



QUEEN'S  
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BELFAST

IMMIGRATION  
SUPPORT SERVICE



# Studying at Queen's: Guide to UK Study visas

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This guidance has been produced in good faith by Queen’s University Belfast to help students understand UK immigration procedures and to assist students making an immigration application to study in the UK. This guidance has been written in line with UKVI guidance which may change at any time if there are changes to the UK Immigration Rules. Our guidance has been carefully checked at the time of publication, however it is the responsibility of students to ensure that any immigration application complies with current UK Immigration legislation. Queen’s University Belfast accepts no legal responsibility for the accuracy of this guidance and if there are any discrepancies found between Queen’s University guidance and UKVI guidance, guidance issued by UKVI will take precedence.

# Who needs a Visa?

You will require a visa to study in the UK if you are a non-UK or non-Republic of Ireland national. If you are an EU/EEA/Swiss national coming to the UK to study and do not hold EU Settled or Pre-Settled Status, you will require a visa.

## Student Visa

Queen's University Belfast has a Sponsor Licence to sponsor Student visas. If you are coming to study in the UK on a main course of study for **more than six months**, you must apply for a Student visa. This route can also be used in some instances for students who want to study for less than six months e.g. students coming to study on a pre-session English course, or for students coming for a Study Abroad programme for one semester. Student visa holders can normally work in the UK and in some instances it may be possible to extend a Student visa without leaving the UK.

## Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

When you apply for a Student visa you must have a **Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)** Statement. This will be issued to you by the University once you have met certain conditions which include:

- you must have accepted an unconditional offer of a place to study.
- if you have previously studied in the UK, you must provide additional information about your immigration history; and
- applicants for postgraduate taught programmes must normally pay a tuition fee deposit before CAS can be issued.

Your CAS statement will be emailed to you once you have met the conditions and are deemed eligible for a CAS. Depending on your course of study, you will receive your CAS statement from:

- **Queen's University Admissions and Access Service:** [cas.info@qub.ac.uk](mailto:cas.info@qub.ac.uk)
- **Queen's University Global Opportunities Team:** [incoming-exchange@qub.ac.uk](mailto:incoming-exchange@qub.ac.uk)
- **Queen's University Study Abroad Team:** [studyabroad@qub.ac.uk](mailto:studyabroad@qub.ac.uk)

Your CAS statement contains essential information you will need to complete your Student visa application, including:

- The University's Sponsor Licence number;
- Your course title, course level and course start/end dates
- Details of your course fees and any deposits paid or any scholarships or stipends awarded;
- Details of your entry qualifications ('evidence used to obtain offer' section of CAS) which were used to make the decision to offer you a place.
- **Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS):**  
Depending on your nationality, some courses will require you to have an ATAS certificate. Your CAS will state if this is applicable for you. The Admissions and Access Service will also inform you if you need this and provide you with the necessary information to enable you to apply for your ATAS Certificate. An ATAS certificate is free of charge and takes approximately 30 working days (6 complete weeks) to receive. You must have the certificate before you can apply for your visa therefore you should apply for your ATAS certificate as soon as possible. You can find further guidance about ATAS on the [UK government's website](#)

Check your CAS statement carefully and let us know if any information is not accurate. If you have paid any further course fees since your CAS was issued, we will be able to update this information on your CAS statement before you make your visa application. If you change your mind about your course, or your circumstances change after you make your visa application or after you have arrived in the UK, you must inform the University's Immigration Support Service (ISS) at [immigration@qub.ac.uk](mailto:immigration@qub.ac.uk) straight away. ISS will make any necessary reports to UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) and will also be able to provide you with further immigration advice.

## Applying for Permission to Enter the UK Visa (Applying from Overseas)

When you apply for a Student visa **overseas** you are applying for Permission to Enter the UK. You must apply online in the country where you live. **You cannot apply for your visa more than six months before the start date of your course.**

You must prepare certain documents for your application such as certificates/transcripts of your academic qualifications and financial evidence to prove that you have sufficient funds to meet the Student visa maintenance requirement. For further guidance about the supporting document requirements please [visit UKVI's website](#).

