



Home Office

Visit guidance

Version 10.0

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Related content

[Contents](#)

About this guidance

This guidance tells you about applications for visas, permission to enter and permission to stay in the UK for visitors.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email the Visit Policy team.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

Clearance and publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was cleared:

- version **10.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **1 December 2020**

Changes from last version of this guidance

- FBIS policy updates
- Updating reference of leave to permission
- Adding validity section
- Adding section on Irish citizens
- Updating numbering to reflect simplified rules
- Adding section on new UKVI process
- Updating references to suitability to tie in with the new Part 9 rules and guidance that will now apply to the Visitor routes

Related content

[Contents](#)

Quick guide: visit visa

This section is a quick reference guide to the process for making a decision on a visit visa application, made outside the UK. This does not apply in respect of applications for Transit visitor visas (see: Transit guidance) but note that Standard and Marriage/Civil Partnership visitors can transit the UK.

When considering a visit visa application you need to consider:

- if the applicant meets the [validity requirements](#)
- all the mandatory identity checks
- if the applicant falls to be refused under [suitability](#) grounds of [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#) – see Part 9 guidance for more information
- is a [third party providing support](#) - do they have a genuine relationship, is the third party in the [UK in breach of immigration laws](#)
- if there are additional eligibility requirements for their type or purpose of visit, does the applicant meet them, see:
 - [children](#) (Complex if unaccompanied)
 - [Approved Destination Status \(ADS\)](#)
 - [private medical treatment](#) (Complex)
 - [organ donor](#) (Complex)
 - [study \(for up to 6 months\)](#)
 - [academics \(more than 6 months\)](#) (Complex)
 - [work related training](#)
 - [marriage and civil partnership](#) (Complex)
 - [permitted paid engagements \(PPE\)](#) (Complex)
- is the visitor intending to undertake activities for which they are required to provide specific supporting documents, for example:
 - Private medical treatment
 - Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB) Test and Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)
- do you need to make a [referral](#), for example:
 - is there a mandatory referral requirement (Complex)
 - if the applicant fails to meet the Visitor Rules, but there are genuinely exceptional or compelling circumstances to consider leave outside the Rules
- what [duration of visa to grant](#), for example:
 - is there a specific duration of grant (ADS, private medical, academic, PPE)
 - have they applied for a [multiple entry long term visit visa](#)
 - is there reason to grant a [short duration](#) or [single entry visa](#)
- Having considered the above do you assess that the applicant is a [genuine visitor](#)– that is, are you satisfied that they:
 - intend only to undertake [permitted activities](#) and to [leave](#) at the end of their stay
 - will [not be living in the UK or making the UK their home through frequent and successive visits](#)
 - will not be doing any [prohibited activities](#)
 - have sufficient [funds, maintenance and accommodation](#) for duration of stay
- Have you completed all the relevant [recording requirements](#)?

Visa decision making: complex and non-complex cases

The Visas & Citizenship Directorate workflow process guidance (Horizon link) sets out in detail the arrangements which all Visas and Citizenship Decision Making Centres (DMCs) must follow from 1 December 2020. This process is to be used when routing and assessing applications from those customers who are applying from overseas as a visitor (other than an Academic visit or Transit visit) under the relevant Immigration Rules. The process guidance should be read in conjunction with this guidance about the visit route.

Applications will be allocated to decision makers based on complexity, which is determined by a number of factors. Complexity is initially determined by the application type (for example, all applications to visit as an organ donor are streamed as complex due to the additional requirements of the rules which require a more detailed assessment), checks against sources of information and reference to a series of person-centric (applicant specific) attributes. Where the attributes are met it would, amongst other factors, ordinarily enable a decision-maker to assess whether an application might meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules more quickly.

In addition to the above, you must also identify as complex any application where:

- no additional evidence other than the application form is presented with the application
- you are unable to assess the application in full because, while some evidence has been submitted to enable a consideration to take place, some information is missing
- the application includes evidence which, following consideration, indicates irregularities, and you consider that further analysis or checks are required to confirm the veracity of the evidence
- a previous application has been refused on suitability grounds (Part 9)
- you have any other doubts about the evidence presented
- you have any concerns about modern slavery
- you have any other reason for thinking that the requirements of the rules might not be met

You must also consider the application against the Decision Makers Checks Table which is at Annex A of the workflow process guidance (Horizon link) and where an attribute on that framework is met, agree with a senior caseworker whether enrichment is required and treat the application as complex accordingly.

You should then follow the [Quick Guide: Visit Visa](#). The positive attributes and the absence of any negative indicators should mean relevant factors are more readily apparent enabling you to assess a non-complex application rapidly.

Visa endorsement codes

For further information on visa endorsement codes see: [Visit: endorsements and LTE/ LTR codes](#).

People who are British citizens or who have right of abode

A person who is a British citizen, or who has right of abode in the UK cannot be given permission to enter or stay under the Immigration Rules. This is because under [section 1\(1\) of the Immigration Act 1971](#) a person with right of abode is not subject to immigration control.

If a person who has right of abode applies for a visit visa and you are satisfied that they have right of abode, you should advise them that their application cannot be considered, the application will be withdrawn, and they may want to apply for a certificate of entitlement to right of abode or a British passport instead. The application fee will not be refunded.

If you believe the person may have right of abode in the UK, but they have applied for a certificate of entitlement to right of abode or a British passport and have been refused on the basis that they have not established their entitlement, you can issue a visit visa provided the applicant meets the Immigration Rules. Where you are not satisfied that they meet the Visitor Rules, they can be refused a visa in line with the Rules (for example, that they are not a genuine visitor).

Irish citizens

The Common Travel Area (CTA) is a long-standing arrangement between the UK, the Crown Dependencies (Bailiwick of Jersey, Bailiwick of Guernsey and the Isle of Man) and Ireland.

Under the CTA, British and Irish citizens can move freely and reside in either jurisdiction. British and Irish citizens enjoy associated reciprocal rights and privileges, including the right to work, study and vote in certain elections, as well as to access social welfare benefits and health services.

Once free movement ends on 1 January 2021, Irish citizens' status will continue to be protected. This will be provided for under section 3ZA of the Immigration Act 1971, which means that they will not require permission to enter or stay in the UK for any reason, including to visit, except for in a limited number of circumstances outlined below.

As a result, Irish citizens will not be eligible to apply for a visit visa or permission (leave) to enter or stay under the Visitor Rules once free movement ends and their new status comes into force. This is set out in Paragraph 5C of the Immigration Rules. You must therefore void any application for a visitor visa from an Irish citizen when made at or after 11pm GMT on 31 December 2020, except where they are subject to any of the following:

- a deportation order made under section 5(1) of the Immigration Act 1971
- an exclusion decision, or an exclusion order made under regulation 23(5) of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016
- a travel ban implemented under section 8B of the Immigration Act 1971

In the event that an Irish citizen falls within one of the above categories, section 3ZA of the Immigration Act 1971 states that they require permission to enter or stay. You should therefore consider their application in line with the relevant Immigration Rules in the same way as any other applicant, noting that Part 9: grounds for refusal may apply.

Where an Irish citizen chooses to apply before 11pm on 31 December 2020, you should contact the applicant to explain that if they intend to arrive in the UK before 11pm on 31 December they can enter the UK exercising their free movement rights and do not need permission and their application for a visit visa will not take effect until after 1 January 2021 but from 1 January they will have rights under section 3ZA and will not require permission. They may therefore want to withdraw their application. Please contact the CTA Policy Team for further information before you do so. If despite this they wish to proceed, then you must consider their application for a visit visa in the same way as any other applicant, except that it cannot be granted for entry before January 2021.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[ECB22: extant leave](#)

[ECB05: where to apply](#)

Quick guide: visitors at the border

This section is a quick reference guide to the process for making a decision on a visitor seeking entry at the UK border. Please see separate Transit guidance on visitors transiting the UK, but note that standard and marriage and civil partnership visitors can transit the UK. Please see separate guidance on the Common Travel Area for visitors arriving in the UK via Ireland.

When considering a visitor application at the border, you need to consider:

- all the mandatory checks at the border
- if the applicant has a visa or existing permission to enter or stay, [do they meet any of the grounds for cancellation](#) under Part 9: grounds for refusal
- if the applicant is a child with a visa endorsed as [accompanied are they with the specified adult or adults](#)
- if the applicant does not have a visa or existing permission to enter or stay, do they need a visit visa in advance, are they:
 - a visa national not on the exceptions list (if they have an Electronic Visa Waiver (EVW) is it valid)
 - an academic, academic dependant, visitor for private medical treatment coming for more than 6 months
 - a visitor for marriage or civil partnership, unless they are [changing an existing civil partnership to a marriage](#)
- if the applicant is a non-visa national, are they a [genuine visitor](#), that is:
 - do they intend only to undertake [permitted activities](#) and [leave](#) at the end of their stay
 - are you satisfied they will [not be living in the UK or making the UK their home through frequent and successive visits](#)
 - will they be doing any [prohibited activities](#)
 - do they have sufficient [funds, maintenance and accommodation](#) for the duration of their stay
 - is a [third party providing support](#) - do they have a genuine relationship - is the third party in the UK [in breach of immigration laws](#)
- are there additional eligibility requirements for the route or purpose of visit, see:
 - [children](#)
 - [private medical treatment](#)
 - [organ donor](#)
 - [study \(for up to 6 months\)](#)
 - [work related training](#)
 - [marriage and civil partnership](#)
 - [permitted paid engagements \(PPE\)](#)
- is the visitor intending to undertake activities for which they are required to provide specific supporting documents, for example:
 - private medical treatment
 - Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB) Test and Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)
- have you completed all the relevant [recording requirements](#) – noting the process for [EEA, Swiss and B5JSSK nationals](#)

Permission to enter endorsement codes

For further information on leave to enter endorsement codes see: [Visit: endorsements and LTE/ LTR codes](#).

Irish citizens

As set out [above](#), Irish citizens will not be eligible to apply for permission (leave) to enter or stay under the Visitor Rules once free movement ends, except where they are subject to any of the following:

- a deportation order made under section 5(1) of the Immigration Act 1971
- an exclusion decision, or an exclusion order made under regulation 23(5) of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016
- a travel ban implemented under section 8B of the Immigration Act 1971

If an Irish citizen applies for permission under the Visitor Rules at the border from 11pm on 31 December, they cannot be granted that permission unless they fall under one of the above exceptions, but instead will be allowed to enter on the basis of proof of their status as an Irish Citizen. If they fall under one of the above exceptions, then they require permission and should be considered in the same way as any other passenger, noting that Part 9: grounds for refusal may apply. Until 11pm on 31 December 2020, Irish citizens should continue to be treated as other EEA citizens and considered under EEA regulations.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Quick guide: permission to stay as a visitor

This section is a quick reference guide to the process for making a decision on an application to extend stay in the UK as a visitor.

When assessing an application you should consider:

- if the applicant meets the [validity requirements](#)
- all the mandatory identity checks
- can the applicant extend – paragraph V 15.1 – V 15.5 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#)
- is the applicant here [in breach of immigration laws](#)
- the suitability requirements under Part 9: grounds for refusal
- is the applicant a [genuine visitor](#), and:
 - do they intend to undertake only [permitted activities](#) and [leave](#) at the end of their stay
 - are you satisfied they will [not be living in the UK or making the UK their home through frequent and successive visits](#)
 - will they be doing any [prohibited activities](#)
 - do they have sufficient [funds, maintenance and accommodation](#) for the duration of their stay
 - is a [third party providing support](#) - do they have a genuine relationship - is the third party in the UK [in breach of immigration laws](#)
- does the applicant meet the additional eligibility requirements for their permission to stay:
 - for private medical treatment
 - as an academic
 - as a visitor doing a PLAB test and clinical attachments
- have you completed all the relevant [recording requirements](#)

Permission to stay endorsement codes

For further information on permission to stay endorsement codes see: [Visit: endorsements and LTE/ LTR codes](#).

