



# Applying for UK immigration permission for your studies at Queen Mary

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## About the Advice and Counselling Service

The Advice and Counselling Service offers a free and confidential service to all Queen Mary students, including those from Barts and The London, Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry.

You can view our confidentiality policy on our website: <http://www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk/procedures/>

## Regulation of our advice

The OISC (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner) is an independent organisation that monitors immigration advice and services.



Welfare Advisers at Queen Mary are regulated under OISC guidelines to give immigration advice. We have to attend regular training to be able to do this.

If you ever need to complain about the immigration advice you receive, the Advice and Counselling Service has a complaints procedure. You can find this on our website at <http://www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk/procedures>

Alternatively, you can complain directly to the OISC. Their complaints form is on the website at <http://www.oisc.gov.uk>

## Disclaimer

Law, regulations and policies can change quickly so make sure that you are using the most up-to-date version of this guidance. Check our website for regular updates.

The information in this guide is given in good faith and has been carefully checked. Queen Mary, however, accepts no legal responsibility for its accuracy.

## How to contact us

In this guide we sometimes advise you to contact a Welfare Adviser for further guidance.

You can see an adviser in person during one of our drop-in sessions or you can submit questions via our web form. For more information on how to contact us, visit <http://www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk/contact/>

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# Do I need immigration permission to study in the UK?

## EEA and Swiss nationals

If you are a national of one of the following countries then you are not subject to UK immigration controls and you do not need immigration permission to study in the UK.

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Republic of Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- The Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- UK

The rest of this guide does not apply to EEA or Swiss nationals.

## Visa Nationals

Nationals or citizens of the following countries or territorial entities are visa nationals:

- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Algeria
- Angola
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Belarus
- Benin
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bosnia Herzegovina
- Burkina Faso
- Burma
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Cape Verde
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- People's Republic of China  
(except those nationals or citizens holding passports)

- issued by Hong Kong or Macao Special Administrative Regions)
- Colombia
  - Comoros
  - Congo
  - Cuba
  - Democratic Republic of the Congo
  - Djibouti
  - Dominican Republic
  - Ecuador
  - Egypt
  - Equatorial Guinea
  - Eritrea
  - Ethiopia
  - Fiji
  - Gabon
  - Gambia
  - Georgia
  - Ghana
  - Guinea
  - Guinea Bissau
  - Guyana
  - Haiti
  - India
  - Indonesia
  - Iran
  - Iraq
  - Ivory Coast
  - Jamaica
  - Jordan
  - Kazakhstan
  - Kenya
  - Korea (North)
  - Kuwait
  - Kyrgyzstan
  - Laos
  - Lebanon
  - Lesotho
  - Liberia
  - Libya
  - Macedonia
  - Madagascar
  - Malawi
  - Mali
  - Mauritania
  - Moldova
  - Mongolia
  - Morocco
  - Mozambique
  - Nepal
  - Niger
  - Nigeria
  - Oman
  - Pakistan
  - Peru
  - Philippines
  - Qatar
  - Russia
  - Rwanda
  - Sao Tome e Principe
  - Saudi Arabia
  - Senegal
  - Sierra Leone
  - Somalia
  - South Africa
  - Sri Lanka
  - Sudan
  - Surinam
  - Swaziland
  - Syria
  - Taiwan (except those nationals who hold a passport that includes the number of the national's identification card issued by the competent authority in Taiwan)
  - Tajikistan
  - Tanzania
  - Thailand
  - Togo
  - Tunisia
  - Turkey
  - Turkmenistan
  - Uganda
  - Ukraine
  - United Arab Emirates
  - Uzbekistan
  - Venezuela (except those nationals that hold a passport that contains biometric information held in an electronic chip)
  - Vietnam
  - Yemen
  - Zambia
  - Zimbabwe
  - The territories formerly comprising the socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

If you hold a passport or travel document issued by the former Soviet Union or by the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, if you are a stateless person or you hold non-national document then you are also considered a visa national.

If you are a visa national, then you must always apply for immigration permission before traveling to the UK.

## Non-visa nationals

If you are a non visa national (you have a passport or travel document issued by an entity not on the list above) then, in certain circumstances, you can come to the UK without applying for immigration permission before you travel.