Certain nationalities will also be required to take a tuberculosis (TB) test if they are coming to the UK for more than six months. You can find further information about TB Test requirements on [UKVI's website](#).

For further information from UKVI about how to apply for a Student visa, the documents you must provide, and to access the link to the online application form please visit [UKVI's website](#). You should also read [UKVI's Student and Child Student Guidance](#) to ensure that your application complies with the UK Immigration Rules.

When you receive your CAS statement, you will also receive a link to guidance from the Immigration Support Service about making a **Permission to Enter visa application**. This guidance will help to ensure that you submit a correct application. You can also visit the [ISS website](#) to find information about applying for your visa. We recommend that you use your CAS statement for reference when you are filling in your visa application form.

You can find current visa application fees on [UKVI's website](#). If you are going to be in the UK for more than 6 months, you will also be required to pay the [Immigration Health Surcharge \(IHS\)](#) at the time of your application.

The standard processing time for a Student visa application overseas is three weeks, however this may vary depending on what country you are in. You can find current visa processing times in your country on [UKVI's website](#). You may be invited to a face-to-face visa interview at a local Visa Application Centre (VAC) as part of the application process. If this happens, you must be sure to know lots of details about your course, including information about the modules.

As part of the Visa application process, you will be asked to prove your identity. You will be directed to either **attend your local Visa Application Centre** to provide your photograph and fingerprints or you will be asked to scan your identity documents using the **UK Immigration : ID Check app**. You will be directed on how to confirm your identity when you are submitting your online application.

If your application is successful, you will receive an email from UKVI advising you of your next steps. Most Student route applicants will receive a 90-day vignette (sticker) in their passport. You use this to travel to the UK. You will also receive evidence of your full permission for the UK in a digital status format called an **eVisa**. You will be able to access this through your [UKVI account](#). EEA nationals who have used the UK Immigration: ID Check app receive their permission in the form of an eVisa and will not receive a vignette. This digital status can be shared with anyone who needs to check your visa.

Whether you receive your visa as a physical vignette in your passport or as an eVisa, you should receive a decision letter or email. It is important that you keep this somewhere safe as it is proof of your granted visa, and carries details of the conditions of your permission.

## Applying for Student Permission to Stay visa in the UK

If you are currently in the UK holding a Student visa and you wish to extend this visa to study a new course, in certain circumstances, you will be permitted to make a Student visa application for Permission to Stay from within the UK. **You cannot apply for a Student visa in the UK more than three months before the start date of your course.** Contact the University's Immigration Support Service (ISS) at [immigration@qub.ac.uk](mailto:immigration@qub.ac.uk) for advice about extending your visa in the UK. If you are eligible to extend your visa in the UK, ISS will assist you with your visa application. If you are currently studying a course at Queen's as a Student visa holder and you wish to start a new course of study at Queen's, contact ISS for advice about whether you can make an application in the UK. If you are currently in the UK under a different visa category and you would like to switch into the Student category contact ISS for advice about whether or not this is permitted.

## Cost of applying for a Student visa

**When you apply for a Student visa, you'll need to pay two fees:**

**1. Visa application fee:** The online application fee for the standard visa processing service is currently **£524** (or equivalent in your local currency) outside the UK. Priority visa services are also available in most countries. This means that you can get your visa application processed more quickly, however this will be more expensive. You are advised to check with your local [visa application centre](#) (VAC) to find out what services are available and how much these cost.

**2. Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) fee:** You will also have to pay the IHS fee, which is currently **£776** for every year of your Student visa. The IHS will need to be paid in full for the whole duration of your visa at the time you submit your visa application. You can find out more information about the IHS fee on the [UKVI website](#). This is a mandatory payment which will give you access to the UK National Health Service (NHS) while you are in the UK. The application fee and IHS fee are online payments which are part of the online visa application, therefore you must make sure that you have enough money to make these online payments using a credit or debit bank card at the point of submitting your online application.