Irish citizens

As set out [above](#), Irish citizens will not be eligible to apply for permission (leave) to enter or stay under the Visitor Rules once free movement ends, except where they are subject to any of the following:

- a deportation order made under section 5(1) of the Immigration Act 1971
- an exclusion decision, or an exclusion order made under regulation 23(5) of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016
- a travel ban implemented under section 8B of the Immigration Act 1971

In the event that an Irish citizen falls within one of the above exceptions, 3ZA of the Immigration Act 1971 states that they require permission to enter or stay. They may therefore have been granted permission as a visitor and may therefore be eligible to make an extension application under the Visitor Rules in country. You should consider their application in line with the relevant Immigration Rules in the same way as any other applicant.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[FLR\(IR\) for extensions](#)

Visit: validity requirements for applications for visit visas and permission to stay as a visitor

This section tells caseworkers how to consider whether the validity requirements are met for applications for a visit visa (entry clearance) or permission to stay as a Visitor.

See: paragraphs V 2.1 to V 2.6 of [Appendix V: Visitor of the Immigration Rules](#)

The validity requirements do not apply to those seeking permission to enter at the border.

Before considering any application, you must check that the application is valid by referring to the validity requirements for the Visitor route: the applicant must have applied on the specified form; paid any fees required; provided any required biometrics; provided a valid passport or other identity document.

An application for a visit visa must also be made while the applicant is outside the UK and to a post designated to accept visit visa applications.

An applicant for permission to stay must also be in the UK and have permission as a Standard visitor or Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor.

For guidance on how to consider the validity requirements see Valid applications guidance.

Visit: evidence

This section gives information on how to make a decision on a visitor application.

Contents:

[Burden of proof and evidence](#)

[Supporting documents](#)

[Refusals](#)

[Refusal wording](#)

Standard and burden of proof and evidence

When assessing whether the applicant meets the requirements of the Rules for a visitor the burden of proof is on the applicant to show they meet the validity and eligibility requirements, but when considering suitability the burden of proof may shift to the Home Office.

The standard of proof you must apply is the balance of probabilities (which means it is more likely than not).

You must assess the applicant's credibility and intentions to visit the UK or to extend their stay as a visitor and decide whether they meet the requirements in the Visitor Rules. You must be satisfied that the applicant is a genuine visitor.

Visitors can undertake multiple permitted activities whilst they are in the UK, but the applicant should be able to explain what their main reason for coming to the UK is at the visa application stage, on entry and when applying to extend their stay.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they provide sufficient evidence to satisfy you that they meet the Visitor Rules.

You must assess all the information provided by the applicant (unless it is a document that should not be sent with the application – see [supporting documents](#)) and any other evidence that may be relevant to the case. This should include any locally held information, but see guidance on suitability (Part 9) for when that information needs to be put to the applicant before a decision is made. Make an assessment considering all factors relevant to the application. See also guidance on [visit: genuineness and credibility](#).

Supporting documents

For more information on supporting documents see the [customer guidance on supporting documents](#) for visits.

Mandatory documents

The Visitor Rules require specific mandatory evidence from certain types of visitors and for certain activities. The [supporting documents guidance](#) sets out the additional evidence required for the different types of visits.

Other documents

You must be satisfied that the applicant is a genuine visitor. Look at their personal circumstances, their stated purpose of visit, their travel history and record of compliance and whether they have adequate funds to cover the costs of their trip or, if they are applying to extend their stay, of the additional time they are seeking to stay in the UK as a visitor. Supporting documents should back up statements made on the application form.

The [supporting documents guidance for applicants](#) includes:

- a list of documents that applicants might want to send in to support the statements on their application form:
 - these are not mandatory - if an applicant does not send one of the recommended documents this failure is not of itself a ground for refusal
- a list of documents we ask applicants **not** to send in. If:
 - an applicant does submit a document on that list you should not consider it
 - you exceptionally want to see one of the documents on the list or some other document, you should contact the applicant to request it

For visa applications, locally held information will help determine what types of supporting evidence is available in different countries.

You must not ask for or accept a written guarantee or undertaking from the applicant concerning the length of their stay.

At the border, whether you ask for supporting evidence will depend on the questions you ask and the answers the applicant gives.

For applications for permission to stay, the applicant will be asked to provide supporting evidence based on the information given in the application form. If you require additional evidence you should contact the applicant to ask for it.

If you have concerns about the genuineness of a document, you should try to verify it at source; see guidance on document verification.

Refusals

You should refuse if the applicant has not provided sufficient evidence to satisfy you, on the balance of probabilities, that they meet the requirements of the Visitor Rules. See also the [guidance on burden of proof and evidence](#) and [genuineness and credibility](#) and guidance on Part 9: ground for refusal.

The reasons for refusal must be factual, clear, and relevant to the application. On whatever ground you are refusing or cancelling entry clearance or permission to

enter/stay, you must have evidence to support the reasons why you are not satisfied that the applicant meets the requirements.

Refusal wording

For visa applications, you should use the following refusal templates:

- Visit_NRA_refusal_letter_template_v1.0 (Horizon link) for all visit visa refusals that do not have a right of appeal
- Visit_ROA_refusal_letter_template_v1.0 (Horizon link) for all visit visa refusals that attract a right of appeal on [human rights grounds](#).

For further information about refusal notices for visit visa applications, including relevant refusal paragraphs, see Visit: refusal notice guidance (Horizon link).

For refusals at the border or refusals of extensions of stay you should use the template and paragraphs on Atlas or DocGen, refusing in line with the Visitor Rules at [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

For suitability refusals under Part 9: grounds for refusal, see Part 9 guidance.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Visit: genuineness and credibility

This section gives information on what being a genuine visitor means.

Contents:

[Assessing an applicant's genuine intentions to visit](#)

[Assessing an applicant's personal circumstances](#)

[Travel/ immigration history](#)

[Frequent or successive visits: how to assess if an applicant is making the UK their main home or place of work](#)

[Grounds for doubting the applicant's intentions to visit the UK](#)

[Credibility and intentions: borderline decisions](#)

Assessing an applicant's genuine intentions to visit

See: paragraph V 4.2 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

You must be satisfied that the applicant meets all the requirements of V 4.2 to V 4.6 of the Visitor Rules and is a genuine visitor. If you are not satisfied, you must refuse their application. A visitor can enter, or extend their stay, to do different permitted activities but they should be expected to have a main reason or reasons for visiting, for example for business or a holiday, and be able to provide details. However, particularly where a visitor holds a long-term, multiple entry visit visa valid for 2, 5 or 10 years, it is likely that their reason for visiting will differ over time. This is permissible, provided they continue to intend to undertake one or more of the permitted visitor activities.

See also [burden of proof and evidence](#).

Assessing an applicant's personal circumstances

See: paragraph V 4.2 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

The following factors will help you assess if an applicant is a genuine visitor:

- their previous immigration history, including visits to the UK and other countries
- the duration of previous visits and whether this was significantly longer than they originally stated on their visa application or on arrival - if this is the case, you should not automatically presume that the visitor is not genuine, but this may be a reason to question the applicant's overall intentions
- their financial circumstances as well as their family, social and economic background
- their personal and economic ties to their country of residence
- the cumulative period of time the applicant has visited the UK and their pattern of travel over the last 12-month period, and whether this amounts to 'de-facto' residence in the UK

- whether, on the balance of probabilities, the information and the reasons for the visit or for extending their stay provided by the applicant are credible and correspond to their personal, family, social and economic background

Travel/ immigration history

You must consider the applicant's travel history in their passport or travel document (and, for visa applications, that listed on the application form). A pattern of travel that shows the applicant has previously complied with UK immigration law may indicate the applicant is likely to be a genuine visitor. As might travel to other countries, especially the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Schengen countries or Switzerland.

If an applicant has previously failed to comply with another country's immigration law, for example if they have been removed from another country, or if they have been refused entry to another country, this may suggest that an applicant is not likely to be a genuine visitor (depending on the circumstances).

Travel history should not be the only consideration in deciding whether you are satisfied an applicant is a genuine visitor. In particular, there may have been a change in circumstances since previous travel. You should consider all relevant information for each application including any social and economic factors and any locally held information.

Where the applicant is a first-time traveller, you will need to rely on other evidence to satisfy you they have are a genuine visitor.

Frequent or successive visits: how to assess if an applicant is making the UK their main home or place of work or study

See: paragraph V 4.2(b) of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

You should check the visitor's travel history, including how long they are spending in the UK and how frequently they are returning. You must assess if they are, in effect, living in the UK through frequent or successive visitors or making the UK their main home.

You should look at:

- the purpose of the visit and intended length of stay stated
- the number of visits made over the past 12 months, including the length of stay on each occasion, the time elapsed since the last visit, and if this amounts to the individual spending more time in the UK than in their home country
- the purpose of return trips to the applicant's home country or trips out of the CTA and if these are used only to seek re-entry to the UK

- the links they have with their home country or ordinary country of residence - consider especially any long-term commitments and where the applicant is registered for tax purposes
- evidence the UK is their main place of residence, for example:
 - if they have registered with a general practitioner (GP)
 - if they send their children to UK schools
- the history of previous applications, for example if the visitor has previously been refused under the Family Rules and subsequently wants to enter as a visitor you must assess if they are using the visitor route to avoid the Rules in place for family migrants joining British or settled persons in the UK

There is no specified maximum period, which an individual can spend in the UK in any period such as '6 months in 12 months' (as long as each visit does not exceed the maximum period for that visit, normally 6 months). However, if it is clear from an applicant's travel history that they are seeking to remain in the UK for extended periods or making the UK their home you should refuse their application.

Reasons for doubting whether the applicant is a genuine visitor

See: paragraph V 4.2 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

This is not an exhaustive list but may help with your assessment. If:

- the applicant has few or no family and economic ties to their country of residence, and has several family members in the UK - for example a person with most of their family in the UK and no job or study in their own country may be considered to have few ties to their home country
- the applicant, their sponsor (if they are visiting a friend or relative) or other immediate family member has, or has attempted to, deceive the Home Office in a previous application for entry clearance, permission to enter or stay
- there are discrepancies between the statements made by the applicant and the statements made by the sponsor, particularly on points where the sponsor could reasonably be expected to know the facts but does not
- it has not been possible to verify information provided by the applicant despite attempts to do so
- the information that has been provided or the reasons for the visit stated by the applicant are not credible
- a search of the applicant's baggage and vehicle at the border reveals items which demonstrate they intend to work or live in the UK

Credibility and intentions: borderline decisions

See: paragraphs V 4.2 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

For visa applications, if you are satisfied that the applicant meets all the Visitor Rules you should grant the visa, but if some aspects remain of concern, you should consider whether to grant a [short duration visa](#).

At the border, you must use code 3 if the applicant meets all the Visitor Rules, but some aspects remain of concern.

See [Recording requirements for UKVI and Border Force: Credibility and intentions – borderline decisions](#) for information you must record where you have residual doubts.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Visit: maintenance and accommodation and sponsorship

This section gives information on maintenance and accommodation requirements and sponsorship which applies to all visitors except transit.

Contents:

[Maintenance and accommodation](#)

[Maintenance and accommodation provided by a third party](#)

[Sponsor undertakings on maintenance and accommodation](#)

[Other third party support \(non financial\)](#)

Maintenance and accommodation

See: paragraphs V 4.2(e) and V 4.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Check the applicant has access to sufficient resources to maintain and accommodate themselves adequately for the whole of their planned visit to the UK or for the period of any application for permission to stay.

