



Home Office

Diplomatic Visa Arrangement

Version 3.0

This guidance is intended for Home Office staff and covers persons applying for a Diplomatic Visa Arrangement visa.

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About this guidance

This guidance tells entry clearance decision makers and Border Force officers about the Diplomatic Visa Arrangement (DVA) visa and permission to enter the UK on the DVA 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, 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 **3.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **3 August 2026**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to reflect changes to Appendix V: Visitor of the Immigration Rules, which extends the Diplomatic Visa Arrangement to diplomatic passport holders from India.

Related content

[Contents](#)

What is a DVA visa?

The Diplomatic Visa Arrangement (DVA) visa is a type of visitor visa for holders of diplomatic passports from China, Indonesia, South Africa, Turkey, Vietnam or India whose visa application is supported by their government through the inclusion of their name on a Note Verbale, confirming their eligibility for the DVA.

The DVA replaces diplomatic visa waivers, which were removed on 11 March 2025. As such, DVA visas are currently only open to the nationalities listed above.

The purpose of the DVA visa route is to facilitate diplomatic travel. However, DVA visa holders may also use the visa for visits for personal reasons.

DVA visas must be obtained before travelling to the UK.

Who can apply for a DVA visa?

DVA visas can only be obtained by diplomatic passport holders from the countries listed at paragraph V 15A.4 of Appendix V: Visitor of the Immigration Rules. Holders of standard passports or other types of special categories of passport can [apply for a visit visa instead](#).

Dependents are not permitted on this route.

Applicants must be over 18 years of age.

The DVA visa route is not designed for people who are exempt from immigration control. People who are exempt from immigration control are advised to [apply for an exempt vignette](#) instead.

DVA visas are a type of visitor visa and are not a route to settlement.

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Is there an application fee for a DVA visa?

No. Those eligible for a DVA visa do not have to pay an application fee.

Do people who apply for the DVA visa need to give their biometric information?

No. Applicants are not required to give their biometric information. However, to produce the visa we require the applicants to provide a facial photograph submitted with the application online or when they submit their passport at a Visa Application Centre. This facial photograph must meet [passport photograph standards](#).

Duration of DVA visas

Entry clearance as a DVA visa visitor will be valid for 2 years and allow multiple visits of up to 6 months at a time.

Validity requirements

All applications for a DVA must be submitted online using the [DVA application form](#). They can be submitted from any country outside the UK.

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 diplomatic passport, confirming their identity and nationality. While the individual is not required to personally attend a Visa Application Centre (VAC) overseas to enrol biometrics, their passport and the facial image of the applicant must be submitted in person at a VAC. Submission of these documents can be undertaken by either the applicant themselves or an authorised representative, for example a 'runner' employed by their Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Applicants must be aged 18 years or older at the time of application.

The applicant must meet all the validity requirements set out in [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

The following activities set out in Appendix V: Visitor are excluded from the DVA:

- PA 10.1. Provisions for overseas graduates from medical, dental or nursing schools
- PA 16.1: Provisions for private and medical treatment
- PA 16.2: Provisions for visitors acting as organ donor
- PA 17: Provisions for studying as a visitor

Suitability requirements

Where an application is set to be refused on suitability grounds, or a DVA visa is set to be cancelled, it must be done with reference to the relevant paragraph of [Part Suitability of the Immigration Rules](#).

See the Grounds for refusal and cancellation (suitability) for further information.

Eligibility requirements

The applicant must satisfy the following eligibility requirements to be issued a DVA visa:

Diplomatic passport from a valid country

The applicant must hold a valid diplomatic passport from the People's Republic of China, Indonesia, South Africa, Turkey, Vietnam or India. Other types of passports such as special, official and public affairs passports will not be eligible for the DVA.

Note Verbale

The applicant must provide a Note Verbale in support of their application issued by their government, confirming their role.

The Note Verbale **must** contain both:

- the applicant's name, date of birth and passport number
- confirmation that their application is supported by the government of their nationality

The Note Verbale **must** have been issued on or prior to the application date.

The Note Verbale must have been issued on or prior to the application date, and must not have been withdrawn prior to the decision being made. The onus is on the requesting government to notify UKVI of any withdrawal of support and you are not required to re-confirm support prior to making a decision.

Genuine visitor requirement

Paragraph V 4.2 and V 4.3 of Appendix V: Visitor set out that you must be satisfied that the applicant is a genuine visitor and has sufficient funds for travel, maintenance, and accommodation for their visit.

A Note Verbale must be provided as part of the application. If you are satisfied that the Note Verbale is genuine this will normally be sufficient to confirm that the applicant meets the genuine visitor requirement and has sufficient funds.

Granting entry clearance

If the applicant meets all the requirements of [Appendix V: Visitor](#), you must grant entry clearance.

The endorsement you must use is:

Endorsement: VISIT – DIPLOMATIC VISA ARRANGEMENT

Cat D endorsement: Code 3

Duration: 2 years

Number of entries: Multiple entries

Nationals of China issued with entry clearance in the DVA route are not eligible for the British-Irish visa scheme (BIVS) and must not be issued with a BIVS endorsement.

Refusing entry clearance

You should refuse if you are not satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the applicant meets the requirements of the Visitor rule. See also the Visit guidance on burden of proof and evidence and genuineness and credibility and guidance on: Grounds for refusal and cancellation (suitability). 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.

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