



A SIMPLE GUIDE TO GETTING YOUR UK VISA

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Overview

The United Kingdom is among the world's most-visited tourist destinations. In 2018, the country welcomed over 36 million visitors to its shores. Popular places of visit within the UK include London, York, Edinburgh, Canterbury, Cambridge and Oxford.

A number of reasons make the UK a tourist magnet. It's fascinating history (the small island invaded all but 22 countries in the world!), towering castles, historic landmarks, and of course, the Queen's residence, Buckingham Palace, are just some excuses to plan a British experience. The highlands of Scotland and rolling hills of Wales promise an idyllic getaway, while the vibrant culture of London - particularly, hotels, museums, parks and iconic towers in Central London - reminds us why the city is a top business destination.

Students seeking world-class education also have their sights on the UK, which is home to such famous universities as Imperial College, University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, London School of Economics, and King's College. According to 2017/2018 statistics, 458,520 international students were attending university in the United Kingdom.

Even as medical tourism today is focused on countries offering affordable treatments, London's specialist medical centers attract foreigners seeking quality care. The city has 25 private hospitals, with orthopedics and cancer treatments being most sought-after by medical tourists.

Visa exempt countries

Her Majesty's government decides who may or may not enter the UK.

The Home Office - also known as the Home Department - is the ministerial department responsible for immigration matters.

Visa exemptions are available to British nationals who are European Union citizens, citizens of Commonwealth countries possessing the right to abode in the UK under the Immigration Act of 1971, all European Union citizens, Irish citizens under the Common Travel Area, and citizens of EFTA member states.

Citizens from 56 countries and union territories can enter the UK visa-free, and stay in the country for up to six months.

Citizens of Kuwait, Oman Qatar and United Arab Emirates can enter the UK with an Electronic Visa Waiver (EVW). Individuals who hold diplomatic passports or service/official passports, issued to government employees for work-related travel, also don't require a visa.

An EVW allows you to stay in the UK for up to six months for tourism, study, business or private medical treatment. You need to apply 48 hours to three months before travel. The fee for an EVW is £30. The required documents to apply are your passport, the address in the UK where you will stay, and details of your journey, including departure and arrivals dates and times.

Andora	East Timor	Mexico	Samoa
Antigua and Barboda	El Salvador	Micronesia	San Marino
Argentina	Granada	Monaco	Seychelles
Australia	Guatemala	Namibia	Singapore
Bahamas	Honduras	Nauru	Solomon Islands
Barbados	Hong Kong	New Zealand	South Korea
Belize	Israel	Nicaragua	Taiwan
Botswana	Japan	Palau	Tongo
Brazil	Kiribati	Panama	Trinidad and
Brunei	Macau	Papua New Guinea	Tobago
Canada	Malaysia	Paraguay	Tuvalu
Chile	Maldives	Saint Kitts and Nevis	United States of
Costa Rica	Marshall Islands	Saint Lucia	America
Dominica	Mauritius	Saint Vincent and	Uruguay
		Grenadines	Vanuatu
			Vatican City

Types of UK Visa

Visitor Visa/Standard Visa

The Visitor Visa is granted for short stays in the UK, for up to six months. It is intended for individuals who wish to come to the UK for tourism, visiting family members, medical treatment or professional reasons.

The other name for the Visitor Visa is Standard Visitor Visa, as it encompasses various short-term visits that previously required separate visas named after the intent of travel, such as General Visitor Visa, Family Visitor Visa, Sports Visitor Visa, Business Visitor Visa, Entertainer Visitor Visa, Prospective Visitor Visa, Private Medical Treatment Visa, Child Visitor Visa, and Approved Destination Visa. *

*The Approved Destination Status (ADS) is a Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and China entitling groups of Chinese tourists visiting the UK assistance on their journey.

You should apply for a Standard Visitor/Visitor Visa if your purpose for traveling to the UK is one of the following:

- Participate in a conference, meeting or training.
- Participate in a sports-related event.
- If you're an academic: to conduct a research study.
- If you're an academic: to accompany students enrolling in a Foreign Studies Program.
- Perform a clinic duty, as a doctor, dentist or an observer.
- Taking the Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB), or of the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) test.
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Applicants from the countries listed below will be required to provide their tuberculosis test results if staying in the UK for more than six months.

