



Home Office

Home Office Gaza Process

Version 4.0

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About this guidance

This guidance is for Home Office personnel conducting security checks and delivering the visa process as part of His Majesty's Government (HMG) support for Gaza Medical Evacuations (Medevacs), Gaza Chevening Scholars, fully funded Gaza Scholarship Students where HMG is providing support to exit Gaza and the dependants of those students who meet the requirements of the UK Immigration Rules.

This guidance does not set out what processes Other Government Departments (OGDs) will be following.

This guidance is intended for use by:

- Home Office staff
- Border Force Officers
- Customer Service Group – UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) staff

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior decision maker cannot help you or you consider that the guidance has factual errors, then email:

- Asylum Policy Secretariat regarding Part 1: HMG Gaza Medevac
- Resettlement Policy Secretariat regarding Part 2: Gaza Scholarship Students

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 Review, Atlas and Forms team.

Publication

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

- version **4.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **27 October 2025**

Changes From Last Version of this Guidance

Changes to 'Background', 'Policy Intention', 'Part 1: HMG Gaza Medevac' and to 'Part 2: Gaza Scholarship Students'.

Related content

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Introduction

This guidance is for Home Office personnel conducting security checks and delivering the visa process for His Majesty's Government (HMG) support for Gaza Medical Evacuations (Medevacs) and to Gaza Chevening Scholars and to fully funded Gaza Scholarship Students where HMG is providing support to exit Gaza.

You should read this guidance in conjunction with other key guidance products where appropriate. All relevant guidance documents can be found below:

- General grounds for refusal guidance
- Biometric information: introduction
- Biometric enrolment: policy guidance
- Criminality guidance
- Restricted leave guidance
- Exclusion from the UK guidance
- Travel bans guidance
- Non-conducive grounds for refusal or cancellation guidance
- Pending prosecutions guidance
- UKVI Identity Standards guidance
- Leave outside the Rules (LOTR) on compelling compassionate grounds guidance
- [Every Child Matters – Change for Children](#)
- [Victims of human trafficking – guidance for frontline staff](#)
- [Safeguarding children: detailed information](#)
- [Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery: Statutory guidance for local authorities guidance](#)
- [Immigration rules appendix finance guidance](#)
- Operating Mandate
- Student route: caseworker guidance

Background

HMG Gaza Medevac

On [24 July 2025 the Prime Minister announced](#) that the UK would evacuate children in urgent need of medical care from Gaza to receive specialist treatment in National Health Service (NHS) hospitals across the UK.

This was followed by a [Written Ministerial Statement](#) from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on 1 September, which set out the intention and details behind the HMG Gaza Medevac.

This [policy statement](#) from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), published on 14 September 2025, sets out the UK Government response to the situation in Gaza, including Medical Evacuations (Medevac).

The Home Office will be conducting security checks and delivering the visa process for the HMG Gaza Medevac.

Gaza Scholarship Students

His Majesty's Government (HMG) has agreed to support the departure of a group of Chevening Scholars and students with full scholarships from Gaza, to take up university places in the UK for the 2025 / 26 academic year. HMG is extending this support to the dependants of those students who meet the relevant requirements of the UK Immigration Rules.

For further information, please see the [HMG policy paper published by the Department for Education \('DfE'\) on GOV.UK](#) on 15 September 2025 and updated on 27 October 2025.

The Chevening Scholarship programme is funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office ('FCDO'), offering individuals with exceptional potential to become future leaders, the opportunity to live and study in the UK for one year. The Chevening Scholarship generally pays only for the student and not for any dependants.

"Full scholarship" in this context means students who have their course fees and living costs fully funded by an official financial sponsor, which must be HMG, the applicant's national government, the British Council or any international organisation, international company or university. Please see FIN 8.3 (b) [Immigration Rules Appendix Finance](#) for further detail. This definition does not include independent schools.

Appendix Student allow students who are studying a PhD, doctoral qualification or research based higher degree or those with financial sponsorship or scholarship from a Government, (such as Chevening Scholars), to sponsor their dependants (spouse/partner and/or children under 18) if they meet the requirements of those Rules.

The Home Office will conduct security checks and, on arrival in a third country, deliver the visa process for the Chevening Scholars, students with full scholarships and their eligible dependants.

