

# Applying for a UK visitor visa



**GREAT** 

BRITAIN & NORTHERN IRELAND

## Applying for a UK visitor visa is quick and simple

Depending on your nationality you'll:

- have to apply for a standard visitor visa before you travel to the UK
- be able to visit the UK for up to 6 months without needing a visa

If you need a visa, you can visit the UK on a standard visitor visa for tourism, business, study (courses up to 6 months) and other permitted activities.

You can usually stay in the UK for up to 6 months. You might be able to apply to stay for longer in certain circumstances, such as getting medical treatment.

### What you need to do

First, check if you need to apply for a visa to visit the UK. Then:

- check if what you plan to do in the UK is permitted as a standard visitor
- check you meet the eligibility requirements
- apply for a standard visitor visa online if you need one

For the latest information, including eligibility requirements and what documents you'll need to apply, visit [GOV.UK/standard-visitor](https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor)



## What you can and cannot do

You can visit the UK as a standard visitor:

- for tourism, such as a holiday or vacation
- to see your family or friends
- to volunteer for up to 30 days with a registered charity
- to pass through the UK to another country ('in transit')
- for certain business activities, for example attending a meeting or interview
- to take part in a school exchange programme
- to do a recreational course of up to 30 days, for example a dance course
- to study, do a placement or take an exam
- as an academic, senior doctor or dentist
- for medical reasons

## You cannot:

- do paid or unpaid work for a UK company or as a self-employed person
- claim public funds (benefits)
- live in the UK for long periods of time through frequent or successive visits
- marry or register a civil partnership, or give notice of marriage or civil partnership (you'll need to apply for a marriage visitor visa for this)

## What are the eligibility requirements?

You must have a passport or travel document to enter the UK. It should be valid for the whole of your stay.

## You must be able to show that:

- you'll leave the UK at the end of your visit
- you're able to support yourself and your dependants during your trip (or have funding from someone else to support you)

- you're able to pay for your return or onward journey (or have funding from someone else to pay for the journey)
- you'll not live in the UK for extended periods through frequent or successive visits, or make the UK your main home

You may need to meet extra eligibility requirements if you're visiting the UK:

- to study, do a placement or take an exam
- as an academic, senior doctor or dentist
- for medical reasons

## How do I apply?

You must apply for a standard visitor visa online before you come to the UK. The earliest you should apply is 3 months before you travel.

For the latest information on the cost of your UK visa use our online tool at [GOV.UK/visa-fees](https://www.gov.uk/visa-fees)

If you visit the UK regularly, you can choose to apply for a long-term standard visitor visa instead. These visas last 2, 5 or 10 years and you can stay for a maximum of 6 months on each visit.

## How long does it take to get a decision?

Once you've applied online, proved your identity and provided your documents, you'll usually get a decision on your visa within 3 weeks.

Depending on what country you're in, you can check to see if you can get your visa decision faster at [GOV.UK/faster-decision-visa-settlement/applying-outside-the-uk](https://www.gov.uk/faster-decision-visa-settlement/applying-outside-the-uk)

For all the latest information about the visa decision waiting times visit [GOV.UK/guidance/visa-processing-times-applications-outside-the-uk](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-processing-times-applications-outside-the-uk)



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Find out more at  
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