There is no set level of funds required for an applicant to show this.

At the border you may want to ask where the applicant will be staying and ask for evidence that they have access to funds to cover the costs they are likely to incur during their visit.

For visa and permission to stay applications you should look at the application form and any financial supporting documents to assess this requirement. You should consider the likely cost of their stay and assess any sources of revenue that will continue to be available to the applicant whilst they are visiting the UK.

You must also take into account any ongoing financial commitments the applicant has in their country of residence such as rent/ mortgage payments and any dependants who they support financially, including those who are not travelling with them.

Their income or savings, minus their financial commitments, must be sufficient to meet the likely costs they will incur in the UK and be reasonable expenditure in light of their financial situation.

Where an individual provides documents which show sufficient funds for their planned stay, but either all or the majority of these funds have not been held in their account for long, you may want to make further checks to establish the origin of this money.

Any funds relied upon by the applicant to demonstrate that they have sufficient funds must be held in a financial institution permitted under Appendix Finance. See Financial requirements guidance for further information.

If the money is from a third party you must check whether the Rules on [maintenance and accommodation provided by a third party](#) are met. If not, you should refuse. If the applicant has not declared the third-party support, for example on the application form, and they are unable to show that the funds are genuinely theirs, they cannot be counted in any assessment.

Where a child is applying to come to the UK as a visitor or seeking to extend their stay, they are not expected to have funds in their own name, instead they may meet the requirement by showing they have access to funds from their parents or a third party.

At the border, if an unaccompanied child is travelling to the UK, you may want to ask for evidence about how their visit is to be funded.

Maintenance and accommodation provided by a third party

See: paragraph V 4.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Maintenance and accommodation support can be provided by a third party, including family members, friends and other people with whom the applicant has a genuine personal or professional relationship. If the third party is in the UK, they must not be in breach of immigration law at the time of the decision on the visitor's application, or their entry to the UK. Where that is not the case, the support must be disregarded.

To assess whether the relationship with the third party is genuine and whether the third party intends to provide support consider:

- the third party's previous history of 'sponsoring' visitors - for example, previous failures to support visitors may call into question their intention and ability to do so for this application
- the relationship between the applicant and the third party

For visa applications, you may want to check with the applicant or third party:

- where and how they met
- how often and by what method they communicate

If the third party is an individual such as a friend or family member providing financial support for the applicant, they must satisfy you that they have enough funds available to adequately support themselves and anyone normally dependent on them, as well as the applicant.

Where you believe it is more likely that not that the third party will be unable to provide this support, you may refuse the application.

Other third party support (non-financial)

Only third parties providing maintenance and accommodation are mentioned in the Visitor Rules. Sometimes third parties such as MPs may seek to provide undertakings in support of a visit application. These cannot be considered as a guarantee that the visitor will comply with the terms of their permission. You should not actively seek out such an undertaking or accept an offer to provide one.

Where a third-party undertaking in support is provided with an application, you may consider it as a factor relevant to establishing the applicant's credibility and intentions, but it should not be accepted as evidence of maintenance and accommodation.

See '[Recording requirements for UKVI: MP letter in support of an application](#)' on what to do when an MP writes to a visa application centre in support of an application.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Visit: prohibited and permitted activities for visitors

This section gives information on visitors coming to the UK for tourism, visits to friends and family, business, work related reasons, for private medical treatment or to transit the UK on route to another country.

Contents:

[Tourism and volunteering](#)

[Assessing whether work or employment is prohibited for a visitor](#)

[Permitted activities for visitors: business and other work-related activities](#)

[Payment for visitors](#)

[Study for visitors](#)

[Medical treatment for visitors](#)

[Transiting the UK as a 'standard' or 'marriage/civil partnership' visitor](#)

Tourism, leisure and volunteering

Permitted activities

See: paragraphs PA 1, PA 2 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#) and paragraph V 6.1 (for ADS) of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

For visa applications, visitors are not required to provide an itinerary, but you should normally expect the applicant to have some plans for their stay and provide information about this on the application form.

At the border, you should expect the applicant to be able to answer questions on what they plan to do in the UK.

Educational exchange visits

See: paragraph V 4.4 (b) of [Appendix V: Visitor](#) and paragraph PA 2 (b) of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#)

You must check that the students are in full time education in their home country and that any teachers or other adults accompanying the group are employed overseas.

Exchanges and educational visits may be with a state funded school or academy or an independent school and should be mainly about broadening horizons and deepening intercultural understanding. These visits do not have a specified time limit, but you should look at the nature of the visit, and if it is for longer than 30 days make sure it does not amount to a course of study, as study is not permitted at state funded schools, academies or independent schools. The precise nature of the visit is for the school to decide. You may wish to see evidence of a programme of cultural visits or other activities to satisfy you that the programme is a short exchange.

For visits by those under the age of 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability) which are longer than 28 days, see guidance on [private foster care](#).

Recreational study

See: paragraph PA 2 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#)

Recreational study can be undertaken for up to 30 days. A recreational course is a course undertaken purely for leisure purposes that does not lead to a formal qualification, for example, a leisure course in pottery or horse riding. Any bona fide institution in the UK, that is not a state funded school or academy, can offer recreational courses. Courses that lead to formal qualifications are not considered recreational. Qualifications for this purpose do not include attendance certificates. Courses that do lead to a formal qualification, should be undertaken at an accredited institution as per the requirements of PA 17.1 of Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities.

Volunteering

See: paragraph PA 3 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#)

Appendix V: Permitted Activities allows visitors to undertake volunteering provided it is for a registered charity and will be for no longer than 30 days in total. Visitors may not undertake voluntary work, you must be clear on the difference between the two.

Voluntary workers:

- often have a contract with their employer (this means the employer must provide the work and the voluntary worker must attend at particular times and carry out specific tasks)
- are also usually remunerated in kind

Volunteers:

- do not have a contract of employment
- must not take the place of an employee
- must not receive payment in kind but reimbursement for reasonable travel and subsistence expenses is allowed
- support a charity or voluntary or public sector organisation, but must not be undertaking work ancillary to the organisation's charitable purpose including, for example, routine back office administrative roles, retail or other sales roles, fund-raising roles and roles involved in the maintenance of the organisation's offices and other assets

Voluntary work is provided for in the Tier 5 Charity worker route of the points based system.

Assessing whether the applicant intends to do work or employment which is prohibited for a visitor

See: paragraphs V 4.4 to V 4.5 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

For visa applications you should consider whether the information provided about the applicant's purpose of visit / activities to be undertaken would amount to prohibited work under V 4.4 or V 4.5. Permitted activities under Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities must not amount to employment or filling a role even on a temporary basis. Where you consider that the information provided means that this is the case, you must refuse the application and notify the sponsor management team in case the organisation holds a sponsor licence.

See '[Recording requirements for UKVI: employers using visitors to undertake work or fill a role](#)' for information that you must record and details of where to send this information to.

At the border, you will need to ask the applicant to explain what they are coming to do and for how long. Where you are satisfied that the information provided means that the activities amount to prohibited work under V 4.4 or V 4.5, you should refuse entry.

The reasons for refusing a visa, permission to enter or cancelling permission must be clear and supported by evidence. For example:

- refusal on the ground that you are not satisfied that an applicant is a genuine visitor because they will be undertaking an activity that is prohibited for visitors (paragraphs V 4.4 to V 4.6) should be supported by information in the visa application form or from examination of the applicant at the border
- it may be considered that an applicant is intending to directly sell goods or services to the public as opposed to negotiating and signing deals or contracts:
 - the former is a prohibited activity for visitors whereas the latter activity is permitted
 - the information in the visa application form or from questioning the applicant would need to support the assessment of whether or not they intend to undertake a prohibited activity

Where a family member is coming to look after a child in the UK, this is permitted provided it is for a short visit and does not amount to the relative being employed as a child-minder. You must be satisfied that the visit is of a short duration, the relative is a genuine visitor and will not live in the UK for extended periods through frequent or successive visits.

Permitted activities for visitors: business and other work-related activities

See: Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities, Appendix Visitor: Permit Free Festivals and paragraphs V 13.1 – V 13.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#)

Check that the applicant has explained their main reason for coming to the UK and that this is one of the permitted activities. For visa applicants this will be on their application form. At the border you may want to ask.

There is no provision for family members (outside of those covered by the dependant routes, such as partners and children, or as the dependant of a visitor undertaking academic activities for more than 6 months) to stay with individuals for the duration of their visit. However, they can enter to visit providing that they are not making frequent or successive visits to reside in the UK for extended periods.

Business activities will normally be linked to the person's employment overseas and activities for visitors are mostly incidental to their employment. There is no restriction on the visitor keeping in contact with their office/ employer whilst they are in the UK. Some activities require a visitor to do a part of their overseas role from the UK, for example a driver on an international route delivering goods or passengers from abroad to the UK. In all cases the duration of activities must be less than 6 months and prearranged where possible. Where they are not, you should check who will be covering the applicant's role whilst they are in the UK and assess whether the activities in fact amount to work that must be carried out under the work routes.

General business activities

See: paragraph PA 4 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#)

You should assess whether the period of leave requested is credible in view of the activities the applicant is seeking to do, and be satisfied that they are not coming to work or make the UK their main place of work. For visa applications this evidence might be included in a letter from an employer.

A visitor can attend conferences or seminars. Whilst most will be formal speaker-led events usually lasting for a couple of days and focussed on a specific topic or sector, they can also include familiarisation programmes for people coming to learn about UK practices on law or finance for example. However, you must ensure this does not amount to the person undertaking work experience or recreational study for more than 30 days.

There is no restriction on the duration of a conference, but it would be reasonable to expect the activity to last no more than a couple of weeks. Where a conference is longer, you should check that it does not amount to work or a course of study.

Coming to the UK for general discussions to secure funding for a project is permitted under the Visitor Rules. However, from 1 December 2020 it is not possible for visitors undertaking these activities to switch into the Start-up and Innovator routes in line with the wider switching principles of the points-based immigration system.

Remote working

Visitors are permitted to undertake activities relating to their employment overseas remotely whilst they are in the UK, such as responding to emails or answering phone calls. However, you should check that the applicant's main purpose of coming to the UK is to undertake a permitted activity, rather than to specifically work remotely from the UK. Where the applicant indicates that they intend to spend a large proportion of their time in the UK and will be doing some remote working, you should ensure that they are genuinely employed overseas and are not seeking to work in the UK. You must be satisfied that the applicant will not live in the UK for extended periods through [frequent or successive visits](#).

Intra-corporate activities

See: paragraphs PA 5 and PA 6 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#)

Intra-corporate activities should be of a short duration, linked to a specific project and not involve the visitor directly working with or for clients. You must be satisfied that the applicant is not coming to fill a role in the company as an 'intra-company transferee' which must be done under the Intra-Company routes. If that is the case, the application must be refused.

You should check that the applicant will mainly be based at their company's offices in the UK and not at client sites unless it is for meetings.

There are no restrictions on the nature of regulatory audits as long as they are internal to the group of companies (including branch and subsidiary). You may want to check company records online to confirm if the companies are in the same group.

An example of an audit is inspecting the quality of car productions at a manufacturing plant.

Manufacturing and supply of goods

See: paragraph PA 7 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#)

You should expect visitors to stay for less than one month to carry out this activity because they will be in employment overseas. If they request longer, you must look carefully at what they will be doing in the UK and be sure they are not filling a role in the UK company. Activities lasting more than one month would not be an automatic ground for refusal but may lead to questions about their intention to be in the UK for a short visit.

Clients of UK export companies

See: paragraph PA 8 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#)

You should check if there is a contract of service between the two companies for the UK company to provide goods or services to the overseas company. An example would be a UK company contracting defence services to an overseas company (companies must not be part of the same corporate group). Employees of the overseas company can work with the UK company to oversee delivery of the contract. Repeat visits are possible if the duration of the contract is for more than 6 months but there should be a clear end date for the work.

