

Applying for a UK Visit Visa



UK Visas
& Immigration



BRITAIN & NORTHERN IRELAND



The UK welcomes genuine visitors, and we continually improve our visa system to make it as easy as possible for those who meet our requirements to gain entry to the UK.

You may wish to experience our world-class heritage, visit our beautiful countryside, shop or attend a sporting event. Whatever the reason, we hope this guide will help you apply for a visitor visa.

*Further information on visas is available at **www.gov.uk/visas-immigration**. You can plan your trip and find out more about the UK at **www.visitbritain.com***

What types of visit visa are there?

There are four types of visit visa:

- Visit (standard) which enables you to visit the UK for activities including a holiday, attending business meetings, take part in sports and entertainment events, have private medical treatment
- Visit (marriage and civil partnership) which enables you to visit the UK to marry or form a civil partnership or give notice of this
- Visit (permitted paid engagements) which enables you to visit the UK for a month to do certain paid engagements such as examining students if you are a highly qualified academic
- Visit (transit) which enables you to transit the UK

Who needs a visa to enter the UK as a Visitor?

Nationals of some countries require a visa to enter the UK. If you are unsure whether you require a visa you can use the 'check if you need a visa' tool on our website at www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa

Who can apply?

You can apply for a visit visa if you are:

- travelling to the UK any of the permitted activities in Appendices 3, 4 or 5 to Appendix V of the Immigration Rules for visitors
- able to support yourself financially for the duration of your visit
- able to pay for your return or onward journey
- will leave the UK at the end of your visit

If you want to come to the UK regularly you could benefit from a long-term visit visa if:

- you have a frequent and ongoing need to come to the UK
- You are likely to need to continue to come to the UK to carry out a permitted visitor activity while your visitor visa is valid
- you plan to leave the UK at the end of each visit

The Application Process

How do I apply for my visa?

You must apply online for a visit visa at www.gov.uk/apply-uk-visa

After you have applied online, you will need to make an appointment to attend one of our visa application centres. Find your nearest centre at www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre

You will need to have your fingerprints and photograph (known as 'biometric information') taken at the visa application centre as part of your application. You may be able to get your visa faster or use other services depending on what country you are in.

How long it will take

You can apply for a visa up to 3 months before your date of travel to the UK and should get a decision on your visa within 15 working days. To find out how long getting a visa might take in the country you are applying from visit www.gov.uk/visa-processing-times

How long you can stay

You can usually stay in the UK for up to 6 months with a visit visa. You can also apply for a long-term visit visa if you can prove you need to make repeat visits over a longer period. You can stay for a maximum of 6 months on each visit and your visa can last for 6 months, 2, 5 or 10 years.

What you can and cannot do

With a visit visa you cannot:

- take paid or unpaid work, be self-employed or set up in business
- study, except for up to 30 days where this is not the main purpose of your visit
- have recourse to public funds
- live in the UK for long periods of time through frequent or successive visits
- marry or form a civil partnership, unless you hold a marriage/civil partnership visit visa.

Documents you must provide to apply for your visa

When you apply you will need to provide a current passport or other valid travel identification. You need a page in your passport that is blank on both sides for your visa.

You must also provide additional documents if you are visiting for a specific reason, for instance private medical treatment, to undertake a permitted paid engagement, to marry or form a civil partnership. You can find further information in the supporting documents guide at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/visitor-visa-guide-to-supporting-documents

You can also provide other documents to support your application, for example:

- evidence that you can support yourself during your trip, for example, bank statements or payslips
- details of where you intend to stay and your travel plans - you should not pay for accommodation or travel until you get your visa
- details of your employment or studies where you are employed or are studying

You will also need to provide a certified translation of any documents that are not in English or Welsh.

Long-term visit visas

If you are applying for a long-term visit visa you must also provide evidence to show that you can support yourself financially for the duration of your visa. You may be given a visa for a shorter period than requested if you do not do this or for other reasons. You will not

get a refund of the application fee if you get a shorter visa or your application is refused.

For more information please visit www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa

Extending your stay when you are in the UK

You may be able to extend your stay as long as the total time you spend in the UK is no more than 6 months (the maximum period of stay for visiting academics is 12 months, the maximum for private medical treatment is 11 months and the maximum for permitted paid engagements is one month) - e.g. if when you enter the UK you were permitted to enter for three months, you can apply to extend your stay for up to a further three months whilst you are in the UK provided you meet the requirements.

For further information on UK visas and our priority and premium services, please visit: www.gov.uk/visas-immigration

For information on travelling to the UK and crossing our border visit www.gov.uk/uk-border-control

Did you know?



86% of those who apply for a visa get one.



The UK currently processes **99%** of non-settlement visa applications within 15 working days.