

The UK's points-based immigration system: An introduction for EU, EEA and Swiss students



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Before you apply to work or study in the UK under the points-based immigration system, you should check if you're eligible for the **EU Settlement Scheme**.

The UK left the European Union on 31 January 2020. Free movement between the UK and the European Union ended on 31 December 2020, and on 1 January 2021, the UK implemented a points-based immigration system that prioritises skills and talent over where a person comes from.

If you are not eligible under the EU Settlement Scheme, you need to meet specific requirements in order to work or study in the UK from 1 January 2021. You will also need to pass relevant checks, including UK criminality checks. You can continue to visit the UK for up to six months without applying for a visa and may participate in a wide range of activities, including tourism, visiting family and friends, short-term study and business-related activities, such as attending job interviews, events and conferences.

Irish citizens' status continues to be protected as part of **Common Travel Area arrangements**. Therefore, Irish citizens do not require permission to come to the UK (except in a very limited number of circumstances), and as a result, are not eligible to apply under the new points-based immigration system.

The UK has a world-leading education sector and continues to welcome talented and high potential students to universities, further education and English language colleges, and independent schools. There is no limit on the number of international students who can come to the UK to study, and the UK is seeking to increase the number of international students in higher education.

We have made it easier for the best international graduates to secure skilled jobs in the UK and contribute to the UK's economic growth by introducing the Graduate route. It allows international students who complete undergraduate and master's degrees in the UK to stay for two years and those who complete a PhD to stay for three years.



EU Settlement Scheme

The deadline for most people to apply to the **EU Settlement Scheme** was 30 June 2021. The EUSS has made provision for **late applications** to be made by EU, EEA and Swiss citizens and their family who can show they have reasonable grounds for missing the deadline. You may also be able to apply to the EUSS at any point in the future if you are **joining a close EU, EEA and Swiss family member** who has successfully applied to the EUSS.

Student visa

If you are aged 16 or over, you may be eligible to apply for a **Student visa** to study in the UK at a registered sponsoring institution. The full register of **sponsoring institutions** is online on GOV.UK.

To be eligible to apply for a Student visa, you need to be able to score 70 points. Points are non-tradeable, which means you will need to meet all the requirements.