Overseas roles requiring specific activities in the UK

See: paragraph PA 9 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#)

It is possible for certain types of people, who are employed abroad and remain so, to visit the UK to carry out their work. For example, drivers on an international route or interpreters accompanying another visitor. You must check the visitor continues to be employed and paid overseas. Personal assistants and bodyguards who are supporting an overseas business person on their visit must not be providing personal care or doing domestic work for them in the UK – they must use the Overseas Domestic Worker route for this.

Work-related training

See: paragraph PA 10.2 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#)

Training should be in work practices and techniques that are not available in the visitor's home country. It should typically be class-room based or involve familiarisation or observation. Practical training is however allowed provided it does not amount to 'training on the job' or the person filling a role. It is acceptable for a visitor to learn how to use a piece of equipment in the UK, but you must carefully assess how long they intend to do this for and make sure there is no risk that they will be working for that company in the UK.

Where you think the training is available in their home country, you may want to question why the visitor needs to come to the UK.

If the visitor states that they will be being trained for longer than one month, you should consider who will be covering their work overseas and whether their training activities actually amount to taking employment in the UK.

Professional Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB) test and Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)

See: paragraph PA 10.1 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#) and paragraphs V 11.1 to V 11.13 and V 15.4 to V 15.5 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#)

Where a person is undertaking the PLAB test / OSCE this will not usually include any study in the UK. The applicant should provide confirmation of their test from the General Medical Council or Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Where an individual successfully passes the PLAB test and wishes to remain in the UK they can only do so if it is for an unpaid clinical attachment as specified in the Visitor Rules.

Individuals can enter as visitors to sit a test or an exam in the UK, such as those for entry into one of the Royal Colleges.

Science, research and academia

See: paragraph PA 11.1 to PA 11.2 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#), and V 10.1 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#)

You should ensure that researchers and scientists remain paid and employed overseas and are only carrying out activities that are incidental to their job overseas, for example providing advice on an international project, or sharing knowledge on research they are working on overseas. If they want to do research in the UK they should consider applying under the work routes.

Eminent senior doctors or dentists must have been working for a number of years in their profession. They may come to the UK to take part in research, teaching or clinical practice as long as this remains incidental to their employment overseas.

An academic can carry out research for their own purposes such as for a book or for their employment overseas but the research should not be for commercial gain.

Academics who are applying for a 12 month visit visa, or an extension to complete 12 months as an academic carrying out visitor activities, must be highly qualified within their field of expertise and working in that area before entering the UK. This will generally be people with PhDs or higher. If the applicant does not provide evidence of this, you can usually find a biography on the relevant university website.

Academics who want to come to the UK for 6 months or less do not need to meet the additional requirements at [V 10.1 of Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Legal

See: paragraph PA 12.1 to PA 12.2 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#).

Where a person is summoned to the UK to attend a court hearing and there are reasons to doubt their intentions, you should check whether their evidence could be given by video-link by contacting the court. Any person summoned by a UK court would need to provide evidence to confirm why their attendance in person is necessary.

Religion

See: paragraph PA 13 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#).

You should check that the person is not seeking to take up an office, post or appointment in the UK.

Religious workers can undertake pastoral duties which can include one-off engagements such as conducting wedding ceremonies or funerals, provided these are one-off engagements for which they are not receiving payment and they continue to be in employment overseas. If they want to work in the UK they should consider applying under Appendix T5 (Temporary Worker) Religious Work or Appendix T2 Minister of Religion.

Creative

See: paragraphs PA 14.1 to PA 14.3 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#).

An artist can include anyone coming to the UK to undertake an activity that is connected to the arts (literature, performing arts, visual arts, culinary arts). There is no restriction on amateur or professional artists doing permitted activities. Examples include:

- poets
- film crew (including crew for online media content, for example YouTube)
- photographers
- designers
- artists
- musicians
- writers
- conductors

Entertainers can include anyone coming to the UK to undertake an activity that is connected to the performing arts, for example dancers, comedians, members of circus acts, members of film crew or those participating in e-sport competitions.

Personal or technical staff who are attending the same event can accompany the artist, entertainer or musician to the UK, provided they are employed to work for them overseas. Examples include, but are not restricted to:

- choreographers
- stage managers
- make-up artists
- personal bodyguards
- press officers

Sport

See: paragraphs PA 15.1 to PA 15.2 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#).

You must consider whether the individual is being employed as a professional sports person by a team based in the UK. If that is the case, you should refuse and inform the applicant to consider applying under the work routes.

Sportspersons are able to take part in tournaments or events, however if the applicant intends to participate in a professional domestic championship or league, including where one or more of the fixtures/ rounds takes place outside the UK, this is classed as employment (paid or unpaid).

Amateur sportspersons are able to join an amateur team or club to gain experience in a particular sport, provided they are an amateur in that sport. You must consider whether the individual is actually an amateur or not, as well as the amateur status of the team/ club. An individual is not permitted to join an amateur team/ club as a visitor if they are a professional sportsperson or the team/club is not an amateur one and you must refuse the application.

It should be possible to confirm the team's/ club's status on their website or on the website of the sport's governing body. For example, the England and Wales Cricket Board for cricket or on the websites of the leagues, for example the English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish football league websites.

“**Amateur**” means a person who engages in a sport or creative activity solely for personal enjoyment and who is not seeking to derive a living from the activity.

“**Professional Sportsperson**” means a person who is one or more of the following:

- a. currently providing services as a sportsperson, or is playing or coaching in any capacity, at a professional or semi-professional level of sport (whether paid or unpaid); or
- b. currently receiving payment, including payment in kind, for playing or coaching, and that payment covers all, or the majority of, their costs for travelling to, and living in, the UK, or has received such payment within the previous four years; or
- c. currently registered to a professional or semi-professional sports team, or has been so registered within the previous four years (this includes all academy and development team age groups); or
- d. has represented their nation or national team within the previous two years, including all youth and development age groups from under 17s upwards; or
- e. has represented their state or regional team within the previous two years, including all youth and development age groups from under 17s upwards; or
- f. has an established international reputation in their chosen field of sport; or
- g. engages an agent or representative, with the aim of finding opportunities as a sportsperson, and/or developing a current or future career as a sportsperson, or has engaged such an agent in the last 12 months; or
- h. is providing services as a sportsperson or coach, unless they are doing so as an “Amateur” in a charity event; or
- i. is providing services as a sportsperson or coach, unless they are doing so as a Student who is studying a course at a degree level or above at a higher education provider and playing or coaching sport as an “Amateur” or as part of a work placement that is undertaken as an integral and assessed part of their course.

Some examples of those likely to be included in the definition of 'professional sportsperson' are:

- players who have played for professional or semi-professional clubs at junior levels, which may include under 17s and under 19s teams, whether they were paid or not
- coaches of junior teams of professional or semi-professional clubs, whether they were paid or not
- former professional sportspeople who have formally reverted to amateur status according to the rules of their sport
- players who have played representative sport for their state, country or territory, whether they were paid or not
- those who have engaged agents to find opportunities to provide their services as a sportsperson or a coach
- those travelling solely to play or coach sport who have their expenses wholly or largely paid for them

Technical or support staff for sportspeople must be attending the same event as the sportsperson and be employed to work for them overseas. Examples include:

- physiotherapists
- coaches
- dieticians
- bodyguards
- press officers
- polo grooms but only when they are accompanying a polo player and not intending to base themselves in the UK for the sporting season to take up employment in the stables

Sports officials (for example lines people, umpires) do not have to, and in many cases will not, be employed by the sportsperson to work for them overseas. They must be attending the same event as the sportsperson and support their activities during that event.

Visitors being paid in the UK

See: Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities, [Appendix Visitor: Permit Free Festivals](#), paragraphs V 4.6 and V 13.1 – V 13.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Visitors may only receive payment from a UK source in specific circumstances as set out in the visitor rules - this must not equate to a salary. Where this is the case, you must refuse the application.

At the border, you may want to ask whether the applicant will be being paid in the UK for any activities. See guidance on [Permitted paid engagements](#).

Study for visitors

See: paragraphs PA 17.1 to PA 17.3 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#), paragraph V 4.4 (b) and V 9.1 to V 9.2 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

A visitor can come to the UK to:

- study a course at an accredited institution (meaning one or more consecutive or concurrent programmes of study that will be completed within the validity period of the visitor permission)
- complete a period of research
- complete research tuition (for example, to learn about research)
- complete one or more elective courses linked to their overseas study, where they are studying medicine, veterinary medicine and science, or dentistry as their principal course of study equivalent to at least degree level study in the UK
- complete a study-abroad programme in the UK as part of an overseas course, where the programme is less than 6 months in length
- sit an entrance exam
- re-sit an examination or retake a module
- take an oral (viva) examination for part of a PhD qualification at a UK institution

If a visitor is coming to the UK to study, other than up to 30 days recreational study, you must check they have been accepted for a course of study at an [accredited institution](#). The applicant must provide an acceptance letter from the institution or institutions with details of the course.

If a visitor is coming to the UK to complete a short period of research, to learn how to conduct research or to complete an elective or electives, you must check that the applicant meets the requirements. They must:

- be studying a course overseas that is the equivalent of a UK degree level course (UK NARIC provide information about course equivalence)
- the research or elective must form part of, or be relevant to, the course and the applicant must provide confirmation of this from their overseas education provider
- have been accepted by a UK higher education institution, which is funded by one of the following bodies, to do research, be taught about research (research tuition) or to complete an elective or electives at the UK institution:
 - Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland
 - Office for Students
 - Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
 - Scottish Funding Council

The following links show institutions that are a UK higher education institution as described above:

- [Department for the Economy](#)
- [Office for Students](#)
- [Higher Education Funding Council for Wales](#)

- [Scottish Funding Council](#)

Applicants who apply for a visit visa or permission to enter to complete research or research tuition as a visitor must meet all the requirements of paragraphs V 9.2 of Appendix V: Visitor of the Immigration Rules.

A visitor cannot be employed as a sponsored researcher - to do so they must apply either under the work routes.

Visitors who intend to study in the UK must, where required to do so by Appendix ATAS, provide a valid Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance certificate.

Visitors are not allowed to enrol on a course of study that includes a work placement or work experience, with the exception of an elective course of study which meets the requirements set out in paragraph PA 17.3 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#).

Genuine study

As well as the considerations under [Genuineness and credibility](#), decision makers should also consider whether the proposed course of study is credible. The following factors may help you assess whether the study is credible:

- length of time the applicant intends to study in the UK and how this might impact on their personal circumstances in their home country
- why the applicant is intending to undertake this course and how it relates to their personal circumstances in their home country
- whether the course is available elsewhere, including online
- whether the applicant intends to study at an accredited institution
- whether the applicant genuinely intends to study here on a course or courses that will be completed during their stay (except in the case of distance learning)
- whether the applicant has sufficient funds to undertake the course of study

Check to ensure that they are not using frequent or repeat visits to pursue a longer course of study.

Studying at a UK Institution by distance learning

The only situation in which a visitor may study on a course that will not be completed within their 6-month stay is where a student is undertaking distance learning. Applicants will be studying for the majority of their time outside of the UK for a UK qualification by distance learning, but may be required to be in the UK for short periods of time for certain activities, such as induction weeks, intensive face-to-face learning, one-to-one progress checks or to sit exams or assessments.

Due to the types of activities that might require a distance learner to be in the UK, you would not expect them to be in the UK for a long period of time and you should

check to ensure that they are not using frequent or repeat visits to pursue a longer course.