Policy Intention

HMG Gaza Medevac

The Home Office policy objective is to conduct security checks and deliver a quick visa process as part of the HMG Gaza Medevac. This will be delivered by:

- conducting robust security checks against biographic and biometric data in order to uphold national security and protect the UK border from those who may pose a threat to the UK

- ensuring applications are considered in a timely and sensitive manner, acknowledging the vulnerable situation that applicants may find themselves in and, where possible, ensuring that applications are processed without unnecessary delay
- enrolling biometrics and undertaking checks prior to travel to the UK in line with the biometric guidance

Gaza Scholarship Students

As set out in the HMG Gaza Response policy paper of 14 September 2025, the Government is taking measures to provide immediate support to certain groups in Gaza. The former Home Secretary made a statement in the House of Commons on 1 September 2025 outlining HMG's intent to support Chevening Scholars and students with fully funded scholarships ([Strengthening border security and reforms to the asylum system](#)). Further to this, HMG published the aforementioned policy paper setting out further detail. This can be found on GOV.UK: [UK Government response to the situation in Gaza: policy summary](#).

As set out by the former Home Secretary in her oral statement to Parliament on 1 September 2025, the Home Office has put in place systems to expedite visa processing, with biometrics enrolled prior to final decisions on issuing visas for all the Chevening Scholars from Gaza. The Home Office has also provided the same expedited process for full scholarship students in Gaza who have been awarded places at UK universities so they can start their studies this year (no later than 31 December 2025). The government is prioritising those with fully-funded, verifiable, scholarships commencing in the Autumn term. This decision has been made for these students due to their potential role in rebuilding Gaza in the future. The Government is extending this support to student dependants eligible under the Immigration Rules to accompany or join a student whose exit from Gaza has been supported under this process.

The Home Office will achieve the policy intent by:

- conducting robust security checks to uphold national security and protect the UK border from those who may pose a threat to the UK
- ensuring applications are considered in a timely and sensitive manner on an individual, objective, and impartial basis, acknowledging the situation that applicants may find themselves in and, where possible, ensuring that applications are processed without unnecessary delay; and
- enrolling biometrics and undertaking checks prior to travel to the UK in line with the Biometric guidance

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Legislation

HMG Gaza Medevac

International obligations

The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) is an international treaty which sets out the rights of children. Article 3(1) sets out that you must consider the best interest of a child as a primary consideration (but not the only consideration).

The [1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction](#) sets out procedures to ensure the return of a child who is subject to international child abduction to the country of their habitual residence immediately before their wrongful removal or retention.

Domestic legislation

Domestic legislation which you must consider is set out in this section.

Immigration Rules

The following sections of the Immigration Rules are of particular relevance to this instruction:

Introduction of the rules

Paragraph 6.2 sets out the relevant definitions for immigration applications such as:

“Adoption” means an adoption in accordance with the requirements of Appendix Adoption, and “adopted” and “adoptive parent” shall be construed accordingly.

“Child” means a person who is aged under 18 years.

“Legal guardian” is a person appointed according to local laws to take care of a child.

“Parent” means:

- (a) biological parent; and
- (b) legal parent, including birth mother where the child is not genetically related, spouse or civil partner of the birth mother at the time of the child’s birth, and person with a parental order under section 54, or section 54A of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008; and
- (c) adoptive parent:
 - (i) who, when habitually resident outside the UK, adopted a child in accordance with a decision taken by the competent administrative authority or court in a country whose adoption orders are recognised by the UK; or

(ii) whose adopted child has been granted permission under Appendix Adoption, or Part 8 of these Rules, and, if applicable, the adoption has been formally completed in the UK.

Part 9 of the rules

Part 9: Grounds for refusal set out the grounds for refusal – see the [suitability](#) section.

Gaza Scholarship Students

Appendix Student: [Immigration Rules: Appendix Student](#).

Appendix Finance: [Immigration Rules Appendix Finance](#).

Appendix English Language: [Immigration Rules Appendix English Language](#).

Related content

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Part 1: HMG Gaza Medevac

Eligibility

His Majesty's Government (HMG) has an agreed eligibility for the Gaza Medical Evacuations (Medevacs).

HMG is partnering with the World Health Organisation (WHO), which works on the ground and plays a critical role in supporting medical evacuations from Gaza. Participation is solely through the WHO supported process, and the UK Government is not able to consider direct requests for assistance. The WHO will provide a list of potential patients, children in Gaza, who have already been referred and identified as priority cases by Gazan medical specialists (medevac child). This will be reviewed by a team of National Health Service (NHS) clinical leaders, established by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), and decisions will be made in accordance with their agreed selection principles.