Afghanistan	Guinea	Moldova	Timor Leste
Algeria	Eritrea	Mongolia	Togo
Angola	Ethiopia	Morocco	Turkmenistan
Armenia	Gabon	Mozambique	Tuvalu
Azerbaijan	Gambia	Namibia	Uganda
Bangladesh	Georgia	Nepal	Ukraine
Belarus	Ghana	Niger	Uzbekistan
Benin	Guatemala	Nigeria	Vanuatu
Bhutan	Guinea	Pakistan	Vietnam
Bolivia	Guinea Bissau	Palau	Zambia
Botswana	Guyana	Papua New Guinea	Zimbabwe
Brunei	Haiti	Panama	
Burkina Faso	Hong Kong	Paraguay	
Burma	India	Peru	
Burundi	Indonesia	Philippines	
Cambodia	Iraq	Russian Federation	
Cape Verde	Kazakhstan	Rwanda	
Central African Republic	Kenya	Sao Tome And Principe	
Chad	Kiribati	Senegal	
Cameroon	Kyrgyzstan	Sierra Leone	
China	Laos	Solomon Islands	
Congo	Lesotho	Somalia	
Congo Democratic Republic	Liberia	South Africa	
Côte D'ivoire	Madagascar	South Korea	
DPR Of Korea	Macau	South Sudan	
Djibouti	Malawi	Sudan	
Dominican Republic	Malaysia	Suriname	
Ecuador	Mali	Tajikistan	
Equatorial	Marshall Islands	Tanzania	
	Mauritania	Thailand	
	Micronesia		

Student Visa

If you will be studying in the UK, this is the visa to apply for. There are three types of UK student visa:

- Tier 4 Child Student visa: As a foreigner aged 4-17 to enroll in a course at an independent school in the UK.
- Tier 4 General Student visa: As a foreigner aged at least 16 years who wishes to enroll at an educational institution in the UK.
- Short Term Study visa: As a foreigner seeking to enroll in a temporary study program with a maximum duration of 6 or 11 months.

Work and Business Visa

UK work visas are designed for highly qualified foreigners, skilled foreign workers who have a job offer from a company in the UK for a job in the shortage occupation list, temporary workers who can stay and work in the UK for up to two years, and under the Youth Mobility Scheme visa, British nationals or citizens between ages 18-30 from Australia, Canada, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Republic of Korea and Taiwan, British Overseas Residents, or British Overseas Territories citizens, can stay, be employed or self-employed, and enroll in studies in the UK for a specified period of time.

UK business visas are of four types.

- Tier 1 is Entrepreneur visa is intended for foreign businessmen willing to invest £50,000 to £200,000 to set up a new business in the UK or form a business partnership with an existing company in the country.

- Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa is for foreign nationals who have been endorsed for their entrepreneurial skill and business ideas, and who must live in and establish a sole ownership or partnership business in the UK. This business visa is not available to foreigners from EEA or Switzerland.
- The Tier 1 Investor visa is for foreign investors willing to invest at least £2,000,000.
- The fourth types of business visa is issued to Turkish nationals who can work as self-employed businessmen or work in a business in the UK.

Family Visas

This visa is issued to the family members of individuals living and working in the UK. Family members such as spouses, parents, children, fiancés/ fiancées and engaged partners of British citizens, can join their family in the UK for a period of more than six months.

Transit Visa

This visa is issued to foreign nationals other than those from EEA or Switzerland, who are transiting through the UK from a country to reach their destination country. You can apply for or will be given this visa if you need to change flights in the UK without leaving the airport, or if you need to leave the airport and use another mode of travel through the UK to reach your destination, in which case your visa will be valid for up to four days.

Refugee Visa

This is a temporary visa for individuals who were compelled to leave their country out of a fear for their lives and who arrived at the UK border to seek refuge in the country. Refugee visa holders will need to return to their country after there is no longer a threat to their lives.

Residence Permits

Indefinite Leave to Remain

If you have lived in the UK for a minimum of five years, you can apply for a permanent visa that entitles you to settle in the country.

EEA Residence Permit

All EEA nationals and their family members who have lived in the UK continuously for a period of five years or more as students or as employed, self-employed or self-sufficient individuals, qualify for permanent residence.

The Home Office also makes residence permits for temporary residence in the UK available to returning residents and Commonwealth citizens with a document proving the right to abode.



UK Visa Statistics



In the past decade, UK visa approvals across all categories have risen. In 2018, a record 142.8 million people visited the UK. More than 2.9 million visas were granted, an increase of 7% over 2017. Here are specific visa statistics for 2018:

- 2.2 million visitor visas, including dependents, granted, with an increasing number of non-EEA arrivals.
- 176,126 work visas granted, with an increased demand for skilled workers in the human health and social work sectors.
- 229,488 sponsored student visas granted, with increases to Indian and Chinese nationals.
- 151,953 visas granted to family members, a 14% increase over the previous period.
- 29,380 asylum applications, a 11% increase over the previous period.

Between 2010 and 2016, an average of 495,000 non-British citizens moved to the UK each year. Commonly cited reasons for migration include a strong labor market, language, educational opportunities and established networks.

Sources:

1. <https://www.gov.uk/>
2. <https://fullfact.org/>