For the avoidance of doubt, a course can be both a distance learning and a part-time course. As long as the above criteria are met, the course will be considered a distance learning course.

Part-time study on a course exceeding 6 months in the UK

A student cannot study a course exceeding 6 months which is designated as part-time using the visitor route. The only exception is studying at a UK institution by distance learning as detailed above and any periods of study making the course length over 6 months will be completed overseas. Such a course will be considered a distance learning course for the purposes of the Visitor Rules, even where 'part-time' is part of the course title.

Students wishing to undertake a part-time course at a UK higher education institution of Regulation Qualifications Framework (RQF) level 7 (Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 11) or higher may do so through the Student route.

Accredited institutions

A visitor who intends to study, other than recreational study of up to 30 days, must be accepted on a course of study provided by an accredited institution.

An accredited institution is one that falls into one of the following categories. It must:

- hold a sponsor licence for the Student route
- hold valid accreditation from:
 - [Accreditation UK](#)
 - [the Accreditation Body for Language Services \(ABLS\)](#)
 - [the British Accreditation Council \(BAC\)](#)
 - [the Accreditation Service for International Colleges \(ASIC\)](#)
- hold a valid and satisfactory full institutional inspection by one of the following bodies:
 - [Estyn](#)
 - [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education](#)
 - [Education Scotland](#)
 - [Office for Students \(OfS\)](#)
 - [the Independent Schools Inspectorate](#)
 - [Ofsted](#)
 - [the Education and Training Inspectorate Northern Ireland](#)

An overseas higher education institution can be accredited if it:

- offers only part of its programmes in the UK
- holds its own national accreditation and offers programmes that are an equivalent level to a UK degree

To check that an overseas higher education institution offers programmes equivalent to UK degrees, you should check the [UK NARIC](#) website.

Long-term visit visa holders

A visitor who holds a long-term, multiple-entry visit visa may wish occasionally to come to the UK to study for up to 6 months. This can include but is not limited to, people who are pursuing a course of study overseas (including a UK course by distance learning) who are required to study in the UK as part of this.

It may be apparent, that the visitor is making repeat visits in order to complete a longer course of study (they may have confirmation of acceptance on such a course). Such study, if it is not a distance learning course, should be carried out under the Student or Child Student route. A visitor must not intend to study in the UK for extended periods through frequent or successive visits, in order to complete a course of study of more than 6 months.

State education: children of visiting academics in UK for 12 months

The requirement that a visitor must not intend to study at a state funded school or academy may be waived for a dependant of a person who has entered the UK for the purpose of accompanying their parent who is a visiting academic who is on sabbatical leave and undertaking research for up to 12 months in the UK.

Admission to state funded schools or academies is not an immigration matter. The Department for Education has policy responsibility for admissions to schools in England. Admissions policy elsewhere in the UK is a matter for the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Responsibility for deciding whether to admit a child to a school rests with the school's admission authority, which is the local authority in the case of a community or voluntary controlled school, and is the school's governing body in the case of voluntary aided or foundation school.

Medical treatment for visitors

Prohibited medical treatment

See: paragraphs V 4.4 (c), V 7.1 to V 7.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#), and paragraphs PA 16.1 and PA 16.2 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#).

Visitors are not eligible for free of charge treatment on the National Health Service (NHS), unless an exemption from charge applies in law, and therefore may be billed for any NHS treatment received in the UK. Further details are in [the Department of Health guidance on overseas visitors](#).

The UK has reciprocal healthcare agreements (RHCA) with a number of countries. RHCA generally provide equivalent access to immediately necessary healthcare for

the citizens of the contracting countries, where they are present in the other's country for a limited period. Treatment is provided on the same terms as for a local resident (free of charge in the UK). The majority of these RHCAs apply only to short-term visitors. RHCAs cater for treatment that arises during a migrant's stay. RHCAs do not usually allow migrants to come to the UK for the specific purpose of seeking medical care.

UK/Ireland reciprocal healthcare agreement

The requirement that a migrant should not come to the UK specifically for the purpose of receiving medical treatment does not apply to those coming to the UK to receive planned medical treatment under the reciprocal healthcare agreement with Ireland. Free NHS treatment received under this agreement is reimbursed by the health authorities in Ireland and will be considered as Private Medical Treatment for the purposes of the Visitor Rules.

Permitted medical treatment, including organ donors

See: paragraphs V 7.1 to V 8.4 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Visitors can only access treatment in the UK if it is paid private medical treatment. The only exception is organ donors.

Organ donors must provide the specified evidence in the Visitor Rules to prove they are a donor match or have been identified as a potential donor to an identified recipient in the UK.

You must be satisfied the organ donor has a genetic or close personal relationship with the intended recipient in the UK.

Genetic relationships would be where the donor is a blood relative to the identified recipient in the UK. Close personal relationships would typically include the visitor's spouse, partner or close friends. It would not extend to relations established via social media campaigns.

It is an offence for money to be given for organ donation (expenses are permitted for NHS donors). Where you suspect payment is being made in return for organ donation, you must refer the case to Immigration Enforcement International.

You must also be satisfied that the identified recipient is legally in the UK and entitled to receive treatment either on the NHS or in a private hospital.

Individuals donating to patients receiving NHS treatment can be reimbursed for expenses incurred which are directly attributable to being a donor. These can include travel costs and loss of earnings and are usually paid by the NHS after the treatment. You should look for information as to who is funding the visitor's stay in the UK.

Organ donors should not be accompanied by their children unless there is no immediate care arrangement for them in their country of residence and satisfactory arrangements have been made for them in the UK. In assessing any arrangements for the UK, you should ensure that this accounts for any period the donor will be either in hospital or unable to care for the child or children whilst recuperating.

There is no permitted activity for a family member, friend or nurse of the visitor coming to the UK for private medical treatment to accompany the visitor. People who wish to do so, must apply as a visitor and meet the Visitor Rules.

If the individual does not meet the Visitor Rules, or the person escorting the private medical treatment visitor wants to stay in the UK for more than 6 months, you must refer the case to the Referred Casework Unit (RCU) to see whether a grant of leave outside of the Rules is appropriate.

Secondary applications from organ donors

Where a visitor enters as an NHS donor and is assessed to be an unsuitable match or chooses not to donate, either because they are incompatible with their intended recipient, or prefer a better match, they may choose to pursue a paired or pooled donation. This allows them to be matched with another donor and recipient in the same situation in the National Living Donor Sharing Schemes. The donor organs are then swapped. When 2 pairs are involved it is a paired donation, and where there are more than 2, it is a pooled donation.

Where an individual applies for a visit visa on this basis, their application must be referred to RCU for consideration outside the Rules. Individuals applying on this basis must provide the relevant medical letter, detailing the arrangements involved and specifying whether this is a pooled or paired donation. The application must be assessed against the general visitor requirements and the additional organ donor requirements (with the exception of the requirement to have genetic or a pre-existing emotional relationship with the direct recipient, although they should still have a connection with someone in the group who is receiving an organ transplant).

Transiting the UK as a 'standard' or 'marriage/civil partnership' visitor

See: paragraph PA 18 of [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#) and V 14.1 to V 14.2 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

A transit visitor is a person seeking to travel through the UK on their way to another destination country outside the Common Travel Area (CTA) (UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands and Isle of Man).

There are four ways an individual can transit the UK. These are explained in detail in the Transit guidance.

A person who holds a 'transit visitor', 'standard visitor' or 'marriage/civil partnership visitor' visa or permission can use that to enter the UK to transit the UK landside (that is, to cross UK border control while transiting and enter the UK for a maximum of 48 hours).

The differences are that a person who holds a 'transit visitor' visa or permission cannot use that to enter the UK for any other reason, they can transit the UK only.

A person who holds a 'Standard visitor' or 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor' visa or permission can transit the UK as well as undertake any of the other permitted activities in [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#).

For example, a visitor who holds a long-term 'Standard visitor' visa valid for 10 years can come to the UK to transit using that visa, without the need to obtain a 'Transit visitor' visa and for the long-term 'Standard visitor' visa to be cancelled. Or a visitor who applies for a 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor' visa valid for 6 months can, if issued, come to the UK to get married or form a civil partnership, leave the UK to honeymoon in a third country and transit the UK on their way to returning to their home country using the same visa.

Full details of considerations and processes can be found in the Transit guidance. 'Standard visitors' and 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitors' intending to transit must meet the requirements under paragraphs V 4.1 to V 4.6, V 14.1 to V 14.2 and (where applicable) V 12.1 to V 12.2.

A 'Permitted paid engagement visitor' visa or permission cannot be used to transit the UK.

Related content

Refer or defer an entry clearance case

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[List of registered medical practitioners](#)

[Transfer or refer an entry clearance case \(GOV.UK\)](#)

Visit: period of stay granted

This section gives information on what length and type of entry should be granted in different circumstances.

Contents:

[Long-term visit visas \(multiple entry\)](#)

[Extensions for long-term multiple-entry visit visas](#)

[Single entry visit visa: when and how to grant](#)

[Short duration visa: when and how to grant](#)

Long-term visit visas (multiple entry)

Applicants may apply for a visit visa that allows multiple visits of up to 6 months at a time (for a (standard) visitor) over a period of:

- 2 years
- 5 years
- 10 years

Applicants for a long-term visit visa must meet all the Visitor Rules relevant to their visit. You must then decide whether to issue the length of visit visa applied for.

The applicant must satisfy you that they have a genuine intention to visit on a regular basis. Consider:

- credible ongoing reason to visit:
 - a successful applicant will show a frequent and continued reason for coming to the UK, such as family links or an established business connection but must not intend to make the UK their home
 - unaccompanied children and those entering the UK for medical treatment are unlikely to demonstrate this
- stability of personal and economic circumstances - as far as possible, an applicant's financial circumstances and ties to their home country should be unlikely to change significantly during the validity of the visa
- travel history - a person does not need to have previously held a visit visa before being issued with a multiple entry visit visa, however, a history of international travel which shows the individual's compliance with UK or other immigration laws will be relevant to deciding whether the applicant intends to leave the UK at the end of each visit - see guidance on [travel/ immigration history](#)

Where the applicant meets the Visitor Rules but does not show a need to visit the UK on a regular basis and therefore does not qualify for a long-term visit visa, you can issue a visit visa for up to 6 months. In such cases, no refund (full or partial) is available.

You must provide clear reasons for the decision to grant a visa for a shorter period than that applied for in a covering letter when the passport is returned.

See: [Frequent or successive visits: how to assess if an applicant is making the UK their main home or place of work.](#)

Extensions for long-term multiple-entry visit visas

If a visitor holds a long-term multiple-entry visa and they want to stay for longer than the visa expiry date, it is possible for them to apply to extend their permission for up to the maximum 6 months permitted for visitors (standard). For example, a visitor arrives in January and their long-term visit visa is due to expire in February. Provided the visitor meets the Rules, they can extend for up to 6 months, until June, as a visitor (standard). A single entry or 6-month visa can also be extended to complete 6 months' in the UK as a visitor. Applications must be made before the original permission expires.

Single entry visit visa: when and how to grant

Entry Clearance officers must obtain the authority of the Entry Clearance Manager before issuing a single-entry visit visa (except for Approved Destination Status (ADS) visas).

Most visit visas allow the person to enter the UK multiple times during its period of validity except for ADS.

For other visitors, you must only issue a single-entry visit visa in certain cases, such as:

- children whose visit is sponsored by charities
- in residual doubt cases where the applicant meets the Rules, but you have a residual doubt and there is a clearly established, verifiable and compelling reason to visit the UK (see examples below)

A non-exhaustive list of examples of where it may be appropriate to issue a single-entry visit visa includes:

- key witness (non-expert) at a criminal, civil or family court appearance
- a visit at the request of the police or other agency to assist enquiries
- to attend the funeral of an immediate family member
- to attend a specific one-off genuine event the applicant has been invited to, for example a religious convention
- to conduct a specific business transaction in the UK where the person's attendance is essential
- to visit an immediate family member who is pregnant or who is seriously ill

Short duration visa: when and how to grant

Unless there are grounds for not issuing a multi-entry or long-term visit visa, you should issue the visa applied for.