The WHO will provide copies of identity documents, and any paperwork to support family relationships where this is available. WHO will have made an initial basic assessment of family relationships and identity within the family group. The final agreed patient selection list for each cohort will then be passed on by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to Home Office staff. This is when the Home Office security and visa process begins.

The medevac child must be accompanied by a responsible adult (someone aged 18 or over) who will act on behalf of a child's best interests. A responsible adult is:

- a biological parent of the medevac child
- a legal parent or guardian
- an adoptive parent
- where none of the above exist, a responsible adult could include someone who is exercising parental responsibility for the child by making significant decisions on behalf of the child's best interests - while a case-by-case assessment should be applied, and WHO and HMG must be satisfied that this responsible adult is making significant decisions such as medical treatment, day to day care

A child of the responsible adult may also be eligible for the HMG Gaza medevac process if they are under the age of 18 and are the biological sibling or half-sibling to the medevac child. This means that children of a legal guardian are not eligible if they are not the biological, adoptive or half-sibling of the medevac child.

Unaccompanied children are ineligible for the HMG Gaza medevac process because it will not be known who is providing parental consent for the movement of this child across international borders and who can make this decision on behalf of the child's best interests.

Where a case is identified by WHO outside of the above HMG eligibility and where there is HMG agreement to include them in the HMG Gaza medevac process, they will escalate to Home Office Ministers for consideration on a discretionary basis.

Home Office process

Home Office processes will begin when staff receive information from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), about the agreed final child patient selection, from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the National Health Service (NHS), alongside details of family members who it is proposed will accompany the medevac child (family group).

Upon receipt of information on the final agreed patient selection list and the family group, Home Office staff must then conduct security checks against the biographic information received from FCDO on each member of the family group.

On identification of an adverse match against biographic information that would likely result in a refusal of entry under Part 9: General Grounds for Refusal of the Immigration Rules, Border Force officers **must** escalate the case to a Grade 7 Border Force officer who will refuse the individual as well as the family group (refer to suitability section). An information to note or advice to Ministers must also be produced. FCDO must also be immediately notified in parallel.

Home Office staff **must** confirm the outcome of biographic checks to FCDO. Subject to the family group having no adverse information, the family are permitted to submit a visa application. The process of submitting the online application will be facilitated by WHO and must be completed before their exit is facilitated by FCDO from Gaza. The visa application form used will be one which will not incur an application fee, nor an Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) charge.

Home Office staff will next receive information from FCDO containing the visa application reference number (commonly referred to as the 'GWF number') for each member of the family group. FCDO must then confirm with the Home Office when they will facilitate the exit from Gaza of each cohort to enable United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) staff to make preparations to capture biometrics in a third country – see the [biometrics](#) section.

The Home Secretary has provided assurances of onwards travel from a third country to the UK. Once approval from the third country is received, the WHO will seek exit agreement from Gaza from Israeli authorities. Exit agreement from Israeli authorities is not a Home Office responsibility.

Once the family group has exited Gaza and following the completion of biometric enrolment, the visa applications for each family group will be processed by UKVI staff - see [Assessing the visa application](#) section.

UKVI staff **must** ensure, once biometrics have been enrolled, that they are dealt with on an expedited basis.

Should anything adverse arise as a result of biometric checks on any member of the family group which falls for refusal under Part 9: General Grounds for Refusal (see the [suitability](#) section), you **must** follow the steps set out in the [refuse](#) section.

If there are no suitability grounds for refusal, UKVI staff will grant Leave Outside the Immigration Rules (LOTR) – see the [grant](#) section.

Should a child patient pass away in a third country, the remaining family group are permitted to continue with travel to the UK should they wish to do so.

Biometrics

Biometrics, in the form of fingerprints and facial images, underpin the United Kingdom (UK) immigration system to support identity assurance and suitability checks on foreign nationals who are subject to immigration control. Further Information about biometrics is contained in the policy guidance Biometric Information: introduction. See the [proof of identity](#) section.

Official – sensitive: start of section

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Official – sensitive: end of section

All individuals must enrol their biometrics where they are medically able to do so. In critical cases where the child is unable to enrol their biometrics due to the need for urgent travel to the UK for urgent treatment, the child and their accompanying adult(s) should be excused from the requirement to enrol their biometrics overseas but should do so as soon as possible thereafter in accordance with the biometric enrolment: policy guidance. The guidance gives further information on who is excused from the requirement to enrol biometrics.