## Those who already have immigration permission to stay in the UK

If you already have immigration permission to stay in the UK for another purpose, it may be possible for you to study at Queen Mary without applying for new immigration permission. However, you must make sure that you will continue to meet the requirements of your current immigration permission while you are studying and that your immigration permission does not prohibit you from studying at Queen Mary.

Types of immigration permission that would prohibit you from studying at Queen Mary include:

- Any type of visitor visa (except student visitor)
- Any Tier 4 Student immigration permission which you applied for on or after 05 October 2010 to study at another institution (not Queen Mary)

Examples of immigration permission which would allow you to study at Queen Mary:

- Immigration permission as a dependant (husband/wife/partner/child) of someone in the UK
- Immigration permission under Tiers 1, 2 or 5 of the Points Based System

*If you are thinking about studying on your existing immigration permission you should check that you would have enough time to complete your course. Depending on the type of immigration permission that you hold, it may not be possible to apply to extend your immigration permission in the UK if you need more time for your studies.*



**If you are unsure if your current immigration permission allows you to study at Queen Mary, please contact one of our Welfare Advisers for further guidance.**

# Applying for immigration permission before you travel to the UK

If you are a visa national **or** you will need to stay in the UK for more than six months **or** you would like to work while you are in the UK, then you must apply for immigration permission before you travel to the UK.

## **What sort of immigration permission should I apply for?**

There are three types of immigration permission which you can apply for to study a course at Queen Mary:

### **Student Visitor**

Permission as a student visitor is suitable for students who will not need to be in the UK for more than six months at a time and not more than six months in any twelve month period.

This could be a suitable immigration category for you if you are studying at Queen Mary for one semester as part of a study abroad programme and don't intend to work in the UK. It could also be suitable if you are studying a distance learning course and only need to come to the UK occasionally for short periods of time.

### **Prospective Student**

If you intend to undertake studies in the UK but you have not completed all the arrangements for your course of study, you might want to come to the UK as a prospective student.

If you are thinking about applying to come to the UK as a prospective student, you should have a clear idea of the type and purpose of the studies you wish to undertake and you should already have been in touch with educational institutions in the UK. For example, you may already have been provisionally accepted but your final acceptance is dependent on an interview.

A vague intention to study for qualifications or to enter an unspecified university or other institution is not sufficient to apply in this category.

You must show that you plan to start your studies within six months of your arrival in the UK.

You can stay in the UK as a prospective student for up to six months. If you then obtain a firm unconditional offer of a place on a full time course, then you can make an application to extend your immigration permission as a Tier 4 (General) Student.

### **Tier 4 (General) Student**

Most students applying for immigration permission to study at Queen Mary apply for this type of immigration permission as it allows students to stay in the UK for more than six months and to undertake limited work experience during and after a course. It is also possible for students with this type of immigration permission to

apply in the UK for an extension of immigration permission for further studies as a Tier 4 (General) Student and to switch to other categories after studies such as Tier 1 Post Study Work.

Additional requirements for English language courses and Tier 4 (General) Student

If you are coming to Queen Mary to study an English language course which is below B2 level (the International Office can tell you the level of your course) you will only be able to apply for Tier 4 (General) Student immigration permission to undertake this course if you will be sponsored by a government. If you are not going to receive government sponsorship, you may be able to apply in one of the other categories (E.g. Student Visitor or Prospective Student).

### **Where do I apply?**

If you are applying to come to the UK as a Student Visitor or a Prospective Student, then you can make your application to any British visa centre or section. If you are applying to come to the UK as a Tier 4 (General) Student, then you must make your application to a British visa centre or section in the country where you normally live.

You can find the UK Border Agency directory of Visa Application Centres here:

<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/wheretapply/>

### **When should I make my application?**

You should try to apply for immigration as early as possible. It can take British visa centres and sections some time to decide applications, especially during the summer when many students are making applications.

There are limits to how early you can apply for immigration permission:

- Student Visitor & Prospective Student — Most visa centres and sections will allow you to apply up to three months before you are due to travel, but check with the centre or section where you will be applying. You can ask for your visa to be post-dated for up to three months if you do not plan to travel immediately.
- Tier 4 (General) Student — You can apply up to three months before the start date of your course.

You can find out how long it is currently taking the post in your country to consider applications on the following UK Border Agency website: <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/processingtimes>

The information on this website indicates what the situation was one month ago and may not represent the current processing times. For example, from July onwards Visa Application Centres become increasingly busy as students make their applications to start courses in September.

