

# Student visa guidance for applications made outside the UK

**SOAS Student Advice Service** endeavours to ensure that the information in this guide is accurate but please note that legislation is subject to change at short notice. Please access this guide from the link below to ensure you are reading the most recent version of this document.

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/international/entry/applying-for-student-visas/>

This guide should be used with the following documents:

SOAS Student visa financial requirement [guide](#)

SOAS Student visa application form [guide](#)

UKVI Student route caseworker [guidance](#)

UKVI Financial Requirements caseworker [guidance](#)

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## When can I submit my Student visa application?

You can submit your Student visa application from outside the UK up to **6 months** before your programme at SOAS starts. Do not delay in making your application as there can be delays in application processing times at peak periods.

## Where can I submit my Student visa application?

You can only submit your Student visa application in a country where you have a legal right of residence, for example as a student or a worker. Normally, you cannot apply from a country in which you hold a visitor or tourist visa. If you're applying in a country that you don't have nationality for, you will need to provide evidence showing your immigration status in that country.

If you are having difficulty returning to your country of nationality to apply, please contact us for advice on [adviceservice@soas.ac.uk](mailto:adviceservice@soas.ac.uk)

## How much does it cost?

- £558 application fee
- the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) – see our [IHS guidance](#) for more information including refunds for EU and Swiss nationals.
- some Visa Application Centres (VAC) charge a 'user pays fee' of £55 and offer other chargeable services such as a 'priority fee' to have your application processed more quickly.

## How long will it take to process my application?

You'll usually get a decision within 3-6 weeks but in many cases it can take longer due to additional checks that UKVI make. Sometimes there may be significant delays in processing times so please apply for your visa as early as possible but only when you meet the eligibility criteria outlined in this guide. If you delay in applying for your visa, you risk not being able to meet the enrolment deadline stated in your CAS and may need to defer your entry to the next academic year, if possible. **SOAS has no control over how quickly your application is decided and cannot request that it is processed more quickly.**

## How do I make an application?

To apply for the Student visa, you will need to complete the application form and pay the application and IHS fees online.

### Providing your biometrics

As part of the application process you will be required to give biometric information (your fingerprints and photograph). How you do this depends on your nationality and what type of passport you have. You will either:

- provide your biometrics at a Visa Application Centre (VAC) via appointment
- Use the UK Immigration: ID Check app to scan your biometric passport

You should book a biometric appointment as soon as possible after submitting your visa application online to avoid delays.

## Submitting your documents

You may need to submit your passport and supporting documents during your biometric appointment or you may need to send them to Visa Application Centre by post/courier. You may also have the option to upload digital copies of your documents with your visa application. You will be told what you need to do when completing the online application.

If you are required to attend a biometric appointment and submit your documents in person, your passport will be returned to you on the same day, shortly after your biometric appointment is completed. Dependent applicants must leave their passport at the VAC and it will not be returned on the same day.

## Receiving a decision on your application

You will normally be informed of the decision made on your application by email or by letter so make sure to monitor your emails and post. You must carefully read and keep your decision notice as this is an important document for immigration purposes.

### If you verified your identity using the UK Immigration: ID Check app

You will receive a digital immigration status called an eVisa. You'll receive an email notification confirming when your visa is valid, when it will expire and the conditions of your visa. It also contains information on how you can [prove](#) your immigration status and how to keep your [UKVI account](#) up to date. This is an important email so make sure to read it carefully and check all the information is correct.

### If you enrolled biometrics at a Visa Application Centre (VAC)

You'll receive either a letter or email confirming the decision on your application including how to set up your [UKVI account](#) and access your eVisa. It is important that you keep this somewhere safe as it is proof of your grant of permission and carries details of the conditions of your permission.

## Accessing your eVisa

Once you have registered for a UKVI account and accessed your eVisa, you will be able to use the [View and Prove service](#) on GOV.UK to check your immigration status and generate a 'share code'. Share codes are used to prove your immigration status to SOAS, your employer, landlord or someone else. **You must keep your details in your UKVI account [up to date](#), especially if you get a new passport to avoid having difficulties accessing and proving your immigration status.**

## Is your eVisa correct?

UKVI can sometime make mistakes, so it is important that you check your visa details carefully. If there are any errors such as the number of hours you can work or the [visa expiry](#) date is incorrect, then you should [report](#) the error as soon as possible.

## When will my visa be valid from?

You should not travel to the UK until your visa is valid, otherwise you may be refused entry at the UK border and have issues with your enrolment at SOAS.