Suitability

The Home Office is committed to maintaining effective immigration control to ensure the UK border, and those within the UK (including children), remain secure. Security and background checks are necessary to uphold national security and help detect known criminals or identify individuals that may pose risks to public safety.

There are 2 points in the Home Office process in which security checks on all members of the family group **must** be conducted by Home Office staff to identify any adverse information. This is when:

- biographic information has been received from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) (before the visa application process has begun)
- once biometrics have been enrolled (see the [biometrics](#) section) after a visa application has been submitted

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When assessing whether the individual likely falls for refusal under Part 9: General Grounds for Refusal, you must refer to existing guidance including:

- Criminality guidance
- Restricted leave guidance
- Exclusion from the UK guidance
- Travel bans guidance
- Non-conductive grounds for refusal or cancellation guidance

You **must** be satisfied that that the application will not be refused under Part 9: Grounds for Refusal. Usually, if an individual falls for refusal under Part 9: General Grounds for Refusal they will be ineligible for the HMG Gaza medevac process and so will the whole family group. This is to prevent any family splits and ensure that anyone who poses a border or national security risk is not brought to the UK. This approach applies to the two sets of security checks set out in this sub-section.

If you are satisfied that the individual likely for refusal under Part 9: Grounds for Refusal following security and identity checks against biometrics, after a visa application has been submitted, you **must** follow the steps set out in the [refuse](#) section.

Care **must** be taken where the suitability ground states within Part 9: General Grounds for Refusal provides that an application **may** be refused – these are non-mandatory grounds and decision makers must ensure any reasons that justify not refusing the application have been taken into account. If an individual meets the ‘may’ fall for refusal under Part 9: General Grounds for Refusal, then you must look at the nature of the suitability issues being considered in the context of the application and the purpose of His Majesty’s Government (HMG) Gaza medevac process as a whole.

You must decide whether the issues identified are sufficiently serious to refuse on the basis of suitability or whether there are compelling reasons to decide that the applicant should be issued with a visa. This will be a case-specific consideration.

Where a person has a prosecution pending for an offence, a series of offences, or is yet to be sentenced, you must urgently investigate this to consider whether the pending prosecution or sentencing would materially affect your assessment against Part 9: General Grounds for Refusal– see the criminality guidance and the pending prosecutions guidance. Where an application and therefore the family group could fall for refusal on this basis, you **must** escalate this to a Grade 7 within UKVI responsible for delivering the visa process – see [refuse](#) section.

Where you are satisfied that the individual does not fall for refusal under Part 9: grounds for refusal, the visa process **must** continue to assess the application.

Assessing the details provided in visa application

Home Office staff will receive information at the start of the process from FCDO about the agreed final child patient selection, obtained from DHSC and the NHS, alongside details of family members who it is proposed will accompany the child (family group). The WHO will provide copies of identity documents, and any paperwork to support family relationships where this is available. WHO will have made an initial basic assessment of family relationships and identity within the family group.

On identity, UKVI staff must establish, to the balance of probabilities, that the person is who they state they are – see the [evidence](#) and the [proof of identity](#) sections.

On family relationship, UKVI staff must establish, to the balance of probabilities, that the child will be accompanied by a responsible adult (someone aged 18 and above) in accordance with the agreed HMG [eligibility](#) – see the [evidence](#) and the [family links](#) sections.

Should you encounter an individual who you have any concerns about (for example, you believe they are not the age they claim or do not meet the agreed eligibility for the HMG Gaza medevac process), but the application does not fall for refusal under Part 9: General Grounds for Refusal, you **must** escalate this to a Grade 7 within UKVI for advice, liaising with relevant operational and policy stakeholders as required to seek a solution.

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Evidence

Individuals in Gaza may not be able to provide the same documents or evidence that you would usually expect for visa routes under the Immigration Rules due to the nature of their situation in Gaza. For example:

- applicants may have needed to leave their home in an emergency situation and without the time or capacity to collect documents
- administrative authorities may not be able to issue specific documents such as birth and marriage certificates, or courts may not be able to provide copies of adoption orders
- documents may have been lost or destroyed in the conflict or on the journey to safety

Original documentation is not required, and digital copies can be used as supporting evidence. These do not have to be notarised by a solicitor or legal representative, but they should be high quality and in colour so that you can examine the documents.