### **How much does it cost?**

All the fees below are quoted in pounds sterling, but are payable in local currency.

- Student Visitor — £68
- Prospective Student — £68 *You will need to pay a further fee of £357 for a postal application or £628 for an in-person application to extend your immigration permission in the UK as a Tier 4 (General) Student*
- Tier 4 General Student — £199

## Which form do I need?

Some visa centres and sections will allow you to make your application online. See <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/wheretosapply/> to find out about the application process. To make your application, you will need to complete the following form(s):

- Student Visitor — VAF1D
- Prospective Student — VAF3A
- Tier 4 (General) Student — VAF9 and Appendix 8

You can find the forms on the following website <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/vafs/>

## Providing your biometric details

For your application to be processed, the UK Border Agency will need to take your biometric details. To do this you will need to visit a Visa Application Centre or Section. The staff at the Visa Application Centre or Section will scan your fingerprints and take a digital photograph of your face. Even if you have submitted your application online, you will still need to attend a Visa Application Centre or Section and your application will not be processed until you have done so.

You can find more information about where you will need to go and the procedure on the UK Border Agency website: <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/wheretosapply/>

## What do I need to show?

When you make your application an Entry Clearance Officer will assess your application to check that you meet the requirements for the visa you apply for. To show that you meet the requirements, you will need to provide:

### Student Visitor

- A valid passport or travel document
- One passport sized colour photograph taken within the last six months.
- If you are not a national of the country in which you are applying, evidence of your permission to be in that country e.g. a residence permit, visa or green card.
- You have been accepted on a course of studies at an institution which is recognised by the UK Border Agency — You could show your offer letter from Queen Mary.
- You have enough money to pay your course fees, accommodation and living expenses while you are in the UK and your return travel — You could show your bank statements, receipts for your course fees, receipts for your accommodation or a letter of invitation from family or friends if you will be staying with them.
- You intend to leave the UK within 6 months — You could show a return ticket home or a letter from your employer or education institution showing that they expect you to return to your work or studies.

You can find more details of the requirements in the UK Border Agency's guidance note Visitors (INF 2): <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/infos/inf2visitors> (See *Special visitors: Student visitors*)



**Example of a visitor visa (If you are coming to the UK as a 'student visitor' it will state under remarks C: VISIT – STUDENT)**



# Applying for immigration permission when you arrive in the UK

If you are a [non-visa national](#), then you can apply for immigration permission as a 'student visitor' from an Immigration Officer when you arrive in the UK.

## What are the advantages?

- It does not cost you anything.
- You do not need to make an immigration application before you travel.
- You do not need to be studying a full time course.

## Are there any disadvantages?

- You can only stay in the UK as a student visitor for a maximum of six months at a time and you should not normally spend more than a total of six months in the UK in any 12 month period.
- You cannot undertake any kind of work (paid or unpaid) while you are in the UK.
- You cannot apply for an extension as a student while you are in the UK.
- If the Immigration Officer decides not to give you permission to enter the UK, you will not be able to stay in the UK while you appeal their decision.

## What are the requirements?

When you arrive in the UK you will need to show the Immigration Officer documents to show that:

- You are over 18 years of age.
- You are a non-visa national.
- You have been accepted on a course of studies at an institution which is recognised by the UK Border Agency — *You could show your offer letter from Queen Mary.*
- You have enough money to pay your course fees, accommodation, living expenses while you are in the UK and your return travel — *You could show your bank statements, receipts for your course fees, receipts for your accommodation and/or a letter of invitation from family or friends if you will be staying with them.*
- You intend to leave the UK within 6 months — *You could show a return ticket home or a letter from your employer or education institution showing that they expect you to return to your work or studies.*

## How do I apply?

When you travel to the UK you can apply for immigration permission from an Immigration Officer when you arrive at the airport, seaport or Eurostar terminal. You may be asked to show evidence that you meet the requirements (see above), so it is a good idea to carry your documents in your hand luggage. Please make sure

that the immigration officer is aware that you are coming to the UK for studies so that you are given appropriate immigration permission.