See [Recording requirements for UKVI: granting a short duration visa](#) for information you must record.

Grounds for limiting the duration of a visa

You can limit the duration of a visa:

- for children, who should only be granted a long-term visa which is valid to 6 months past their 18th birthday, for example:
 - for a 14 year old applying for a 2 year long term visit visa, the visa expiry date should be 2 years from the date it is granted
 - for a 14 year old applying for a 5 or 10 year long term visit visa, the visa expiry date should be limited to the date that is 6 months after the applicant's 18th birthday
- when it is appropriate to issue a [single entry visa](#)
- when the applicant holds a travel document:
 - with permission to enter another country that must be exercised before a given date
 - that restricts how long they may be outside their country of normal residence

Related content

[Frequent or successive visits: how to assess if an applicant is making the UK their main home](#)

[Contents](#)

Visit: suitability

This section gives information on how the suitability Rules apply to all visitors.

Part 9: grounds for refusal

Where an application falls to be refused on suitability grounds, or a visit visa or permission to enter or stay as a visitor falls to be cancelled it must be done with reference to the relevant paragraph of Part 9: grounds for refusal.

See the Part 9 guidance for further information.

Change of circumstances and cancellation

Part 9: general grounds for refusal provides for visit visas and permission to enter or stay as a visitor to be cancelled in specified circumstances.

All visitors, apart from Transit Visitors and those under the Approved Destination Status (ADS) agreement can undertake any permitted visitor activity included in Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities. Marriage and civil partnership visitors can visit to marry or form a civil partnership or to give notice of this as well as undertake the activities in Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities. Permitted paid engagements visitors can undertake the activities in paragraph V 13.3 of Appendix V: Visitor as well as the activities in Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities.

It is reasonable to expect that a person who is applying for a visit visa or permission to enter or stay will have and be able to articulate a main purpose or purposes for visiting the UK. However, since a visitor can undertake any permitted activity or activities, it is not sufficient reason to cancel a visit visa on arrival due to a change in the declared permitted activity to be undertaken, provided the visitor does propose to undertake a (any) permitted activity. The primary purpose of a long-term multiple entry visit visa holder is particularly likely to change over the course of 2, 5 or 10 years. It is also possible that a visitor, having indicated on a visa application that they intended to undertake a particular permitted activity, changes their main purpose before or on arrival at the border. For instance, they proposed to take part in a sporting event that is cancelled and they come here for a holiday instead. Since a visitor can undertake any permitted activity, this is permissible.

See Part 9: grounds for refusal guidance for full information about how to consider and apply the Part 9 rules to visitors.

Related content

Part 9: grounds for refusal guidance

Document verification

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[Curtailment \(GOV.UK\)](#)

[Revocation](#)

Visit: children

This section gives information on how to deal with applications from children visiting the UK.

Contents:

[Child welfare duty](#)

[Child not travelling or residing with their parent or guardian](#)

[Visit visa applications: parental consent and responsibility for care in home country](#)

[Border Force: parental consent](#)

[Private foster care](#)

[Child visiting to stay with a host family](#)

[Child visit organised by a charity](#)

[Accompanied children \(visa nationals\)](#)

[Unaccompanied children](#)

Child welfare duty

See: paragraphs V 5.1 to V 5.2 and V 1.4 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

The Home Office has a statutory duty to have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK under section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009. For more information, see Safeguard and promote child welfare.

You must make sure a child's welfare is taken into account when considering an application from someone under the age of 18.

Child not travelling or residing with their parent or guardian

See: paragraphs V 5.1 to V 5.2 and V 1.4 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Where a child is not travelling or residing in the UK with their parent or guardian, you must be satisfied that travel, care and reception arrangements are adequate and that the requirement for parental consent has been met.

See [Recording requirements for UKVI: child not travelling or residing with their parent or guardian](#) for information you must record.

If details are missing, unclear or other factors raise concerns about the child's welfare, you must make further enquiries to confirm the identity and residence of the host and make sure the child is expected.

If you are not satisfied that there are adequate arrangements for the child's welfare in the UK, you may decide to refuse the application.

At the border

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare you must contact your local authority children's services department or the police where appropriate.

Children's Services will advise on the suitability of the sponsor and will take the child into their care, if they agree that the sponsor is unsuitable or if there is no responsible sponsor. See: Border Force children's guidance.

Visit visa applications: parental consent and responsibility for care in home country

See: paragraph V 5.2 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

If a parent or guardian is making the application on behalf of the child, this will usually satisfy the requirement for parental consent.

If the applicant's parents are divorced, the consent must come from the parent(s) who holds legal custody or joint responsibility.

If the application is not made by the parent or guardian, and there are no other factors which give cause for concern, a letter from the parent or guardian confirming their relationship to the child and consenting to the child's application will be sufficient to establish that this requirement has been met. This does not preclude you from asking for further evidence if required.

If the applicant provides information that the parent they will be travelling with is not the parent who holds legal custody you should seek consent from both parents.

If there is evidence that the legal authorities (meaning the police or judiciary, not a legal representative of one parent) in the child's country of residence have indicated that they are at risk of being moved out of the country without consent you should seek consent from both parents.

You should also request consent from both parents where you are concerned that the child may be at risk.

If there is no consent from the parent or guardian to support the application and no reasonable explanation why this is the case, the application must be refused.

If an application is made by someone other than the parent or guardian, unless that person is a social worker who holds parental rights and cares for the child, you must make enquiries about the identities of accompanying adults and the person giving consent.

See [Recording requirements for UKVI: parental consent and responsibility for care in home country](#) for information you must record about accompanying adults.

If you have any concerns relating to child trafficking you must consult the victims of modern slavery guidance.

Border Force: parental consent

If there is no parental consent, refer to the Border Force children's guidance.

Private foster care

See: paragraphs V 5.1 to V 5.2 and V 1.4 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

A child is considered to be in private foster care when they are:

- under 16 years old, or under 18 years old for those who have a disability
- being cared for on a full-time basis for more than 28 days
- not being cared for by parents, legal guardians or close relatives

This is unless the child is part of a group travelling and staying together and accompanied by an adult, for example, a school group.

If a foster carer or relative who is not a parent or guardian will have responsibility for the child's care whilst in the UK, the applicant must be able to show the following to satisfy you that reception and care arrangements are adequate:

- a written statement of consent from the parent or guardian
- the name and date of birth of the intended foster carer
- the address where the applicant will be living
- the relationship of the foster carer to the applicant
- authority from the parents or legal guardian allowing the foster carer to care for the applicant during their stay in the UK
- where the child is on an educational exchange visit that lasts longer than 28 days and they are not accompanied by their parent or guardian, a letter from the school to include details of the foster care arrangements
- confirmation that the parents have or will notify the relevant UK local authority, including the reply from the local authority if they have one

You must make every reasonable effort to make sure the documents presented are genuine.

In England and Wales

Private foster care arrangements must be notified to the relevant local authority by:

- the parents or other carer of the child
- other parties to the arrangement, for example the education provider
- the Home Office if it has not already been done

In Scotland

The regulations require that parents including a guardian or relative:

- notify the local authority of arrangements to be made for the fostering of their children privately under the Foster Children (Scotland) Act 1984
- make provision for the local authority to investigate the suitability of such private fostering arrangements in the interests of the child (regulations 4 to 6) and for the visiting of such foster children by the local authority (regulation 7)

In Northern Ireland

The regulations are equivalent to those in England. Health and social care trusts must be notified of private foster care arrangements lasting more than 28 days in relation to children under 16 years old (or under 18 if they have a disability).

Where a child's visit exceeds 28 days, under child foster care arrangements the host family must present evidence to satisfy you that they have contacted their local Social Services for a home assessment. Where a home assessment has been completed and approved, evidence of this must be provided.

Where a council declines to carry out such an assessment, their response and any relevant evidence to demonstrate that suitable arrangements have been made for the child's stay in the UK must be provided by the applicant.

Child visiting to stay with a host family

See: paragraphs V 5.1 to V 5.2 and V 1.4 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

If care arrangements are not adequate the application should be refused.

The checks you must make will vary and depend on whether the child is accompanied or unaccompanied. In all cases a clear record of who is responsible for the child's welfare in their home country and whilst in the UK is imperative.

For host families you need to establish the identity and address of the hosts and you must make sure that the care arrangements meet paragraph V 5.1. In routine cases this could mean seeing a letter from the host family.

See [Recording requirements for UKVI: child visiting to stay with a host family](#) for information you must record about care arrangements.

At the border

Where a child does not present any documentary evidence about the care arrangements, you must pursue enquiries as you see fit to satisfy yourself that the child is not at risk. See:

- Border Force children's guidance
- [Child not travelling or residing with their parent or guardian](#)

Child visit organised by a charity

See: paragraphs V 5.1 to V 5.2 and V 1.4 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Charities must complete the registration form for facilitating child visits to UK host families and provide the following information where they are involved in organising a child's visit to the UK:

- full details of the hosts allocated to accommodate the children whilst in the UK
- full details of checks carried out on the hosts - these checks must be in line with the charity's own child protection policy and any Charities Commission or Devolved Authority requirements, such as Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks
- they must state whether this is the first or a subsequent visit sponsored by the charity for the child

You must be satisfied that appropriate checks have already been carried out by the charity. At the time of application any DBS checks must be no more than 3 years old.

Charities should notify UKVI of any amendments to their registration details, which should be recorded accordingly. It is recommended that charities re-register and provide up-to-date details every 12 months.

Charities may only change host families allocated to children, and as stated on the visa application form, in exceptional circumstances. Full details of the new host family and the checks carried out on them must be presented (as set out above). Where Border Force officers have reason to believe that host families have changed, for example if an adult accompanying the child is not one recorded on their visa, they should check the CRS record or check with the visa application centre to confirm whether they have been notified of this change. If not, the officer must be satisfied that the relevant checks on the new host family have been made. If they have not, and the officer is not satisfied that adequate care arrangements are in place, the application should be refused.

Where children are not residing with host families (for example in cases where they may be residing in residential centres), charities must provide full details of the arrangements.

Where the stay will be for longer than 28 days, see: [private foster care guidance](#).

See: Border Force children's guidance.

Accompanied children (visa nationals)

See: paragraph V 1.4 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Issuing an accompanied visa to a child

If a child is travelling in the company of an adult, the passport number and adult's name must be included on the child's visa.

If the child intends to travel with two adults one after another during the validity of the visa (for example, the child may arrive with one parent and then travel for a day trip to France with the other), each of the adult's passport numbers must be entered on the vignette. The passport numbers are sufficient as there is not enough space on the vignette to allow for the names of two people as well as the passport numbers.

See [Visit: endorsements and LTE/ LTR codes](#) for the information you must include on the vignette.

Accompanied children at the border

If the child is not travelling with the adult identified on their visa, they may be refused.

If you have concerns over the identity of the accompanying adult, you must:

- check the passport number, initial and surname in the passport of the accompanying adult against the details recorded for the child's visa on the CRS computer record
- advise the visa application centre that issued the visa so they may make a note against the record, in case subsequent applications are made by the same person

In cases where the accompanying adult has travelled with the child but remains airside and does not accompany the child into the UK, the terms of the visa will not be met. Further enquiries must be made of the child and of the accompanying adult, if the latter can be found. In such cases it may be appropriate to refuse the child entry.