Submitting false documents or evidence, whatever the motives for so doing, may lead to refusal – see the [suitability](#) section.

Proof of identity

It is the responsibility of the applicant to satisfy you about their identity. You **must** read this sub-section alongside the [evidence](#) section which sets out the reasons why an applicant may not be able to produce certain documents or evidence for this HMG Gaza medevac process.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) will have made an initial basic assessment of identity.

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Applicants can produce a range of alternative documents or evidence to establish their identity. The UKVI Identity Standards guidance contains examples of 'alternative acceptable documents' and 'corroborative evidence' an applicant can provide to establish their identity.

Family links

The WHO will have made an initial basic assessment of family relationships within the family group. The role of UKVI staff should be to establish, on the balance of

probabilities, that they are satisfied based on the information and documentation provided that they are related as stated.

While an individual could include documents or evidence as part of their visa application, for the reasons set out in the [evidence](#) section you **must** not always expect this.

Individuals, however, could provide documents such as:

- family photographs
- birth certificate
- government family records
- adoption orders or court documents

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Decision

Grant

Under the Immigration Act 1971, the Home Secretary has a residual discretion to grant entry clearance outside of the (Immigration) Rules (LOTR). The published LOTR policy makes clear that periods and conditions must reflect the reasons an individual is seeking to enter or stay in the UK – see Leave outside the rules (LOTR) on compelling compassionate grounds guidance.

Accordingly, where an individual meets the requirements to enter the UK on the basis of the concession set out in the HMG Gaza medevac process (see [policy intention](#)), the endorsement you **must** use when granting LOTR is:

Endorsement – LEAVE TO ENTER OUTSIDE OF THE RULES

Entry type – MULT

Cat D endorsement – Code 1A

Duration – 2 YEARS

Refuse

Where you determine that an individual likely falls for refusal under Part 9: Grounds for Refusal, you **must** escalate this to a Grade 7 within UKVI responsible for delivering the visa process to authorise the decision or decide whether advice should be provided to Ministers, liaising with relevant operational and policy stakeholders as required.

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Section 55 duty

HMG Gaza Medevac

[Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009](#) requires the Home Office to ensure that immigration, asylum and nationality functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK. As part of this, the best interests of a child must be a primary, but not the only, consideration.

Although Section 55 only applies to children in the UK, the statutory guidance [Every Child Matters - Change for Children](#) provides guidance on the extent to which the spirit of the duty should be applied to children overseas. You must adhere to the spirit of the Section 55 duty and make enquiries when you suspect that there may be safeguarding or welfare needs that require attention. In some instances, international or local agreements are in place that permit or require children to be referred to the authorities of other countries. You must abide by these arrangements and work with local agencies in order to develop arrangements that protect children and reduce the risk of trafficking and exploitation.

Where any safeguarding concerns arise, the Home Office Safeguarding Advice and Children's Champion (SACC), upon request, will support Home Office staff with safeguarding assurance support, on an expedited basis, and can act as an interlocutor between Home Office staff and local authorities involved in the child or family's care in the UK if needed. For example, if there are safeguarding concerns or a child will be cared for someone other than their parent in the UK and could be considered to be privately fostered.

Should any adverse information arise, after an online visa application has been submitted and biometrics have been enrolled, which means an individual falls for refusal under Part 9: General Grounds for Refusal, you must carefully consider the circumstances of the application - see [suitability](#) section. If an individual falls for refusal, so will the family group. You must clearly identify the best interests of the child as a primary consideration, alongside any other considerations which you have identified.

For more information on the key principles to take into account, see guidance on:

- [Every Child Matters – Change for Children](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [Victims of human trafficking – guidance for frontline staff](#) (where appropriate)
- [Safeguarding children: detailed information](#)
- [Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery: Statutory guidance for local authorities guidance](#)

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Part 2: Gaza Scholarship Students

Eligibility criteria for Chevening and Full Scholarship Students

His Majesty's Government (HMG) has an agreed eligibility criteria for the Chevening Scholars and full scholarship students in Gaza. This is set out in the HMG Gaza Fully Funded Scholarship Students policy paper, published on GOV.UK on 15 September 2025 (and subsequent to the HMG Gaza Response policy paper referred to above – see [Policy intention](#) section): [Scholarships for students from Gaza](#).

