



Applying for a Student Visa as a US national – October 2024

This guidance is based on frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be used on its own and you must use it in combination with the detailed guidance available on our [website](#).

What is the best way to prepare a successful visa application?

Read the Student visa guidance carefully before applying. You should refer to the [SAET guidance](#) and the [Student Guidance](#). If you have questions after reading the guidance, [contact SAET](#) for advice.

What is meant by 'low-risk' and does this apply to me?

This will apply to you if you are a US national applying for your visa from the US, the UK or another country where you are legally living.

If your application is considered to be 'low-risk', you don't need to submit evidence of your finances with your initial visa application. However, you must still ensure that you meet the Student visa requirements and that you are in possession of documents to evidence that you meet them. The UKVI can request the documents at any time while your application is being processed. There is no real benefit to the low-risk arrangement; it just means that you have to send fewer documents with your initial application.

If you are applying for your visa inside the UK and have held a UK visa for 12 months or more on the date you submit and pay for your application online, you do not need to prepare evidence of finances as you automatically meet these requirements.

If your application will be low-risk, we recommend that you don't include evidence of finances. If you do choose to submit this, you must ensure that it meets the requirements precisely. Failure to meet the requirements is likely to result in a visa refusal.

How do I apply for a visa in the US?

The process is explained here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/usa-apply-for-a-uk-visa/apply-for-a-uk-visa-in-the-usa>. Please read these instructions carefully.

Can I come to the UK early and apply for the Student visa there?

Unfortunately, it is not possible to apply for a Student visa from within the UK if you enter as a Standard Visitor. If you attempt this, your application will be refused and you may not be able to campus enrol for studies at LSE.

Can I come to the UK before my Student visa is granted?

You should wait until your Student visa is granted before travelling to the UK.

When can I apply for my visa?

The earliest you can apply for your visa is from 6 months before the course start date on the CAS if you are applying from outside the UK.

If you apply from inside the UK, you can only apply 3 months before your programme start date.

You should only apply for the visa when you are confident that you hold the documents required to prove that you meet the Student visa requirements. The date of application is the date you submit and pay for the online application.

I will be in another country as a tourist over the summer, can I apply there?

No. You must apply in your country of nationality or a country where you are legally living. If you apply whilst visiting another country, your application is likely to be unsuccessful. If you are a US national but not living in the US, you should apply in the country where you are living or in the UK (or UK if you meet the requirements to apply inside the UK).

Do I need to have any of my own money?

You must ensure that you can meet the financial requirements. If you are self-funded, you must ensure that you have sufficient funds to cover the tuition fees plus £12,006 for living costs (this will increase to £13,347 for applications made on or after 2 January 2025). If you are relying on bank statements as evidence of funds, please refer to our [info sheet](#) for details of the financial documentary requirements.

Please note that you can only use money held in your name, your parent(s)' names or your spouse / partner's name if they already have a UK visa or are applying for a visa at the same time as you.

Do I need a tuberculosis (TB) testing or any vaccinations for visa purposes?

If you have only been in the US for the last 6 months, you will not require TB testing for visa application purposes. However, if you have recently been living in a country which is subject to the TB testing requirement, you may need to provide a TB test certificate from an approved test centre. Please see [here](#) for further information about TB testing for visa purposes and contact us if you have questions.

You told me the IHS is £776 per year. Why am I being charged more?

You are charged £776 per year of study plus the additional time you are granted on your visa. If you are charged in US Dollars rather than GB Pounds Sterling, the exchange rate used by the UKVI may also result in a slightly higher payment.

How can I say I want to benefit from the differentiation arrangements for low-risk nationals?

Don't panic! It is assessed by the passport you submit with your application. The question has been removed from the form but not from the application summary. You can state in the additional information section of the form that you wish to be considered as a low risk national.

Do I really need to provide my original passport for the application?

Yes, because a temporary visa vignette (sticker) must be placed in your passport if your visa application is successful. If you do not submit your original passport, you will not receive a visa.

How do I provide biometric information?

Step 2 on [this website](#) explains the process. You will need to book an appointment with a US Department of Homeland Security ASC Field Centre or a VfS Premium Application Centre. Your fingerprints and photograph will be taken at the appointment, after which you will be given a receipt that you must send with your passport and supporting documents for your visa application.

If you attend an ASC Field Centre, you **must** follow the instructions on this [web page](#).

Can I arrange my own courier to get my passport and supporting documents back?

No. We are aware of students who used an alternative courier service and experienced problems in receiving their documents back. We recommend that you follow the instructions in [on this website](#) and obtain a fully addressed pre-paid UPS electronic shipping label to include inside the envelope with your passport and documents.

Could my application be refused and what does this mean?

It is not possible to guarantee that a visa application will be successful. If you do not meet the requirements for the visa your application will be refused which is why it is very important that you read our [guidance](#)

Can I travel to the UK on a second passport?

This could pose a risk to your Student visa and may complicate your immigration status. If you are considering doing this, please contact [SAET](#) for advice before making travel plans.

What is a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) and how do I get it?

The BRP is the visa, however you can only collect it when you arrive in the UK. A BRP is a credit-card sized plastic card; it is an important legal document and is your evidence you are legally in the UK.

Do not carry it in your wallet on a daily basis as proof of identification..

Why is my visa only 90 days long?

Initially you will be given a temporary visa vignette which will be valid for 90 days. This will allow you to enter the UK on a Student visa. You will then need to collect a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) which is the actual visa from the Post Office you selected in the visa application form. The BRP is your main visa so you don't need to extend the visa vignette to match it.

What is a decision letter / email?

This letter or email informs you of the outcome of your visa application. It also confirms where you must collect your BRP. You will need to have access to the letter or email in the UK because you will require it to collect the BRP. Please keep an eye on your junk and spam folders as UKVI emails can be filtered into these in error.

I think that the dates on my visa are incorrect, what do I do?

First, please remember that the date on the visa will be in the UK format which is dd/mm/yy. If you are already aware of this and can see that the visa dates are still incorrect, please contact the visa processing centre directly to inform them of the error and request that it is corrected. You can also refer to our [webpage](#) for information about visa corrections.

I've heard that it's not a good idea to travel to the UK via Ireland; why is this?

This is because Ireland is part of the Common Travel Area which means that there is no border control when you enter the UK. Please refer to the [UKCISA website](#) for further information.

Can you speak to my parents about my visa instead of me?

Due to the Data Protection Act, we have to contact you directly. We are not permitted to discuss an individual with a third party without prior consent. If your parents want to see the information, we suggest that you forward our emails to them but you will need to respond to us directly if you have further questions.