If the accompanying adult has legitimately obtained a replacement passport since the issue of the child's visa, the old cancelled passport is acceptable as evidence of identity to allow the child's entry.

If the original passport has been retained by the issuing authority, the new passport is acceptable if it:

- gives the original passport number in full
- contains an official endorsement confirming it replaces the previous passport

Photocopies of the original passport are not, on their own, reliable evidence of identity.

Unaccompanied children

See: paragraph V 1.4 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

You must pay particular attention to applications and to the circumstances of a child coming to the UK on their own.

A child with an 'unaccompanied child visitor' visa may travel with or without an accompanying adult. For example, they may have obtained a multi-entry visa and be unable to advise in advance who they will travel with on subsequent trips to the UK.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Visit: private medical treatment

This section gives information on dealing with applications for private medical treatment as a visitor.

Contents:

- [11 month medical visit visas: when to grant](#)
- [Assessing a visit for private medical treatment](#)
- [Referral to a medical officer: when you must do this](#)
- [Length of treatment](#)
- [Extension of stay for medical treatment: showing funds](#)
- [Confirming the details of a doctor in the UK](#)
- [Danger to public health](#)
- [Requesting a report from a doctor \(not the medical inspector\)](#)
- [Surrogacy](#)
- [Applications at the border for private medical treatment](#)

11 month medical visit visas: when to grant

See: paragraphs V 7.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

You must make sure that individuals applying for an 11-month visa for private medical treatment have provided medical evidence to support their stay in the UK for this amount of time. The majority of visitors seeking private medical treatment would be expected to stay for 6 months or less.

Assessing a visit for private medical treatment

See: paragraphs V 7.1 to V 7.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

A visitor wishing to come to the UK for medical treatment may not be in a position to present specific documentary evidence for the proposed treatment. But they must provide a letter from their doctor or consultant in the UK detailing:

- their medical condition requiring consultation or treatment
- costs likely to be incurred
- the likely duration of any treatment (which must be finite)
- where the consultation or treatment will take place

A visitor coming to the UK for medical treatment will also need to provide satisfactory evidence to show they have sufficient funds to cover all reasonable costs in relation to their visit and treatment.

If you need to make checks on the evidence, you can search the General Medical Council (GMC) [list of registered medical practitioners](#). Or you can contact them using their telephone enquiry service on 0845 357 3456.

If you cannot find the consultant listed in the register, you must make enquiries with the hospital where the consultation or treatment is due to take place to confirm whether the consultant carries out work there.

You must contact the consultant or hospital in the UK if you have doubts about the costs or arrangements for private treatment given to you by the applicant.

There is nothing to prevent a visitor from undertaking private medical treatment once they are in the UK, however if this is their main reason for visiting, they will need to provide this information when they are seeking entry or applying for a visa.

If you receive an application from an individual wanting to take part in a clinical trial in the UK, you should consult the visit policy team for further advice.

See: [Medical treatment for visitors – prohibited medical treatment](#).

Referral to a medical officer: when you must do this

See: paragraphs V 7.1 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

If an applicant has a communicable disease, you must refer them to a medical officer where available.

Length of treatment

See: paragraphs V 7.2 and V 7.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

A long period of treatment, for example, 11 months may be acceptable, provided there is a clear need for the patient to be in the UK to receive treatment and they have enough funds to meet all costs. You must assess how long treatment is likely to take. For example, fertility treatment could go on for some years. As long as you obtain the applicant's consent, you will be able to get good estimates by contacting the consultant who is due to treat them. Where the treatment is open ended, the application will fall to be refused.

Extension of stay for medical treatment: showing funds

Where a visitor is applying for an permission to stay for private medical treatment, if the applicant is reliant on funds from abroad (their own or a third party's), you must ask for proof that the funds are transferable, as certain countries operate strict exchange controls. If there is evidence the person is relying on a third party for funding, you must get fresh confirmation of the third-party sponsor's willingness and ability to meet the cost.

Confirming the details of a doctor in the UK

See: paragraph V 7.1 to V 7.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

To check if a doctor is registered with the General Medical Council (GMC) a search can be made on the [list of registered medical practitioners](#). This will also show if the doctor is on the Specialist Register (but not which hospital they work at). Where there is doubt, contact the hospital directly to confirm the doctor is a consultant there.

Requesting a report from a doctor (not the medical inspector)

See: paragraphs V 7.1 to V 7.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Any doctor or medical adviser, including the patient's own general practitioner, is likely to charge a fee. For this reason, a decision to request a report as part of the consideration of an application must be approved by a manager at least one grade higher than you.

Surrogacy

There is no provision in the Rules for a woman to be allowed into the UK for the purpose of being a surrogate mother. Admission for private medical treatment is not appropriate since the applicant would not be suffering from any medical condition.

Any application from a woman to enter the UK to act as a surrogate should normally be refused on the grounds that there is no provision in the Rules. Where there are exceptional circumstances you should refer the case to Referred Casework Unit (RCU).

See: [medical issues guidance](#).

Applications at the border for private medical treatment

See: paragraphs V 7.1 to V7.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

If a person says they are receiving, or intend to receive, health or medical treatment in the UK, you must refer them to the port medical inspector.

Admission can be refused on the advice of the port medical inspector.

Applicants will need to satisfy you that they meet the suitability and eligibility requirements, including having sufficient funds available and the additional requirements for private medical treatment.

If an applicant is successful they may be granted no more than 6 months, subject to a condition prohibiting access to public funds, study and work.

People escorting private medical treatment visitors

There is no permitted activity for a family member, friend or nurse of the visitor coming to the UK for private medical treatment to accompany the visitor. People who wish to do so, must apply as a visitor and meet the Visitor Rules.

If the person escorting the private medical treatment visitor wants to stay in the UK for more than 6 months (in line with the person seeking medical treatment), you should consider whether there are any compelling compassionate or exceptional circumstance that would warrant a grant of leave outside of the Rules and refer the case to the Referred Casework Unit (RCU).

Related content

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Visit: Approved Destination Status (ADS)

This section gives information on considering applications under the ADS agreement in China.

ADS visit visas

See: paragraph V 6.1 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

The ADS agreement is an agreement between the UK and China allowing Chinese nationals to enter the UK with an approved tour group.

You must use VISIT - ADS Code 3 for a maximum period of 30 days and marked 'single' or 'dual' to indicate the number of entries to the UK for which it is valid.

In most cases the visa for ADS tourists will be valid for one entry to the UK during the period for which the visa is valid. However, in cases where the tour group's itinerary involves onward travel to Europe and then the group plans to re-enter the UK dual entry visas should be issued.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[ADS supporting documents](#)

Visit: permitted paid engagements (PPE)

This section gives information on considering applications for a permitted paid engagements visit visa.

Contents:

[Permitted paid engagements visitors: assessing applications](#)

[Visiting examiners or assessors](#)

[Visiting lecturers](#)

[Other recognised organisations who may invite visiting examiners or assessors or visiting lecturers for PPE](#)

[Designated air pilot examiner](#)

[Qualified lawyers](#)

[Arts, entertainment or sporting professionals](#)

Permitted paid engagement visitors: assessing applications

See: paragraphs V 13.1 to V 13.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Visitors undertaking permitted paid engagements (PPE) are allowed to undertake any of the activities at V 13.3 and in Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities. For example a professional footballer may enter to give a paid interview and also attend meetings to discuss a contract.

You must make sure that PPE visitors are not using this route on a repeat basis for temporary employment. Whilst payment is allowed, this is strictly for short engagements and you must consider whether the applicant's main place of employment is overseas.

Refuse where you have evidence of the PPE visitor making frequent or successive repeat visits.

See: [Frequent or successive visits: how to assess if an applicant is making the UK their main home or place of work](#).

Where a visa national has made an application for a Permitted Paid Engagement visitor visa, and you are satisfied that they meet the relevant Rules, to allow greater flexibility for applicants to travel in and out of the UK during the validity of their PPE visa you can issue a multi-entry PPE visa with a validity for up to 1 month.

You can continue to restrict a visit visa to single entry, if the circumstances require it – for further information see [Single entry visit visa: when and how to grant](#).

Visiting academic examiners or assessors

See: paragraph V 13.1 to V 13.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Given the short-term nature of this route, experts will normally be employed outside the UK and therefore intend to return to this employment on completion of their engagement.

Where an academic is fully retired and carries out one-off examination work, this would not count as their full-time occupation and you must refuse their application. However, an individual who is semi-retired, carrying out regular examination work and earning income from this, will qualify under this route.

Where the proposed activities include examining at a further education establishment, their application must be refused, as they must apply under the work routes to do this.

Evidence

You must consider their employment overseas, which must be in a field relevant to their engagement here.

The invitation should show why the individual has been chosen to carry out the PPE (because of their skills or expertise) and set out how the engagement links to the venue and how long the engagement is for. Other evidence could include publications by the applicant in their particular field of expertise or a letter from their employer confirming where they work and area of expertise.

Visiting lecturers

See: paragraph V 13.1 to V 13.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Given the short-term nature of this route, experts must be employed outside the UK (this does not have to be as a full-time lecturer) and intend to return to this employment on completion of their engagement.

Where an expert is fully retired and carries out a one-off lecture, this will not count as their full-time occupation and you must refuse their application. However, an individual who is semi-retired, carrying out regular lectures and earning income from this, will qualify under this route.

UK Higher Education Institution (HEI) is defined in Part 1 of the Immigration Rules.

If an individual is invited to give a lecture at a HEI as part of a course this is acceptable, providing they are not replacing the formal role of the course teacher at the HEI (this would come under the points-based system).

The nature of their lecture will, in the majority of cases directly relate to the area in which they are employed overseas. In cases where they are coming to the UK to

lecture on an unrelated area you must take care to verify the applicant's qualifications in this area, such as:

- any previous employment or posts held in this area
- publications on the subject
- other recognised qualifications

Evidence

Consider their employment overseas which must be in a field relevant to their engagement in the UK.

Other evidence can include:

- publications by the applicant in a particular field
- evidence of previous lectures given in that field of expertise
- a letter from their employer confirming where they work and area of expertise

Other recognised organisations who may invite visiting examiners or assessors or visiting lecturers for PPE

See: paragraphs V 13.1 to V 13.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

The Home Office recognises publicly funded research institutions, such as:

- research organisations which could include independent research organisations and those Research Council funded institutes
- museums (this must be the primary purpose of the venue)
- art galleries (where the primary purpose of the venue is to exhibit art as opposed to selling it or any other activity)
- arts centres, arts festivals, theatres and other arts venues

Designated air pilot examiner

See: paragraphs V 13.1 to V 13.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

To make sure a training organisation is regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) see the [Civil Aviation Authority website](#).

If you are unsure about the training organisation status, you must contact the CAA to confirm they are an approved facility for providing flight training.

You must make sure the engagement relates to the applicant's expertise or qualifications, and full-time profession overseas. Given the nature of this engagement the applicant must be employed overseas as a member of that country's national aviation authority, for example the Federal Aviation Authority in the USA.

Qualified lawyers

See: paragraphs V 13.1 to V 13.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Qualified lawyer covers:

- counsel
- advocates
- attorneys
- barristers
- solicitors

In addition to advocacy and dispute resolution work, lawyers entering under these provisions are permitted to take an active role in the preparation of a hearing which may need one or more preparatory visit.

Where it is clear from the invitation or other information the case is likely to last longer than one month, you must find out if the applicant's involvement will be required for the entire duration. If it is, you must refuse the application on the basis that they are not genuinely seeking entry for a period no longer than one month.

If the qualified lawyer is representing a client based overseas, the engagement must still relate to a UK-based hearing. Rights of audience are not required for:

- arbitration
- other alternative dispute resolution hearings
- certain tribunal hearings

Evidence

They must provide confirmation of the lawyer's right of audience (or 'temporary call') (where required) which would allow an overseas lawyer to represent a client in a UK court.

