

# UNITED KINGDOM

## **Will I need a student visa to come to the UK to study?**

If you are a citizen of the EU (or Iceland, Norway, Switzerland or Liechtenstein) you will not need a student visa to come to the UK to study. If you are a national of any other country, you will need entry clearance. In most cases, that means you will have to apply for a student visa.

## **What types of student visa are there?**

There are two types of UK student visa: Student Visitor Visa and Tier 4 Student Visa. A Student Visitor Visa (SVV) is sufficient for short academic courses and for most English courses. For longer academic courses, you will need a Tier 4 Visa. These are divided into two categories: Tier 4 (General) and Tier 4 (Child). Tier 4 visas are issued under the provisions of the UK Points Based System (PBS).

## **What type of student visa will I need?**

For academic courses up to 6 months, or English courses up to 11 months, a Student Visitor Visa will be sufficient. (Note: the 6 - 11 month visa is also known as an Extended Student Visitor Visa, or ESVV). For longer courses, or if you plan to extend your study time in the UK, you will need a Tier 4 Student Visa.

If you are under 18 and want to study a course at GCSE level (NQF Level 2), you must apply for a Tier 4 (Child) Student Visa. If you want to study at a higher level (e.g. A Levels or University Foundation), you can choose whether to apply for a Tier 4 (Child) or Tier 4 (General) Student Visa. The requirements and conditions differ, so the best choice will depend on your own circumstances.

If you are over 18, you must apply for a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa. Note that you cannot study at GCSE level or below if you are over 18.

## **What are the requirements for obtaining a Tier 4 Student Visa?**

The requirements for obtaining a Tier 4 Student Visa are:

You must obtain a document called a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) from the institution where you intend to study. Normally, an institution will issue a CAS only when you have confirmed your place by paying a substantial deposit.

The institution must be recognised (i.e. have a sponsor's licence) by the UK Border Agency.

If you are over 18 and you want to study an academic course, the courses must be at NQF Level 3 or above (e.g. A Level or University Foundation). There is no restriction on study level for under 18s.

You must prove you have the funds to pay for your studies. As a minimum, you will need sufficient funds to pay your first year tuition fees in full, plus at least £7,200 (£9,000 in London) for accommodation and living expenses. Usually, you will be asked to produce bank statements showing the funds have been in your account (or your parents' / legal guardian's account) for 28 days before you apply for your visa. Documentary evidence of a bank loan or sponsorship from a Government body is also acceptable. Visa applications are automatically rejected if you cannot prove you have these funds, or if they have not been in your account for 28 days before you apply for your visa.

If you are over 18, you may need to pass an approved English language test before you apply for your visa. English tests are mandatory if you are studying below degree level and may be required at degree level or above.

When assessing your visa application, the British Embassy or High Commission will also take into consideration other factors, in particular whether you have been refused a visa or refused entry in the past.

### **What are the requirements for obtaining a Student Visitor Visa?**

The requirements for obtaining a Student Visitor Visa are:

You must provide documentary evidence to show you have been accepted onto a course of study by an education institution recognised by the UK Border Agency.

Your course must be no longer than 11 months (for English language courses) or 6 months (for academic courses).

As with a Tier 4 Student Visa, you must prove you can pay for your course and support yourself during your studies. You will need sufficient funds to pay your tuition fees in full, plus £800 per month (£1,000 in London) for accommodation and living expenses.

### **What if I am already in the UK?**

You cannot apply for a Student Visitor Visa or new Tier 4 Visa from within the UK. However, you can extend an existing Tier 4 visa, provided your course begins no more than one month after the expiry of your current leave to remain.

If you have a Tier 4 visa and have been studying in the UK for at least 6 months, you will have a special immigration status called established presence. When you apply to extend your Tier 4 visa, you will still need to meet the requirements described above. However, you will only need £1,600 (£2,000 for London) for accommodation and living expenses, instead of £7,200 (£9,000 for London).

### **How do I know if the institution I apply to is recognised by the UK Border Agency?**

The institution must be licensed by the UK Border Agency to sponsor international students. You can download the latest Register or Sponsors (pdf) from the UKBA web site.

Institutions are rated as Highly Trusted, A (Trusted) or B (Sponsor). Only Highly Trusted Sponsors can accept students onto courses at or below NQF Level 3 (e.g. GCSE, A Level and University Foundation courses). The B rating is assigned as a temporary measure for institutions that need to improve to keep their licence. B rated institution must either regain A status or be suspended from the register.

### **Will I be able to work when I am in the UK?**

If you have a Tier 4 Student Visa, you may be allowed to work full time during vacations and part time during term time, but it depends on the level of course you are studying and the type of institution that sponsored your student visa.

You can work full time during vacations and up to 20 hours per week during term time if your student visa was sponsored by a UK university and you are studying at degree level above (i.e. NQF Level 6+).

You can work full time during vacations and up to 10 hours per week during term time if your student visa was sponsored by a university or a publicly funded college of further education and you are studying below degree level (NQF Level 3+).

If your student visa was sponsored by a private institution, you will not be allowed to work at all. Important: if you are studying a university foundation or pre-masters course on a university campus, you should check whether your student visa is sponsored by the university or by a private education provider working with the university. This will affect your right to work during term time. Your student advisor can provide further details if you are not sure.

### **Can I bring my family with me to the UK while I study?**

You can bring dependants with you only if you are studying a postgraduate course at a university or publicly funded college. The course must be more than 12 months' duration. You will have to demonstrate your family members (or you) have sufficient funds to cover monthly living costs.

### **What are the restrictions on Student Visitor Visas?**

Restrictions apply if you enter as a student visitor. The main restrictions are follows: i) you will not be able to apply for more time in the UK, even to extend your studies; ii) you will not be able to undertake any employment, even unpaid placements or internships as part of your study; iii) you will not be able to study at a government funded school.

### **What is a Non-Visa National?**

Non-Visa nationals do not need to apply for a visa for courses of 6 months or less. You are a non-visa national if you are from a country designated as a non-visa national country by the UK Border Agency. Countries on the list change from time to time, so you should always check with the UK Border Agency website for the latest information - [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk).

### **What is a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)?**

If you need a Tier 4 Student Visa to study in the UK, you must obtain a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) from a recognised institution before you apply for your visa. The CAS contains information about you, the institution, your course, the fees due (in the first year) and the amount already paid. It also states the course start date and the latest arrival date, after which the CAS expires if unused. A CAS is specific to an institution, so you cannot use a CAS issued by one institution to study at another.