## Student Visa Terms & Conditions

When you accept your unconditional offer, you will agree to the [Queen's University Terms and Conditions](#) for Student visa holders. As a Student route sponsor, Queen's University is required by UKVI to carry out certain recording and reporting responsibilities in relation to Student visa holders. These include keeping a record of your passport and visa/immigration documents; keeping an up-to-date record of your contact details in the UK, and keeping a copy of your ATAS certificate (if applicable). The University is also obliged to inform UKVI if you defer your studies before arriving in the UK or if you do not arrive on the expected date to start your course. The University will monitor your attendance in class for the duration of your course and will inform UKVI if you miss expected contact points, if you change or withdraw from your studies, if you change to another Sponsor or change your visa status, or if you breach any of the conditions of your visa.

## Student Visa Dependants

Some Student visa holders may be able to apply to bring a husband or wife, civil partner or any children under 18 with them to the UK as dependants. To be eligible, the Student visa holder must be government-sponsored on a full-time course of study which is longer than six months or a PhD or other doctoral student on a full-time course of study which is nine months or longer. You can find further information about applying as a Student Visa dependant, [on UKVI's website](#) or on the [UKCISA website](#). You can also email the Immigration Support Service (ISS) at [immigration@qub.ac.uk](mailto:immigration@qub.ac.uk) for further advice about bringing your dependants to the UK.

# Standard Visitor Visa for Study

Students who are coming to the UK to study a short programme for **less than six months** (for example on a Study Abroad or Exchange programme) that does not include a work placement or work experience, can apply for this visa. You are **not** permitted to work under this route and you cannot extend this visa. You will not require a CAS for this type of visa application but you will need a **Visitor Study Visa letter**. This visa letter will usually be issued to you from the Queen's University Global Opportunities team, Queen's University Study Abroad team or the Immigration Support Service. Students are not permitted to switch and apply for a Student visa whilst in the UK as a Visitor study visa holder. If you want to apply for a Student visa, you must return home and apply from the country where you live.

## Visa Nationals and Non-Visa Nationals

How and where you apply for a Visitor Study visa will depend whether you are a (A) **Visa national** or a (B) **Non-visa national**.

### (A) Visa national

A [visa national](#) is a national of a country that is required to apply **in advance of travelling** for a visa to come to the UK for whatever purpose they intend and for any length of time. You can check if you require a visa before you travel to the UK [on UKVI's website](#).

### (B) Non-visa national

A non-visa national is a national of a country (for example USA, Canada, Japan, South Korea and Australia etc.) who may apply in advance for a visa to come to the UK **OR** can choose to apply for a Visitor Study immigration permission endorsement (stamp) when they arrive at a UK Port of Entry (i.e. a UK airport). Most Study Abroad and Exchange students studying in the UK for less than 6 months who do *not* plan to work choose to apply for Visitor immigration permission at the airport on arrival. However, if you have a criminal record, have previously had a visa refusal or been refused entry to a country or you have recently held a UK visa it is strongly recommended that you apply for a Visitor visa in advance.

## Applying for the Visitor Study Visa

When applying for a Visitor study visa you must ensure that you submit the required supporting documents with your application:

- **Visitor Study visa letter** issued from Queen's University Belfast
- A valid passport
- Several months' bank statements showing that you have enough money to support yourself during your stay in the UK. We recommend showing evidence of around £1136 per month of your visit.
- Evidence of where you will be staying in Belfast for your studies (if you have reserved University accommodation we will confirm this in your visa letter).
- Evidence that you intend to return home at the end of your studies, i.e. return ticket (or enough money to buy a plane ticket)

If applying for a Visitor study visa **in advance** of travelling to the UK you must complete and pay for the online application and submit the above supporting documents. You will need to prove your identity as part of your application and will either need to need to attend a **Visa Application Centre (VAC)** to have your fingerprints and photograph taken or alternatively, you may be directed to apply using the **UK Immigration: ID Check App**. You will be advised on the steps you need to take when you are submitting your visa application. The application fee for the Visitor Study visa is **£127** (or equivalent in your local currency) when you apply for the visa in advance. **There is no charge if you are a non-visa national and you apply at a UK airport**. The standard application processing time is three weeks; however we recommend that you do not book your flights to the UK until your visa has been granted. You can find further information about applying for a visitor visa on [UKVI's website](#).