Course duration	Visa valid from date
6 months or more	1 month before your course start date or 7 days before your intended travel date entered into the visa application form, whichever is later.
Less than 6 months (pre-sessional course)	1 month before your course start date or 7 days before your intended travel date entered into the visa application form, whichever is later.
Less than 6 months (not a pre-sessional course)	7 days before your course start date

## When will my visa expire?

Your visa should expire according to the course dates on your CAS, please check your Student visa carefully. If you're returning to your course after a leave of absence, the caseworker should use your original course start date listed in the CAS in when calculating when your visa should expire.

Course duration	Visa expiry date
12 months or more	4 months after your course end date
6 months or more but less than 12 months	2 months after your course end date
Less than 6 months (pre-sessional course)	1 month after your course end date
Less than 6 months (not a pre-sessional course)	7 days after your course end date

## Visa refusals and rejections

If your visa application has been refused or rejected as invalid, you must inform the Student Visa Compliance team immediately ([compliance@soas.ac.uk](mailto:compliance@soas.ac.uk)), including a copy of the decision notice. The [Student Advice Service](#) will provide advice on your refusal or rejection, and whether you have grounds for an [Administrative Review](#) or how to submit a second successful application. If your visa application has been refused, you will need to request another CAS to support a new visa application once the Student Advice Service has verified your visa supporting documents.

## Entering the UK

You cannot travel to the UK until:

1. a decision has been made on your Student visa application, and
2. you have set up your UKVI account and accessed your eVisa, and
3. your visa is valid on the date you plan to arrive in the UK.

You must travel to the UK on the passport listed in your UKVI account.

If your passport is not date stamped by a Border Force officer then you must keep evidence such as a boarding card, flight ticket or a travel booking to confirm the date you entered the UK. SOAS will need to see this evidence as part of your enrolment.

### **Providing your new visa details to SOAS**

As part of the visa sponsor duties, SOAS must keep up to date immigration records for all students enrolled at the School. Visit [the enrolment pages](#) to find out which documents you need to upload and how to upload them.

# Student visa requirements and evidence

You must meet all the Student visa requirements and be able to provide evidence in the required format to make a successful visa application.

## Summary of documents to be submitted:

Depending on how you apply, you may need to submit these documents to a Visa Application Centre or you upload them to your UKVI account. You should check the instructions given to you onscreen or in any emails you receive as this varies from country to country. Our other guide explains how to apply online, [Student visa application form guide](#).

Document	Low risk applicant, see <a href="#">ST 21.2*</a>	Other applicants
Passport	Yes*	Yes*
Evidence of immigration permission when applying in a country that is not your nationality (only if applying <b>outside</b> the UK)	Yes	Yes
Qualifications listed on CAS in 'Evidence used to obtain offer' section.	No**	Yes, if you will study a course <b>below</b> RQF 6.
English language assessment (see CAS)	No**	Yes, unless 'HEI sponsor has made assessment' or 'met in a previous successful application' is listed on CAS.
Financial documents	No**	Yes
If using parent or partner account, proof of relationship, plus letter of consent	No**	Yes
Letter of parental consent to application if under 18-years old, plus proof of relationship	Yes	Yes
Letter of consent from your Official Financial Sponsor (required in some <a href="#">circumstances</a> )	Yes	Yes
Translations of any submitted documents not in English or Welsh	Yes	Yes
TB test result	Yes, <a href="#">if required</a>	Yes, <a href="#">if required</a>

\*\*Low risk applicants do not have to submit some documents, but they must still meet the requirements of the Student visa application. UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) can contact you during their decision-making process to ask you to provide your qualifications and financial

documents. If you cannot provide them by the deadline that you are given, then your Student visa application will be refused. We would therefore recommend that you prepare the documents, so you are ready to submit them if a UKVI caseworker contacts you when deciding your application.

## Differentiation arrangements for ‘low risk’ nationals

You can qualify for Student visa differentiation arrangements because you are a national of one of the ‘low risk’ countries or hold certain type of passport listed in [ST 22.1](#) (Eligibility requirements section) of the Immigration Rules. If your nationality or passport is listed in [ST22.1](#) (Eligibility requirements section), you do **not** need to include the following documents with your visa application but you are still required to meet all the requirements as other applicants. **You are only exempt from providing documentary evidence, not exempt from meeting the requirements themselves.**

- Documents listed on your CAS in the ‘Evidence used to obtain offer’ section
- Proof of meeting the financial requirements
- Evidence of meeting the English language requirements

UKVI can contact you during their decision-making process to ask you to provide your qualifications and financial documents. If you cannot provide them by the deadline that you are given, then your Student visa application will be refused. We would therefore recommend that you prepare the documents anyway so that you will have them ready if UK Visas and Immigration ask for them.