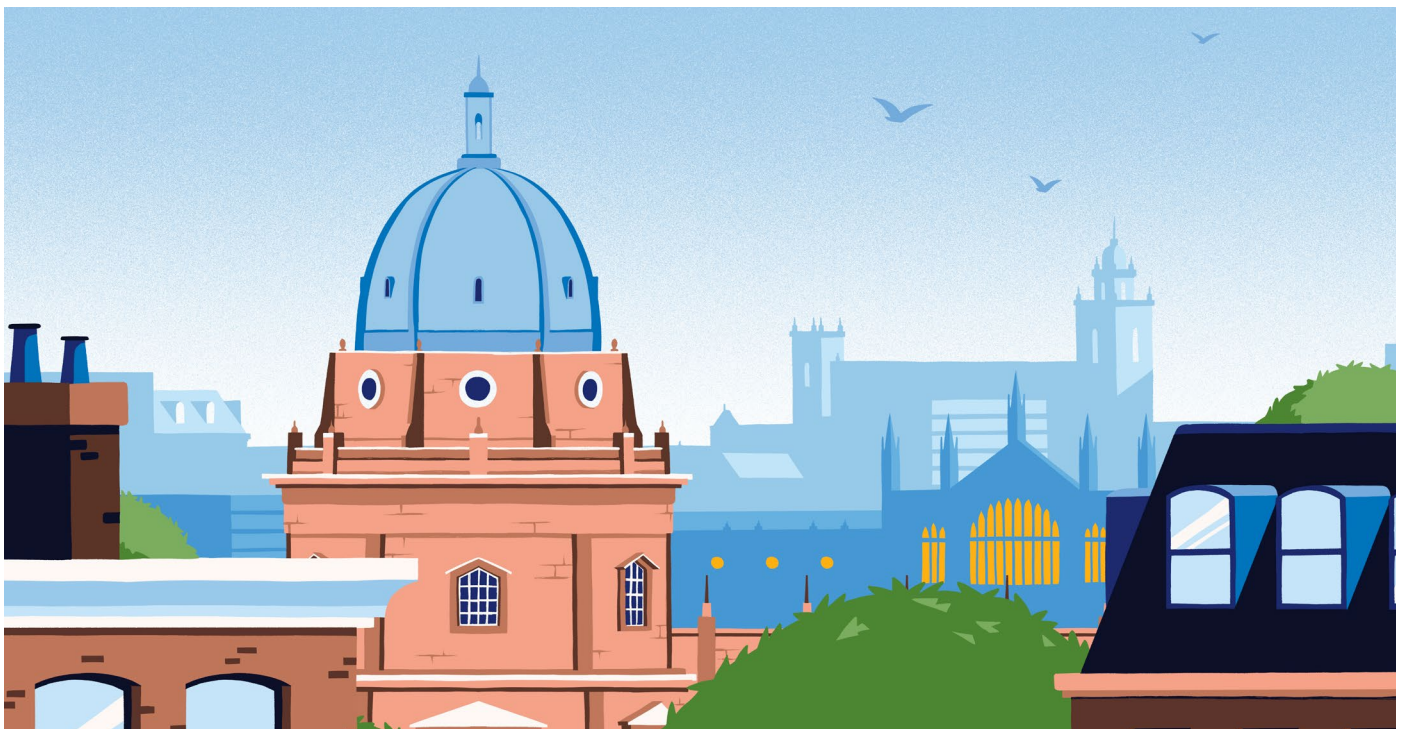


To be eligible for a Student visa, you must demonstrate that:

- you have an unconditional offer from an approved sponsoring institution. When you apply for a Student visa, you will need to provide your reference number from the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS), which is provided by your education provider once they've offered you an unconditional place on a course
- you are taking a course that leads to an approved qualification at an appropriate level of study
- you have any relevant academic qualifications needed to undertake the course
- you genuinely intend to study in the UK
- you can financially support yourself during your studies in the UK
- you can speak, read, write and understand English to the required standard for the level of course you intend to study.

In addition to this, you will need to demonstrate the following if you are under 18:

- proof of parental or other legal guardian(s) consent and their relationship to you
- suitable care arrangements are in place for you in the UK.

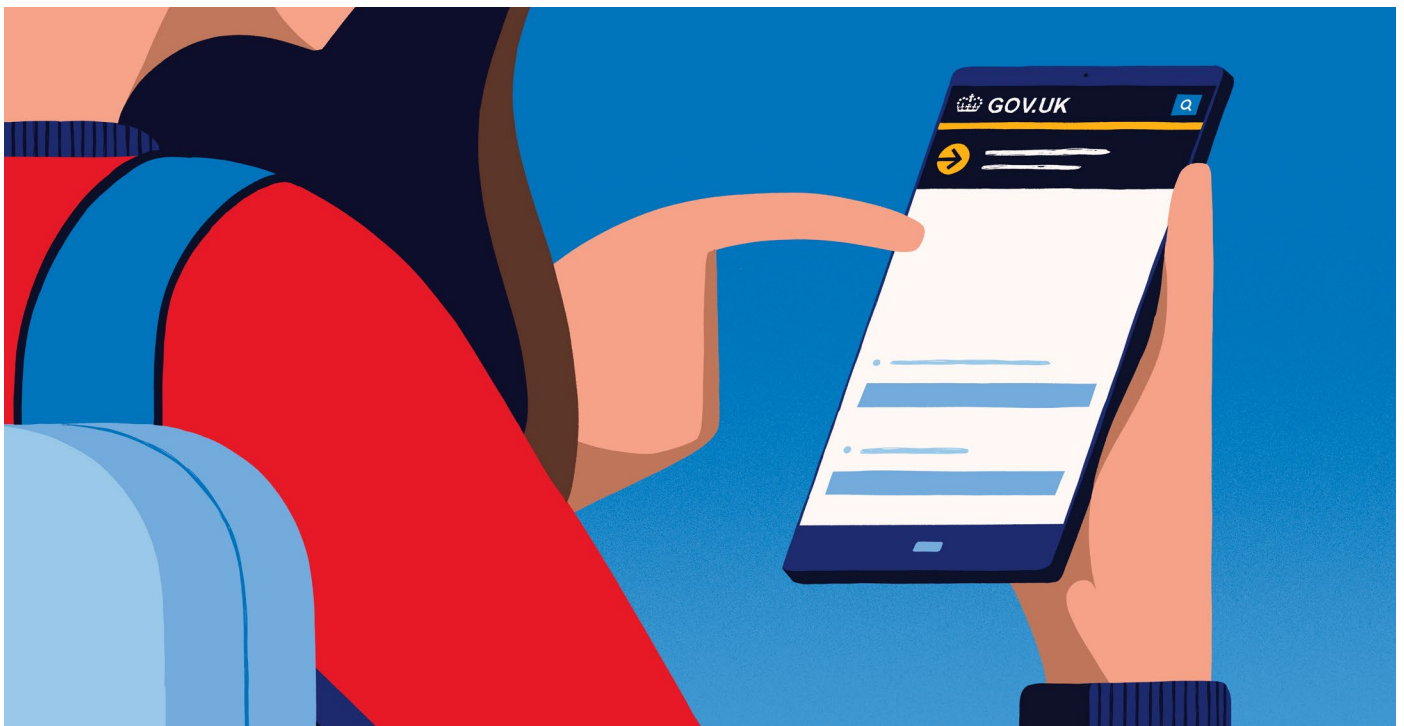


Applying for a Student visa

You can apply for a **Student visa** up to six months before your intended course starts.