To be eligible for HMG support to exit Gaza, individuals **must** satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- students **must** be aged 18 or over and meet the requirements of the [Immigration Rules](#)
- **Scholarship confirmation:** universities **must** confirm that a full scholarship covering course fees and required living costs is in place for a course starting no later than 31 December 2025 - this confirmation should be communicated by the Department for Education (DfE) / Devolved Governments (DGs) to the Home Office
- **valid Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS):** the applicant is required to hold a valid CAS issued by an eligible UK higher education institution for the intended course of study - the CAS details **must** be submitted with the individual's visa application and remain valid at the time of exit from Gaza
- **submission of Student Visa Application:** applicants **must** submit a fully completed student visa application online, ensuring all relevant requirements are met in accordance with the relevant Immigration Rules - any relevant fees and the Immigration Health Surcharge must also have been paid
- **ongoing University Acceptance:** the individual **must** maintain acceptance by their chosen UK university

To be eligible as dependants of such students for HMG support to exit Gaza, individuals **must** satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- **submit a student dependant visa application** – any relevant fees and the Immigration Health Surcharge must also have been paid
- **they must be an eligible dependant**, as defined in the Immigration Rules namely the partner or spouse, or child under 18, of a student who is either studying a PhD, doctoral qualification or research based higher degree or holds a financial sponsorship or scholarship from a government
- **the student they are accompanying/joining was or is being supported to exit Gaza under this process**
- **they must meet the requirements of the** Immigration Rules; including having verifiable funding in place, as set out in Appendix Student ST 33.2 of the Immigration Rules, to cover their living costs, up to a total of £6120 for

those studying outside of London, or £7605, for those studying in London

Support to exit Gaza will not be provided for students without either a Chevening Scholarship or a full verifiable scholarship; and for dependants whose lead applicant does not have such a scholarship.

In addition, support shall not be provided if there are reasonable concerns as to whether the individual meets the Immigration Rules (e.g. whether they are a genuine student), or the individual is seeking entry to the United Kingdom for other purposes.

Students and their eligible dependants **must** also satisfy the UK Immigration Rules, specifically ensuring they do not meet any of the grounds for refusal outlined in Part 9 of the Immigration Rules. See the [suitability](#) section and grounds for refusal guidance.

While HMG is doing everything it can to support this process, it is important to note that a student and/or their eligible dependants' journey out of Gaza and onwards to the UK cannot be guaranteed, and timelines remain uncertain. This process is highly dependent on factors outside the UK Government's control.

Home Office process

The Home Office is committed to maintaining effective immigration control to ensure that the UK border, and those within the UK, remain secure. Security and background checks are necessary to uphold national security and help detect known criminals or identify individuals that may pose risks to public safety.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) are facilitating the exit of Chevening Scholars, students with fully funded scholarships from Gaza and their eligible dependants. The Home Office process for supporting such individuals to exit Gaza and enter the UK will begin when the Home Office receives information from the Department for Education (DfE) / Devolved Governments (DGs) confirming that an individual is eligible. DfE / DGs will speak to the relevant UK university to request information about fully funded scholarship students, to seek the university's confirmation that the student is eligible to attend the relevant course and that they have been accepted by the university. DfE / DGs will pass on the information received and is not able to verify it.

DfE and the DGs will communicate to the Home Office where a university has provided confirmation that a CAS has been issued.

The Home Office will verify that the visa application has been submitted and that the CAS is valid for the intended period of study. If the CAS or visa application is not valid, the Home Office will notify the DfE and the DGs, setting out the reasons for this.

The Home Office will not intervene in matters of academic eligibility, acceptance, or course suitability, as these issues remain within the remit of the university.

The Home Office process for supporting eligible dependants of students to exit Gaza and enter the UK will begin when the FCDO shares the relevant information received from the individual, evidencing their eligibility for support.

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Official – sensitive: end of section

Where the applicant passes security checks, Home Office staff will confirm this to FCDO. FCDO will seek to obtain exit agreement from the relevant authorities and are leading on the logistics of facilitating the students' exit from Gaza.

Biometrics

Once initial security checks are cleared, the FCDO will be responsible for facilitating the student's exit from Gaza and onward travel to a third country. The applicant's biometrics will then be enrolled at a VAC in a third country. To determine next steps, the Home Office ('UKVI') will then consider the application against the requirements of the Student Visa Rules including the assessment of any adverse matches or information.