## Tuberculosis (TB) Screening

You may need to provide a certificate from an approved clinic to prove that you have been screened for tuberculosis (TB) as part of the visa application process. Read the guidance on [GOV.UK](#) to find out who needs to submit a test certificate with their visa application. If you’re applying in a country where TB testing is normally required but you meet one of the [exemptions](#), you should explain this in your visa application form and include evidence. (A ‘returning UK resident’ is someone who holds Indefinite Leave to Remain.)

If you need to provide a TB test due to your residency history but are submitting your visa application in a country where TB testing is not normally required e.g. France, [consult](#) the list of approved clinics you can attend.

If your TB test has expired by the date the caseworker is deciding your visa application, they may request that you obtain another test.

## Translations

Any document provided to support your application that is not in English, or Welsh must be translated into English to the requirements detailed in the [Student route caseworker guidance](#).

## Qualifications used to obtain offer

When you applied to study at SOAS, you needed to provide proof of your qualifications to obtain your unconditional offer, e.g., proof of your undergraduate degree qualification to study on a masters. Refer to your CAS which will list these documents in the '*Evidence used to obtain offer*' section.

If your CAS states that you will be studying on a degree level course (RQF 6) or above, you do **not** need to provide evidence of these qualifications to UKVI as SOAS is a HEI sponsor with a track record of compliance.

If you will study on a course at RQF 5 or below, you **must** provide a certificate or transcript of your results for each qualification listed unless you can apply under the ['differentiation arrangements'](#).

## Financial requirements

See our [guide](#) Student visa: financial requirements to ensure you understand the rules and avoid a visa refusal. A common reason for Student visa refusals is a problem with financial documents or an incorrect amount of funds being shown. If you can apply under the ['differentiation arrangements'](#), you must meet the financial requirements but do not need to provide the evidence.

## Consent from your current or previous financial sponsor

If all the following are true, you will need to provide a letter of consent from your financial sponsor:

- you have completed a course of studies in the UK within the 12 months prior to your Student visa application date, and
- you were awarded a scholarship or official financial sponsorship for that course, covering both fees, and living costs, and
- the scholarship or financial sponsor was a government, or international scholarship agency.

Your application will be invalid if you don't provide this letter and is required even if you benefit from the differentiation arrangements. If you're applying for further immigration permission to continue your current programme, we recommend contacting the Student Advice Service for guidance on this letter before submitting your application.

## Consent from parent(s)/guardians if under 18 years old

If you submit your visa application when you're under 18, you must provide a letter of consent from both your parents, legal guardian(s) or the relevant parent/guardian if they have sole responsibility for you. You should also provide evidence of your relationship to them such as a birth certificate. Please note that the definition of parent excludes step-parents and restricts the definition of a parent to biological parents, legal parents, and adoptive parents. If in doubt, contact our team for guidance. The letter should confirm the following:

- confirm their relationship to you
- consent to your Student visa application
- consent to your living and care arrangements in the UK

- consent to your independent travel arrangements to the UK and reception on arrival

## English Language Requirements

As your Student visa sponsor, SOAS are required by UK Visas and Immigration to confirm that you have met a minimum level of acceptable English to be able to enrol on a course in the UK. If you hold an unconditional offer from SOAS you will already have met these language requirements as part of the course application process. If you can apply under the [‘differentiation arrangements’](#), you do not need to provide evidence of how you meet the English language requirements.

To understand what evidence, you may need to provide to UKVI to prove your English language ability, please check what your CAS states in the English language qualification section.

### English language qualification

Is SELT required?

Reason not required:

If your CAS states ‘Y’ for the question ‘*Is SELT required?*’, you need to enter your [SELT test](#) number on your visa application form. It’s valid for 2 years only

If your CAS states ‘N’ for the question ‘*Is SELT required?*’, your CAS will state a reason a SELT is not required. Check below what evidence (if any) you need to submit with your visa application:

- [Migrant has met required English level in a previous successful visa application](#)

**Evidence:** Although the guidance does not specify how this will be checked, confirmation on the CAS and on the visa application should be sufficient.