For the majority of applicants, the application process will be entirely digital. As part of your application, you will need to verify your identity. Most people will be able to do this using a smartphone, through the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app, as part of the online application. This will enable a smoother journey and will allow you to have a fully online experience. To do this, you will need a **biometric passport and a compatible smartphone**. The app is free and is compatible with Android phones and iPhone 7 or newer models. If you do not own a compatible phone, you can use the app from a family or friend's mobile phone. No information is stored on the phone or app after you close it. During the application process you will create a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account which you will use when accessing your application, or once you receive a decision, to access your immigration status information.

If you do not have a biometric passport or access to a compatible smartphone, or if ID verification through the app is not yet available for the route you are applying through, you will need to attend a **Visa Application Centre**. You should still start your application on **GOV.UK**. If you are directed to attend a Visa Application Centre you will be given further information about this process and what documents you will need to provide upon your visit.



Receiving a decision and demonstrating your rights

If you use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app, you will receive written notification of your immigration status, normally via email, if your application is successful. As you will have a UKVI account, you will have access to the **View and Prove Service** which allows you to view the details of your immigration status (eVisa), along with other services.

Signing into the View and Prove service allows you to:

- View your eVisa and check what rights you have in the UK, for example the right to work
- Prove your status to others, such as employers, landlords, or education providers, by generating a 'share code' which gives them time limited access to relevant data
- Update some of your personal details, for example your passport number or email address.

If you successfully apply through a Visa Application Centre to stay in the UK for longer than 6 months, you will receive a **vignette** in your passport to travel to the UK, and then a **biometric residence permit (BRP)** once you arrive in the UK. You will still be able to use some online services to evidence your **right to work** and **right to rent** rather than having to rely on your physical documents.

You must apply and receive confirmation that your visa application has been successful before you travel to the UK.

The **processing times for applications** vary depending on the visa you are applying for.

A guide about viewing and proving your immigration status (eVisa) is available on GOV.UK

Fees

A Student visa costs £348 if applied for outside of the UK, and you must pay the same amount for any dependants.

You will need to pay the **Immigration Health Surcharge** as part of your application, which gives you access to the UK's National Health Service on generally the same basis as a UK permanent resident. As a student, you will receive a 25% discount on the Immigration Health Surcharge. The discounted Immigration Health Surcharge is £470 per year and the full amount needs to be paid when applying.

If you are coming to the UK as a full-time higher education student and you have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) which has been issued in an EU country, you may be able to **apply for a refund** of your Immigration Health Surcharge fee. To be eligible, your visa must have a start date of 1 January 2021 or later, and you must not be employed or self-employed in the UK.

If you intend to apply for a refund of the Immigration Health Surcharge payment you should use your EU EHIC for medically necessary treatment during your studies. Once you have received your reimbursement, you may have to pay for any NHS healthcare you receive that is not deemed medically necessary. Applications for refunds will open from 1 January 2022.

Dependants

If you are studying at master's level or above on a course lasting nine months or more, or you are a UK Government sponsored student on a course lasting six months or more, you are entitled to bring **dependants** when you apply to study in the UK.

A dependant may include:

- your spouse
- your unmarried partner with whom you have a subsisting relationship
- your child under 18 years old.

A separate application must be made for dependants. The same fees and Immigration Health Surcharge apply.



