



Home Office

VIP Delegate Visa

Version 2.0

This guidance is intended for Home Office staff and covers people applying as members of a Head of State or ministerial delegation.

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About this guidance

This guidance tells entry clearance decision makers and Border Force officers about the VIP Delegate Visa and permission to enter the UK on the VIP Delegate Visa route.

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 Visa 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.

Publication

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

- version **2.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **23 October 2024**

Changes from last version of this guidance

A minor change to the wording around the VIP Delegate Visa form, and a further reminder to applicants that they are not exempt from immigration control, despite the form being held with exempt products.

Related content

[Contents](#)

What is a VIP Delegate Visa?

The VIP Delegate Visa is for a government official accompanying a Head of State or serving government minister on an official visit to the UK for a temporary period. This period must not exceed one month in duration.

This route is not designed for people who are exempt from immigration control nor others on official visits to the UK.

There is a cap of 20 for Heads of State delegations and 10 for ministerial delegations, per visit. A VIP Delegate Visa will be issued for the duration of their official visit in the UK plus three days before and after the visit takes place for travelling purposes.

Visa Nationals travelling as a delegate accompanying a Head of State or serving government minister on an official visit must obtain entry clearance as a VIP Delegate before arrival in the UK. However, should numbers in the delegation exceed the caps, the option remains for surplus travelling members to [apply for a visit visa instead](#).

The VIP Delegate Visa is not a route to settlement.

Dependents are not permitted on this route.

Are those benefitting from the VIP Delegate Visa required to pay the application fee?

No. Those eligible for a VIP Delegate Visa within the cap numbers do not have to pay an application fee if their name is included in an official Note Verbale (diplomatic note). The applicant must be named in a Note Verbale provided by their government, confirming that they are part of the official delegation accompanying their Head of State or serving government minister. When submitting their application, a copy of this Note Verbale – evidencing eligibility – must be submitted with their application.

Do people who apply for the VIP Delegate Visa need to give their biometric information?

No. Government officials applying for a VIP Delegate Visa are not required to give their biometric information. However, to produce the visa we require the applicants to provide a facial photo when submitting their passport at a Visa Application Centre. This facial photograph must meet [passport photograph standards](#).

Duration of the VIP Delegate Visa

Entry clearance as a VIP Delegate will be issued with a start date 3 days before the beginning of the official visit to the UK and ending 3 days after the end of the official

visit to the UK, as indicated in the Note Verbale. The full duration of the visit must not exceed in any case the maximum period of one month.

Visa national applicants seeking to visit the UK for a period longer than one month should apply for a visit visa.

Validity Requirements for a VIP Delegate Visa

All applications for a VIP Delegate Visa must be submitted online using the [VIP Delegate Visa form](#). Delegates are not exempt from immigration control, although the application form is stored alongside exempt products.

The applicant is not required to pay a fee. The applicant is not required to provide their biometric information; however, they must provide a facial image, compliant with [rules for digital photos](#), along with a valid passport, confirming their identity and nationality. While the individual is not required to personally attend a Visa Application Centre (VAC) overseas to enrol biometrics, applications must be submitted in person at a VAC. Submission can be undertaken by either the applicant themselves or an authorised representative, for example a 'runner' employed by their Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The applicant must be named in a Note Verbale provided by their government, confirming their status. and they must be aged 18 years or older at the time of application.

The applicant must meet all the validity requirements set out in [Appendix VIP Delegate Visa](#).

Suitability

Where an application falls to be refused on suitability grounds, or a VIP Delegate 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.

Eligibility requirements for a VIP Delegate Visa

The applicant must satisfy the following eligibility requirements to be considered for a VIP Delegate Visa.

Purpose of travel

The applicant must be visiting the UK with the sole intention and sole purpose of accompanying their Head of State or serving government minister, who must be travelling on official business of their government. The official business may be at the invitation of HM Government, but this is not a requirement.

Government officials

The applicant must be a serving government official. In practice, this means that they are employed by their government in an equivalent role to one that would be occupied by a civil servant in the UK system.

Private individuals, such as journalists or businesspeople included in a party for an official visit of a Head of State or serving government minister on official business are not exempt from immigration control. International Protection Officers (also known as Royal Protection Officers or Personal Protection Officers) are not eligible for a VIP Delegate visa, even if they are employed by the government. In these cases, the Standard visitor route is likely to be the most appropriate route for the intended visit. Visa nationals must apply for entry clearance in the normal way.

Dates of travel

The applicant's intended dates of travel must be consistent with the dates of the official visit indicated on a Note Verbale provided in support of the application, with an additional 3 days of validity before and after the visit takes place, issued for flexibility. The purpose of the VIP Delegate Visa is to enable official travel and must not be used to undertake other travel to the UK such as tourism.

Age

The applicant must be aged 18 years or older.

Notes Verbale

When assessing the application, you must be satisfied that the Note Verbale provided in support of the application has been issued by the country sending the delegation. The Note Verbale must contain the full list of individuals accompanying the Head of State or government minister on official business. The number of individuals listed must not exceed the allocated cap per visit.

The Note Verbale must contain the following information about each individual applicant:

- their name, date of birth and passport number
- confirmation of the title/purpose of the official visit and the dates the official visit will take place
- confirmation that the application is supported by the country sending the delegation
- confirmation that the applicant has sufficient funds to cover all reasonable costs in relation to their visit without unauthorised working or accessing public funds

The Note Verbale must have been issued before the date of application submission and must not have been withdrawn after the issue date.

Applications submitted in excess of the cap

The number of delegates permitted to accompany the Head of State is capped at 20 and the number of delegates accompanying a serving government minister on official business to the UK is capped at 10. Additional applicants will be required to apply for a Visit Visa, paying the relevant application fee and providing biometrics. If you receive applications for the VIP Delegate Visa that would exceed the cap for a single visit, you must inform the relevant FCDO Post so they can liaise with the relevant government to arrange withdrawal of applications.

Granting entry clearance

If the applicant meets all of the requirements of [Appendix VIP Delegate Visa](#), you must grant entry clearance for a period beginning 3 days before the beginning of the official visit to the UK and ending three days after the end of the official visit to the UK or for a period of one month, whichever is shorter.

The endorsement you must use is:

Endorsement: VIP DELEGATE

Duration: Duration of visit, plus 3 days before and 3 days after

Biometric Residence Permit (BRP): No

Number of entries: Single

Refusing entry clearance

If the applicant does not meet all the requirements of [Appendix VIP Delegate Visa](#), you must refuse the application. There is no right of appeal or right to an administrative review.

Official – sensitive: start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: end of section

Related content

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