Lawyers can be expected to demonstrate their qualifications. It is common to show a practising certificate or certificate of good standing. This document will vary depending on the regulatory body involved.

Arts, entertainment or sporting professionals

See: paragraphs V 13.1 to V 13.3 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

A creative organisation includes all organisations involved in artistic and entertainment activities. Examples include galleries, arts faculties or departments in universities, schools and venues involved in producing or staging of events. UK based agents and broadcasters can also invite individuals to undertake a paid engagement in the UK. You must be satisfied that the inviting organisation is legitimate.

A sports organisation includes any organisation involved in organising or staging sporting events or matches.

To qualify, applicants must be able to demonstrate this is their full-time profession. In assessing this you must consider factors such as:

- standing
- reputation
- earnings, recognising that some artists may earn lower salaries in certain countries
- existing work commitments outside of the UK

An arts professional can include fields across the performing and creative arts such as a poet, a make-up artist, a photographer or a traditional artist.

Artists may be taking part in activities such as:

- judging panels
- giving lectures
- talking about, presenting or launching their work to other professionals or the public
- performances
- panel debates
- professional conferences

For more information see the [Granta website on up and coming writers](#).

Fashion models who are coming to the UK to undertake a specific engagement can use this route, providing they do not intend to make the UK their home.

Evidence

They must also provide documents to show they are an established professional artist, entertainer or sports professional, such as:

- publications they have produced
- publicity material for performances, screenings, concerts, talks, readings and exhibitions
- evidence of awards
- media coverage and reviews
- proof of recent performances

EEA, Swiss and B5JSSK nationals

Nationals of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, and the United States of America (B5JSSK) and EEA states and Switzerland are able to use ePassport gates to enter the UK. However, if they do so without holding a valid

entry clearance they will automatically obtain 6 months permission to enter as a standard visitor. Therefore, if a B5JSSK, EEA or Swiss national wishes to carry out any of the above Permitted Paid Engagements they **must** see a Border Force officer on arrival and **must not** use the ePassport gates.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Visit: marriage and civil partnership

This section gives information on considering applications to visit the UK to marry or enter into a civil partnership.

Contents:

[Visa requirement](#)

[Non-visa nationals who have not applied for a visit visa to come to the UK to marry or enter into a civil partnership](#)

[Holders of existing visit visas who want to enter the UK to marry or enter into a civil partnership](#)

[Changing an existing civil partnership to a marriage](#)

[Giving notice of intention to marry or enter into a civil partnership](#)

[Assessing a visit to give notice or to marry or enter into a civil partnership](#)

[Assessing whether the marriage or civil partnership is a sham](#)

Visa requirement

All visitors, who are not relevant nationals, who intend to enter the UK to marry or enter into a civil partnership or give notice of an intention to marry or form a civil partnership, must have a valid marriage/ civil partnership visit visa.

You must include the name of the fiancé, fiancée or civil partner on the vignette.

A relevant national is as defined in [section 62 of the Immigration Act 2014](#).

Non-visa nationals who have not applied for a visit visa to come to the UK to marry or enter into a civil partnership

See: paragraph V 1.1(b) and V 1.3(a) of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Non-visa nationals who are seeking entry to visit the UK to marry or enter into a civil partnership or to give notice of that, who do not hold a visit visa must be refused entry.

Non-legal marriages

Non-visa nationals who are seeking entry to visit the UK to enter into a marriage that is not recognised under UK law are **not** required to hold a marriage visit visa. They can seek entry as a standard visitor. Visa nationals may apply for a standard visit visa for this purpose.

Changing an existing civil partnership to a marriage

Non-visa nationals who are seeking entry to visit the UK to change an existing civil partnership to a marriage are **not** required to hold a marriage visit visa. They can seek entry as a standard visitor. Visa nationals may apply for a standard visit visa for

this purpose. A civil partnership can only be converted to a marriage if it took place under the laws of England and Wales or Scotland.

A visa national will need to present their original civil partnership certificate to evidence that they are in a valid civil partnership. For non-visa nationals arriving at the border, you will need to see the original civil partnership certificate for the person seeking entry to the UK. If you are satisfied that the purpose of the visit is to change a civil partnership to a marriage a visit visa or permission to enter can be granted.

For guidance on how to convert a civil partnership to a marriage see guidance on [Convert a civil partnership to a marriage](#).

Holders of existing visit visas who want to enter the UK to marry or enter into a civil partnership

See: paragraph V 1.1 (b) of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Visitors who already have a visit visa to enter the UK and who are now seeking entry to marry or enter into a civil partnership (other than when changing an existing civil partnership to a marriage) must hold a visit visa specifically for this purpose.

Giving notice of intention to marry or enter into a civil partnership

See: paragraphs V 12.1 and V 12.2 of the [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Visitors intending to marry or form a civil partnership in the UK must give notice at a register office before the marriage or civil partnership can take place. In England and Wales notice must be given in person. In Scotland and Northern Ireland notice can be given by post.

For guidance on what someone giving notice of marriage is required to do (including what documents they are required to have with them) see guidance on [Marriages and civil partnerships in the UK](#).

Assessing a visit where the intention is to give notice or to marry or enter into a civil partnership

An individual who is coming to the UK to give notice at a register office will need to show that they have made arrangements to do so, for example by providing confirmation of a provisional advance booking to give notice (appointment card or email).

An individual who is coming to the UK to marry or form a civil partnership will need to provide evidence they have made arrangements for their marriage or civil partnership to take place in the UK. Examples of evidence include confirmation of the church or register office booking (email confirmation or a receipt for payment of the marriage/ civil partnership venue).

Assessing whether the marriage or civil partnership is a sham

An individual seeking entry to the UK must not intend to give notice or enter into a sham marriage or sham civil partnership. See: paragraph V 12.2 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

For visa applications, you should consider the evidence submitted, including the arrangements for the marriage or civil partnership, the couple's relationship, future plans and living arrangements. You must be satisfied from the evidence provided that the applicant is in a genuine relationship. If you consider that the proposed marriage or civil partnership will be a sham, you should refuse the application under paragraph V 12.2 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[Giving notice of intention to marry or enter into a civil partnership](#)

Visit: referrals to other caseworking teams

This section gives information on when to refer visitor applications to other teams.

You must follow the transfer or refer a case guidance.

Where the applicant does not meet the Visitor Rules, but there are compassionate and compelling circumstances you must refer to guidance on leave outside the rules.

The referrals to the Referred Casework Unit (RCU) should be made on the referral form and should clearly state what guidance you need and include comprehensive information, documentary evidence and if relevant, a full medical report.

Related content

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Visit: recording requirements and other procedures for visitor cases

This section gives information on the recording requirements for visitor decisions and other procedures.

Contents:

[UKVI: granting a short duration visa](#)

[UKVI: sponsor undertakings on maintenance and accommodation](#)

[UKVI and Border Force: credibility and intentions - borderline decisions](#)

[UKVI: MP letter in support of an application](#)

[UKVI: employers using visitors to undertake work or fill a role](#)

[UKVI: child not travelling or residing with their parent or guardian](#)

[UKVI: parental consent and responsibility for care in home country](#)

[UKVI: child visiting to stay with a host family](#)

[UKVI: requesting a report from a doctor \(not the medical inspector\)](#)

[UKVI: extension of stay where a person is receiving NHS medical treatment](#)

UKVI: granting a short duration visa

Where you issue a visa for less than 6 months, it must be referred to an entry clearance manager (ECM) for approval and recorded locally for management information (MI) purposes.

Where an applicant has requested leave for 6 months, but has been issued permission for a shorter period, the ECO must issue a letter clearly explaining the reasons for this. In such cases, no refund (full or partial) is available.

UKVI and Border Force: credibility and intentions – borderline decisions

Where you have residual doubts about whether a person is applying as a genuine visitor, you must record full details of the applicant's stated intentions, especially those given verbally, either on the caseworking system or in a written account of the interview.

UKVI: MP letter in support of an application

If an MP writes directly to the visa application centre in support of an application, you should send an acknowledgement stating that when the application is assessed, the MP's letter will be taken into account together with all other available evidence.

UKVI: employers using visitors to undertake work or fill a role

Where you have concerns that specific companies in the UK are sending visitors to their offices to undertake work or fill a role, and circumventing the work routes, you must record this in the notes section on Proviso and refer it to the Sponsor Management team.

UKVI: child not travelling or residing with their parent or guardian

You must enter the following details on the caseworking system to record this (if the information does not auto-populate from the application form onto the caseworking system):

- name, address and telephone number of the parent or carer in the child's home country
- the name, address and telephone number of the host in the UK
- the name, address and telephone number of any person accompanying the child

UKVI: parental consent and responsibility for care in home country

You must record the following details about accompanying adults:

- names and passport number - this is necessary for the child's visa
- address in the home country
- any address in the UK or abroad
- employment details
- their relationship to the child, their parent or guardian and their host in the UK

UKVI: child visiting to stay with a host family

Proviso/ CID details must be updated to show that satisfactory care arrangements are met and to include the name, address and telephone number of the intended family or carer, as well as the parents contact details.

Failure to make sure this information is readily available may result in a lengthy delay for the child at the border.

UKVI: requesting a report from a doctor (not the medical inspector)

If you require a doctor's report, you must:

- make a note in the file explaining why the medical report is necessary and refer the proposal to a senior caseworker or an entry clearance manager for approval before any further action is taken

- send or hand to the person (or in the case of a child, the guardian), form ICD 0867 seeking their consent for a medical report to be prepared by their doctor
- on receipt of the patient's consent, write to the doctor asking for a full report and enclose ICD 0868

Forms ICD 0867 and ICD 0868 can be found on the CID DocGen database.

UKVI: extension of stay where a person is receiving NHS medical treatment

If a person is refused (except for where the applicant is an NHS debtor), the refusal notice must be accompanied by a letter, making it clear to the applicant that they can make a fresh application if they are prepared to have the treatment privately.

Related content

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Visit: endorsements and LTE/ LTR codes

This section gives information on what endorsements and codes must be used for visitors.

Contents:

[Visit visa endorsement codes](#)

[Endorsements for accompanied children \(visa nationals\)](#)

[Entry codes at the border](#)

[On entry refusal codes at the border](#)

Visit visa endorsement codes

See: Visit endorsement guidance.

Endorsements for accompanied children (visa nationals)

If the child is travelling with one adult, you must include the adult's passport number, initial and surname on the child's vignette.

If the child is travelling with 2 adults, the endorsement must read 'only valid if acc. by [passport number of first adult], or [passport number of second adult]'.

Entry codes at the border

See Visit endorsement guidance.

On entry refusal codes at the border

The on entry refusal codes at border are:

- A1 - insufficient funds for proposed visit
- A2 - not satisfied genuine visitor
- A4 - unsatisfactory or unacceptable arrangements for proposed study
- E4 - lack of required visa or entry clearance

EEA, Swiss and B5JSSK nationals

Nationals of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, and the United States of America (B5JSSK), EEA states and Switzerland are able to use ePassport gates to enter the UK. If they do so without holding a valid entry clearance, they will automatically receive 6 months permission to enter as a standard visitor and will not receive an endorsement in their passport.

If granting permission to enter as a standard visitor to a B5JSSK, EEA or Swiss national at the staffed primary control point, you should not endorse the passenger's travel document with a code 5N but should instead grant permission to enter verbally, in line with the B5JSSK guidance.

Related content

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Visit: permit free festivals

This section gives information on how an event qualifies for inclusion on the permit free festival list.

See: Appendix Visitor: Permit Free Festivals List of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

See: [permit free festival guidance](#).

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