

HOW TO APPLY FOR YOUR U.K. STUDENT VISA

A LIST OF HANDY SUGGESTIONS FROM
THE TEAM AT PRODIGY FINANCE

The purpose of this guide is to provide prospective students with a general overview of the application process for the most prevalent type of visa applied for by the majority of foreign students. Each applicant's personal circumstances and requirements for entering and remaining in the UK will determine which type of visa will be required by that person to enter the UK. This guide is not directed at nor created for the benefit of any particular individual nor any relevant or particular matter and therefore does not constitute legal or immigration advice. This guide is not a substitute for the official information published by UKVI from time to time or any instructions and/or advice provided by UK embassies and consuls. Whilst we have carefully compiled the guide in accordance with the information published by UKVI, Prodigy Finance Limited does not accept liability for any inaccuracies, mistakes, omissions or outdated information in the guide and we encourage prospective students and other readers to consult the UKVI's website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>. Prodigy Finance Limited is not authorised by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) or any other approved professional body to provide immigration advice and will not provide any additional information or assistance to any person to apply for a UK student or other category visa.

U.K. STUDENT VISA APPLICATION TIPS



Applying for a U.K. visa can be a long and detailed process.

It will involve online forms, two separate payments, and even giving your electronic fingerprints. Have no fear – we’re here to make the process as painless as possible.

Grab a tea and get settled in!

Most of our borrowers who study in the UK on full-time programs will apply for a Tier 4 visa. Your school can give more guidance on which types of visas they support and we encourage you to contact the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to confirm which visa is right for your requirements. For the sake of this guide, we have documented the application process for the Tier 4 visa.

#PROTIP: Get yourself one of those plastic folders that hyper-organised people use to keep their documents. You’re going to need to print and keep all of your confirmations and receipts throughout this process.

STEP 1: RECEIVE YOUR CONFIRMATION LETTER

Your university will send over an electronic Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). This usually happens after you’ve formally accepted a place in your course, and you may need to request the CAS letter from your university.

Your letter will have a unique 14-digit number that identifies you in the U.K. visa system.

PRO TIP: It’s important to double-check that all of the information in the CAS matches your passport. If the two don’t match you’ll have to re-start the visa application process with a new letter.

STEP 2: REGISTER ONLINE

If you’ve never applied for a U.K. visa, the first step is to register with the U.K.’s visa service (U.K.VI) via their website. If you’ve previously created an online account with U.K.VI (and you can remember your password!) you can skip this step and simply sign in.

STEP 3: COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORM ONLINE

Once you’re logged in to the website, choose the option for “Apply for Myself”. If you’ve already confirmed that you’ll receive a scholarship from the U.K. government, choose the Tier 4 (U.K. Government Scholarship) option. Otherwise, the Tier 4 (General) application is for you.

PRO TIP: The visa application will ask for the date that you plan to arrive in the U.K.. If you haven’t yet booked your travel, the best bet is to choose 30 days in advance of your course start date.

PRO TIP: The application will ask you to claim points for your visa application. If you’ve received your CAS document and have the funds to cover your tuition, this usually counts for 30 points. If you have the funds to cover your living expenses while you study (called “maintenance” in the U.K.) this usually represents 10 points. The total would therefore be 40 points.

STEP 4: PAY THE HEALTHCARE CHARGE

Once you've finished the application you'll be directed to pay an Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS). This cost is intended to cover any medical care that you'll use from the government's National Health Service while living in the U.K.. It is usually £150 per person, for each year that your visa is valid.

STEP 5: SUBMIT THE VISA APPLICATION

When you click "submit" your IP address needs to show that you are physically:

- In the country where your passport is from, or
- In the country where you live, or
- In a country that has an agreement with yours that you can apply to their British Embassy.

If you're not living in the U.K. already, don't apply from there! It's best to apply from the place where you're a permanent resident.

STEP 6: BOOK YOUR PERMIT COLLECTION

When you've submitted your application, the next step is to click on Biometric Residence Permit Collection. The biometric residence permit (BRP) is a physical ID card that you'll need to carry with you while living in the U.K.. The visa office will send your biometric residence permit to a post office and ask you to collect it within 10 days of arriving in the U.K.. Make it easy for yourself and choose a post office that is near your campus.

STEP 7: SCHEDULE YOUR VISA APPOINTMENT

After you've submitted the visa application you'll be asked to schedule an appointment with the local British embassy or consulate using the online portal. Each embassy does this a bit differently, so it's important that you choose the embassy or consulate that is nearest to your permanent residence so the site can direct you to the correct process.

STEP 8: PAY THE APPLICATION FEE

The site will then prompt you to pay the application fee of £322. This can be done online using a credit card (visa or mastercard) or PayPal.

Time to class start date – 90 days

STEP 9: THE APPOINTMENT

Finally, you've made it to the visa appointment. Be sure to arrive on time. Wait, no. Arrive early. If you're late they might ask you to reschedule to a different day. What to bring with you? All of the documents in our checklist.

CHECKLIST

- THE EMAIL CONFIRMATION OF YOUR APPOINTMENT WITH BARCODE
- A PRINTED COPY OF YOUR CAS LETTER
- YOUR VALID PASSPORT, WITH TWO EMPTY PAGES (BACK AND FRONT)
- TUBERCULOSIS TEST RESULTS (FOR SOME COUNTRIES)
- EVIDENCE THAT YOU HAVE ENOUGH FUNDS TO COVER YOUR STAY IN THE U.K. (Your Loan Confirmation Letter from your Prodigy Finance dashboard should help. Otherwise, proof that you've paid your deposit and 3 months of bank statements to prove your savings.)

WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD YOU EXPECT?

- Tell me about your education and professional career to date?
- Why do you want to study for a Master's?
- Where is your extended family? What are your ties to [your home country]?
- (For non-native speakers) How have you developed your English language skills?
- How are you planning to fund your studies?
- What do you plan to do when you finish studying?

OTHER THINGS TO EXPECT

They'll take digital scans of your fingerprints. The embassy will hold on to your passport, and let you know when and how to expect it back. Usually they'll ask you to fetch it from the consulate or send it to you via courier. This takes about 14 days.

PRO TIP: Don't try to predict what the interviewer might be thinking. Instead, give brief and honest answers. Rather than "tell your whole life story" keep it simple and allow the interviewer to follow up if he or she has other questions.

You'll be great!

Time to class start date – 60 days

STEP 10: TRAVELLING TO THE U.K.

Remember to keep your visa documents in your hand luggage! You might be asked to show them again when you enter the U.K. Here's the master list to carry with you:

- **Valid passport with your newly-minted visa stamp**
- **Your printed CAS letter**
- **Evidence of your funding (e.g. your Prodigy Finance loan confirmation letter)**

Time to class start date – 30 days

STEP 11: COLLECT YOUR BIOMETRIC RESIDENCE PERMIT

Within 10 days of arriving in the U.K. you'll need to drop by the post office to fetch your biometric residence permit. The address is the same as the office that you chose in the original visa application. Remember to hang on to your permit, and bring it with you every time you travel outside of the U.K.. The immigration officers will ask for it each time you return.

Time: Class start date – 20 days