Biometrics, in the form of fingerprints and facial images, underpin the United Kingdom ('UK') immigration system to support identity assurance and suitability checks on foreign nationals who are subject to immigration control. Further Information about biometrics is contained in the policy guidance Biometric Information: introduction. See the [proof of identity](#) section.

UKVI staff **must** ensure, once biometrics have been enrolled, that they are dealt with on an expedited basis.

Following the completion of biometric enrolment, the visa application will be processed by UKVI staff - see [Assessing the visa application](#) section.

Official – sensitive: start of section

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Where there is no adverse information, the Home Office will issue a visa within 72 hours of submitting biometrics, subsequently sharing the decision with the FCDO and DfE / DGs. They will be granted entry clearance as a student or a dependant of a student eligible to be accompanied under the Immigration Rules.

Following this, the FCDO / DfE / the university will facilitate the applicant's travel to the UK.

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When assessing whether the individual falls for refusal under Part 9: General Grounds for Refusal, you **must** refer to existing guidance including:

- Criminality guidance
- Restricted leave guidance
- Exclusion from the UK guidance
- Travel bans guidance
- Non-conductive grounds for refusal or cancellation guidance

If you are satisfied that the individual likely falls for refusal under Part 9: Grounds for Refusal following security checks, after a visa application has been submitted, you **must** follow the steps set out in the [refuse](#) section.

Care **must** be taken where the suitability ground within Part 9: General Grounds for Refusal provides that an application may be refused – these are non-mandatory grounds and decision makers must ensure any reasons that justify not refusing the application have been taken into account. If an individual meets the ‘may’ fall for refusal under Part 9: General Grounds for Refusal, then you **must** look at the nature of the suitability issues being considered in the context of the application.

You **must** decide whether the issues identified are sufficiently serious to refuse on the basis of suitability (bearing in mind that anything which comes within these criteria should normally, must or may be refused) or whether there are compelling reasons to decide that the applicant should be issued with a visa. This will be a case-specific consideration.

Where a person has a prosecution pending for an offence, a series of offences, or is yet to be sentenced, you **must** urgently investigate this to consider whether the pending prosecution or sentencing would materially affect your assessment against Part 9: General Grounds for Refusal– see the criminality guidance and the pending prosecutions guidance. Where an application could fall for refusal on this basis, you **must** escalate this to a Grade 7 within UKVI responsible for delivering the visa process – see [refuse](#) section.

Assessing the details provided in a visa application

UKVI staff **must** satisfy themselves that the person is who they state by taking account of all of the evidence available – see the [evidence](#) and the [proof of identity](#) sections. This means they need to be confident that the person is who they claim to be.

Should you encounter an individual who you have any concerns about (for example, you believe they are not the age they claim to be or do not meet the eligibility requirements), you **must** escalate this to a Grade 7 within UKVI for advice, liaising with relevant operational and policy stakeholders as required to seek a solution.

Evidence

Individuals (Chevening Scholars, full scholarship students or eligible dependants) in Gaza may not be able to provide the same documents or evidence that you would usually expect for the Student Visa route under the Immigration Rules due to the nature of their situation in Gaza. For example:

- applicants may have needed to leave their home in an emergency situation and without the time or capacity to collect documents
- administrative authorities may not be able to issue specific documents such as birth and marriage certificates, or courts may not be able to provide copies of adoption orders
- documents may have been lost or destroyed in the conflict or on the journey to safety

Original documentation is not required, and digital copies can be used as supporting evidence. These do not have to be notarised by a solicitor or legal representative, but they should be high quality and in colour so that you can examine the documents.

Submitting false documents or evidence, whatever the motives for so doing, may lead to refusal – see the [suitability](#) section.

Proof of identity

It is the responsibility of the applicant to satisfy you about their identity. You **must** read this sub-section alongside the [evidence](#) section which sets out the reasons why an applicant may not be able to produce certain documents or evidence for this approach.

Identity documentation will be submitted at the Visa Application Centre, in line with normal visa application processes.

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Applicants can produce a range of alternative documents or evidence to establish their identity. The UKVI Identity Standards guidance contains examples of 'alternative acceptable documents' and 'corroborative evidence' an applicant can provide to establish their identity.

Decision

Decision makers should refer to the student route: caseworker guidance.

Refuse

Where you determine that an individual likely falls for refusal under Part 9: Grounds for Refusal, you must escalate this to a Grade 7 within UKVI responsible for delivering the visa process, liaising with relevant operational and policy stakeholders as required.

Related content

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