- [Higher Education Institute \(HEI\) sponsor has made assessment](#)

**Evidence:** confirmed on the CAS no other evidence required

- [National of a majority English-speaking country](#)

**Evidence:** your passport

- [Migrant holds degree from majority English speaking country](#)

**Evidence:** transcript or certificate plus if the qualification was awarded outside the UK, you will also require an [Ecctis](#) (formerly UK NARIC) Visa and Nationality Statement (English proficiency).

# Dependants

## Which students can bring dependants?

You can only bring dependants with you to the UK when studying at SOAS if you meet one of the categories below:

- you're studying a full-time PhD programme of 9 months or more in duration, or
- you're receiving a scholarship or financial sponsorship from your national government or His Majesty's government and are studying a programme of 6 months or more in duration, or
- you're studying or have studied on a full-time course lasting at least six months and all four bullet points below apply:
  - Your Student permission is current or expired no more than three months before this immigration application.
  - Your new immigration application is for a full-time course that is at least six months.
  - Your dependant already has Student dependant immigration permission (or it expired no more than three months before this application), or your dependant is your child who was born since you were last granted your immigration permission.
  - You are applying for immigration permission at the same time as your dependant.

**Our MRes degrees do not meet the requirements to be eligible to bring dependants unless you meet bullet point two or three above.**

Your dependants visa should expire on the same date as your Student visa.

## Who are considered dependants?

- your spouse
- your civil partner
- your unmarried partner if you have been in a 'durable' relationship similar to marriage for at least two years before the application, evidence of this will be required.
- Your child or children (under 18 years if coming to the UK for the first time as your dependant). Both child's parents must be in the UK or coming to the UK with the child unless exemptions apply. Please see the [UKCISA](#) website for further details or contact our team.

Other family members who wish to join you in the UK must apply for a Standard Visitor visa (see [GOV.UK](#) or more details).

## Application costs

- £524 application fee per dependant
- the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) – see our [IHS guidance](#) for more information

## Application process

There is a slightly different in application procedures for Dependents compared with Student applicants. Dependent applicants must submit their passport at the VAC and will receive a 90-day vignette in their passport if successful. This is used to travel to the UK during its validity.

Dependents must also set up a UKVI account and access their eVisa before travelling to the UK. Follow the instructions in the decision notification.

## Required documents

Evidence is set out in the [Relationship with a partner: caseworker guidance](#) & [Appendix Children: caseworker guidance](#) which are subject to change at any time. If you wish to bring your step-child to the UK, please contact our team for advice.

You will need to provide the following documents:

- proof of your marriage or civil partnership e.g., marriage or civil partnership certificate\*
- evidence of co-habiting for two years if not married or in a civil partnership with your partner or evidence to explain why you don't live together\*
- child applicants need evidence of the relationship between parent/legal guardian and the child e.g., birth certificate\*
- child applicants need a letter from both parents/legal guardians confirming all the following:
  - Their relationship to the child.
  - Whether both or one parent/legal guardian has legal responsibility for the child.
  - They consent to the child's Dependant visa application.
  - They consent to the living arrangements in the UK and the address the child will be staying.
- evidence of meeting the dependent financial requirements

\*These are not required if they were already submitted in a previous successful Student dependant application but sometimes caseworkers still ask to see them. However, you will need to show evidence that you and your spouse, civil partner or unmarried partner are still in a relationship since the last visa was granted by including evidence such as a recent utility bill, council tax bill or bank statement in both your names.

If your child's other parent is not coming to the UK, you will need to show evidence that you meet an exemption for not requiring both parents come to the UK. Please see the [UKCISA](#) website for further details or contact Student Advice Service.

## Financial requirements and evidence

See our [guide](#) Financial requirements when applying for a Student visa either inside or outside the UK.

## Further help

This guide should be used with the following documents:

SOAS Student visa financial requirement [guide](#)

SOAS Student visa application form [guide](#)

UKVI Student route caseworker [guidance](#)

UKVI Financial Requirements caseworker [guidance](#)

If you need further immigration advice after reading this guidance, please email the Student Advice Service with your full name, nationality, name of the country in which you are making your Student visa application and SOAS student ID (if issued).

Email: [adviceservice@soas.ac.uk](mailto:adviceservice@soas.ac.uk)

[UK Council for International Student Affairs](#) (UKCISA) has lots of helpful resources on student immigration and living in the UK as an international student.