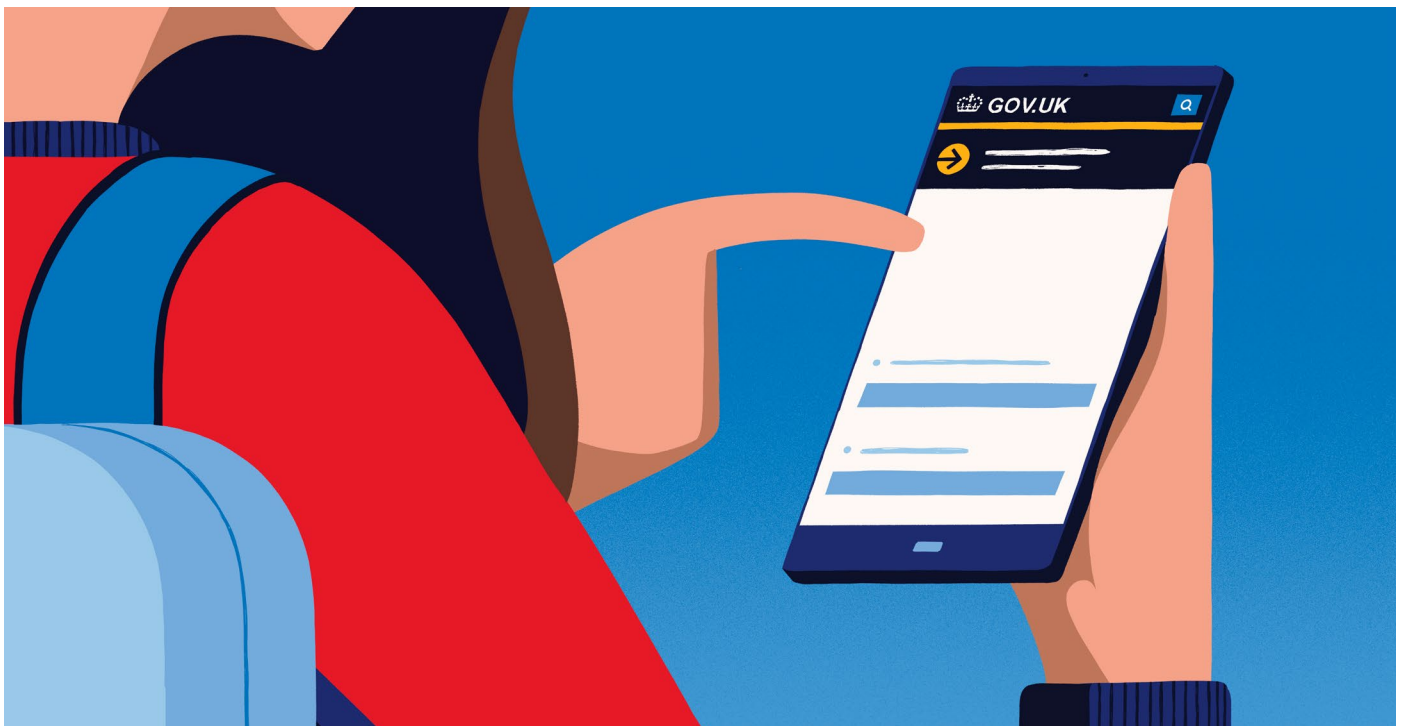
Travelling to the UK

From 1 October 2021, you will not be able to use an ID card to enter the UK. You will need to provide a valid passport.

You can continue to use your national ID card to enter the UK until at least 31 December 2025 if you:

- have settled or pre-settled status under the **EU Settlement Scheme**
- applied to the **EU Settlement Scheme** by 30 June 2021 but have not received a decision yet
- have an **EU Settlement Scheme family permit**
- have a **Frontier Worker** permit
- are an **S2 Healthcare Visitor**
- are a Swiss national **Swiss Service Provider**.

When crossing the UK border, information will be checked digitally on arrival, and those with a UKVI account will not routinely need to prove their status. To prevent unnecessary delays at the border, it is important to ensure the document you travel on is registered to your account, which you can do by updating your details if you intend to travel on a different document (for example a new passport). Further information on **viewing and proving your immigration status** is available on GOV.UK.



Working while studying in the UK

Depending on the level of study and your sponsoring institution, you may be able to take up part time work in the UK alongside your studies.

The table below sets out the number of hours you can work depending on the type of study you wish to undertake.

Type of study	Employment conditions
Student following a full-time course of degree level or above study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sponsored by a higher education provider with a track record of compliance; or • sponsored by an overseas higher education institution to undertake a short-term study abroad programme in the UK 	20 hours per week during term-time (full-time employment permitted outside of term-time)
Student undertaking a full-time course below degree level study sponsored by a higher education provider with a track record of compliance	10 hours per week during term-time (full-time employment permitted outside of term-time)
All other study, including all part-time study	No employment permitted



Graduate route

If you successfully complete a degree at undergraduate level or above in the UK, you may be able to apply to the Graduate route to stay and work, or look for work, for a maximum period of two years (three years for doctoral students) after completing your studies.

From the Graduate route, you will be able to move into different visa routes if you have a suitable job offer from a sponsor and can meet the requirements of the visa.

Apply to the **Graduate route** on **GOV.UK**

Child Student visa

There is a separate visa route for child students. You may be eligible to apply for a **Child Student visa** if you are aged between 4 and 17 years old and can demonstrate:

- proof of parental or other legal guardian(s) consent and their relationship to you
- suitable care arrangements are in place for you in the UK
- you are at least 4 years old and under 18 years old and studying at an independent school
- you genuinely intend to study in the UK, if you are 16 years or older
- you meet academic ability and maintenance requirements
- you have an unconditional offer from an approved sponsoring institution. When you apply for a Child Student visa, you will need to provide your reference number from the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS), which is provided by your education provider once they've offered you an unconditional place on a course.

Find out more about the **points-based immigration system** on **GOV.UK**