If the Immigration Officer is happy that you meet the requirements, then he or she will stamp your passport with his or her date stamp and a stamp detailing how long you can stay and the conditions of your stay. The Immigration Officer will annotate their stamps with the letters 'VST' or 'STV' to indicate that you are a 'student visitor' and not a 'general visitor'. It is important that the Immigration Officer makes this annotation as you cannot study in the UK if you have immigration permission as a 'general visitor'.



*Student visitor immigration permission granted by an Immigration Officer*

# Important information about entering the UK via the Republic of Ireland

## The Common Travel Area

The common travel area is made up of the UK, Republic of Ireland, the Isle of Man & the Channel Islands.

## Problems for students entering the UK via the Republic of Ireland

Because there are different immigration rules which apply to those entering the UK from another part of the Common Travel Area, some students may encounter problems. If you are traveling via the Republic of Ireland, you should check to see if you need immigration permission. The immigration rules for the Republic of Ireland are different to those of the UK. See <http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=8605> for more information.

## Students with a UK visa or entry clearance

If you obtained immigration permission to come to the UK before your travel, then you can enter the UK via the Republic of Ireland. There is no passport control between the UK and the Republic of Ireland, so it is unlikely that your passport will be stamped with an entry stamp. Because there may be no record in your passport of the date when you entered the UK, it is important that you keep a record of your travel to the UK (E.g. Your airline or ferry ticket).

## Non-visa nationals without entry clearance

Since there is no immigration control between the Republic of Ireland and the UK, it is unlikely that you will meet an Immigration Officer when you enter the UK. If you do not meet an Immigration Officer, you will not be able to apply for student immigration permission. Instead you will be admitted for 90 days under the Common Travel Area rules. It is important that you keep a record of your travel to the UK (E.g. Your airline or ferry ticket) so that, if needed, you can show when your 90 days of immigration permission began. You can study if you are in the UK under the Common Travel Area rules.



### **Inadvertently entering the UK illegally**

Because there is no immigration control between the Republic of Ireland and the UK, it is possible to enter the UK illegally (without immigration permission). You should not enter the UK from the Republic of Ireland if

- You require a visa for the UK, and you do not have one
- You entered the Republic of Ireland unlawfully from a place outside the Common Travel Area
- You entered the Republic of Ireland from the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man and you did not have immigration permission for those places
- You are subject to directions given by the Secretary of State that your exclusion is conducive to the public good or in the interests of national security.
- You are subject to a deportation order
- You have been refused permission to enter the UK (unless you have subsequently been given permission to enter or remain in the UK)

# What if things go wrong?

## **What should I do if my application has been refused?**

If your application is refused, the visa section or centre will contact you and provide you with a 'refusal notice'. You should note the date when they give you the refusal notice. If you intend to ask for your application to be reviewed you will need to do submit your request within 28 days of the date they gave you the notice.

You can obtain advice from a Welfare Adviser at the Advice and Counselling Service about your refusal. For us to be able to advise you please forward us the following documents:

- Your full refusal notice
- Your completed application forms
- Your financial evidence
- Any other documents you were required to submit with your application
- The details page in your passport

You will also need to provide us with the following details:

- The date you submitted your application
- The date you received your refusal notice
- Your contact details (e-mail is our preferred method of contact)

You can either scan your documents and e-mail them to [welfare@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@qmul.ac.uk) or fax them to us on +44 (0)20 7882 7013. If you are scanning your documents make sure your scans are high enough resolution so that we can read your documents, but not so large that they will be returned by our e-mail servers. We recommend that your scanned pages should be not more than 300KB per page.

Once we have received your documents and details one of our Welfare Advisers will review your documents and will then send you a Client Care Letter which will explain if your refusal is correct or not and what your options are now.

## **What do I do if the Immigration Officer refuses to let me into the UK when I arrive?**

If you are refused entry to the UK when you arrive you should seek immigration advice immediately. You can contact Advice and Counselling on +44 (0)20 7882 8717 during office hours.

If you are arriving at Heathrow airport during Queen Mary's arrivals weekend, there may be Welfare Advisers at the airport. The International Office will have provided you with a contact number which you can use to contact our staff at the airport.

If you have problems at passport control, and are unable to contact one of our Welfare Advisers, contact the Immigration Advisory Service (IAS) for free advice:

- Tel: 0844 974 4000 (daytime, Monday to Friday)
- If it is night-time, leave a message on their emergency answer phone: 020 7967 1299
- Website: [www.iasuk.org](http://www.iasuk.org)