travel to the UK with the child)
 - suitable arrangements for private foster care exist as above

For further information on Home Office requirements on foster care, see:

- [private foster care](#)
- [private foster care: legislation](#)

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When to grant and refuse entry clearance

This page tells you when you can grant and when you must refuse entry clearance for a person who applies for the Short-term Student (English Language) route.

Granting entry clearance

You must grant entry clearance if the applicant:

- meets all the requirements stated in [Appendix Short-term Student \(English Language\) of the Immigration Rules](#)
- none of the Part Suitability apply

You must consider the application in line with the short-term student rules as set out in this guidance. If you approve the application, you must endorse the visa as follows:

Type of student	Visa endorsement
Short-term student (11 months)	Category D: short term student

Refusing entry clearance

You must refuse the application if you are not satisfied that the applicant meets all the requirements of the Short-term Student (English Language) route, or if you are satisfied that any of the Part Suitability apply.

Extensions of stay in the UK

You must refuse any applications for permission to stay as a Short-term Student under [paragraph SUI 18.1 of Part Suitability](#) of the Immigration Rules because there are no provisions in the Immigration Rules to grant permission for this purpose.

See: short-term student refusal wording for suggested wording.

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Conditions of permission for Short-term students

A Short-term student is not allowed to:

- access public funds
- work
- study on any course apart from the one for which they were granted permission to study

Short-term students and employment

Short-term students are not allowed to work in the UK, either in a paid or an unpaid job. They are not allowed to enrol on a course of study that includes a work placement or work experience.

Short-term students can volunteer but may not do voluntary work. You must be clear on the difference between the two.

Voluntary workers:

- often have a contract with their employer (this means the employer must provide the work and the voluntary worker must attend at particular times and carry out specific tasks)
- are also usually remunerated in kind

Volunteers:

- do not have a contract of employment
- must not take the place of an employee
- must not receive payment in kind but reimbursement for reasonable travel and subsistence expenses is allowed
- usually help a charity / voluntary / public sector organisation

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