# Travelling to the UK

We recommend that you arrive in the UK via a **UK port of entry** e.g. Belfast, London Heathrow, Manchester etc. When your visa is issued to you overseas, it grants you entry clearance to arrive in the UK. When you enter a UK port of entry your visa will be stamped by a UK immigration officer. If you are applying for immigration permission to enter the UK as a visitor at a UK airport, please read the following important advice:

## ePassport Gates

If you are permitted to use an ePassport gate, it will be possible for you to use this gate on arrival into a UK airport and receive 6 months' Visitor Study immigration permission. Using an ePassport gate will mean that you do not receive a stamp in your passport – this is okay. When you arrive at Queen's University you will need to provide evidence (such as a boarding pass) that will allow us to confirm you passed through a UK airport [ePassport gate](#) on arrival. **You can check if it is possible for you to use an ePassport gate [here](#).**

If you come via the Republic of Ireland e.g. Dublin, you will **not** receive this stamp as the Republic of Ireland is **not** part of the UK.

## Arriving in the UK via the Republic of Ireland

**If you are arriving to the UK via the Republic of Ireland (ROI) you will need to consider the following:**

You will need to **check if you require a ROI visa**. Nationals of some countries require a visa to enter ROI and travel on to the UK. You can check if you require a Republic of Ireland visa here: [www.irishimmigration.ie](http://www.irishimmigration.ie)

**You must arrive into ROI on or after the start date stated on your UK visa** and you must provide evidence of this when enrolling at Queen's (e.g. a flight boarding pass).

If you are a **non-visa national studying at Queen's for less than 6 months** and intending to apply for immigration permission on arrival, you will not have the opportunity to do this because there is no immigration control at your UK arrival point (i.e. between Dublin and Belfast). However, when you arrive into the Republic of Ireland you may be granted statutory immigration authorisation known as 'deemed leave'. If applicable to you, deemed leave will permit study in the UK for up to 6 months, further information is available [on the UKCISA website](#).

If you are a **non-visa national studying in for less than 6 months** planning to travel in and out of the Republic of Ireland on multiple occasions during your time study at Queen's you are strongly advised to apply for a UK visa in advance of travelling. A visa applied for in advance of your travels is multi-entry and will allow you to travel in out of ROI on multiple occasions.

For further details about arriving via the Republic of Ireland please visit [the UKCISA website](#).

## Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)

All non-visa nationals will need to apply for Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) before traveling to the UK if they are studying for less than 6 months and planning to apply for Visitor immigration permission at the UK border (e.g., airport or ferry terminal) on arrival. ETA is permission to travel to the UK, which is linked to your passport. The ETA application costs £16 and normally takes 3 working days to be processed. Once the ETA has been granted, it will last for 2 years. If you renew or replace your passport, you will require a new ETA. You can check if you will require an ETA and how to apply on the [UKVI website](#).

**You do not need to apply for ETA if you have been issued with a visa, for example a Student visa, before travelling to the UK.**



# English Programmes at the International Study Centre (ISC)

If you are studying an English Language programme at ISC Queen's and have received an unconditional offer, ISC will provide you with information regarding the type of visa you will require to study. You will find further information [on their website](#).

## Contacts for further information

**Immigration Support Service - Advice Team:** [immigration@qub.ac.uk](mailto:immigration@qub.ac.uk)

*for immigration advice and further information about applying for your visa.*

**Immigration Support Service- Compliance Team:** [isscompliance@qub.ac.uk](mailto:isscompliance@qub.ac.uk)

*for further information about your visa conditions and enrolling at the University as a visa holder.*

**Admissions and Access Service:** [cas.info@qub.ac.uk](mailto:cas.info@qub.ac.uk)

*for further information about your course offer and issue of your CAS statement*

**Global Opportunities Team:** [incoming-exchange@qub.ac.uk](mailto:incoming-exchange@qub.ac.uk)

*for further information about Study Exchange and your short-term student visa letter.*

**Study Abroad Team:** [studyabroad@qub.ac.uk](mailto:studyabroad@qub.ac.uk)

*for further information about Study Abroad options and your short-term student visa letter.*

**Immigration Support Service (ISS) website:**

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/iss/>

**For further information about studying in the UK as an International Student, visit the UKCISA website at <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/>**