Visa Guidance for International Students

This guide provides a comprehensive overview of the student visa journey, offering key insights into application procedures, eligibility criteria, required documentation, and compliance responsibilities for international students. It is designed to support you through every step of the process, from preparing your application and securing a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to understanding visa conditions and maintaining compliance during your studies. This guide should be used in conjunction with the full UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Student Visa Policy Guidance to ensure you meet all legal requirements and stay informed of your rights and obligations as an international student in the UK

Do I need a Visa?

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations require the majority of non-EEA and EEA nationals studying in the UK to obtain a student visa. Without one, you will not be permitted to enter the UK. To check whether you need a student visa to study in the UK please visit the **Check UK Visa page on the UK Government's website**.

Which type of Visa do I need?

It depends on what course you are studying. For our Foundation course, you will need a standard visitor visa. For Undergraduate or Postgraduate courses, you will need a Student Visa

When should I apply?

You can apply for your Student Visa no more than six months prior to the start of your course if outside of the UK or three months if applying from within the UK, however you can only apply once you have everything you need to support your application. Most Student Visa applications take approximately three weeks to be processed, although in some cases it can take longer than this during peak application periods. It is important to ensure that your application is completed correctly prior to submitting it to maximise your chances of a swift processing time. It is not advisable to book flights for travel to the UK until after the visa has been issued.

If you are currently studying in the UK at a different institution and on a different student visa and are hoping to apply for your student visa for Bruford from within the UK, you can only do this if your current visa expires less than one month prior to the start of your

course at Bruford. If your current visa ends more than one month before the start of the course at Bruford, you will need to return home and make your new student visa application from there.

Where should I apply?

You must apply from the country you are ordinarily resident in. For example, an Australian student should submit their application in Australia. The exception to this is if you are currently in the UK on a type of visa which enables you to switch to a Student Visa – if this is the case you can apply from within the UK. Types of visas which enable an applicant to apply to switch to the Student Visa from within the UK can be found on the Switch to This Visa webpage on the UK Government website.

How do I apply?

You will have to apply through the online application system on the **Student Visa - Apply webpage on the UK Government website**. As well as submitting the online application form you will also need to submit any documentary evidence asked of you, submit your biometric information (fingerprints and photograph) by either using the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' or attending a Visa Application Centre and pay an Immigration Health Surcharge.

How much does the visa cost?

If you are applying for your student visa from outside the UK, the fee for your visa will be £558 (or the local currency equivalent). If you are already in the UK and are permitted to apply for your visa from here the application fee is £558. You will be required to pay the application fee every time you submit a new application, so it is very important to ensure that your application is correct and complete, with the required accompanying documentary evidence, prior to submitting it.

How long does the visa application take?

The visa processing time is typically 3 weeks if there are no complications. Further and up to date information can be found here: Visa processing times: applications outside the UK - GOV.UK

What are the criteria for applying for a Student Visa?

There are two key criteria you would have to meet for your student visa application to be successful. You must have met these criteria the point of applying for the visa.

1. You will need to prove that you have been accepted on to a course of study at an approved educational institution. To do this you must have a **Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)**. This is a reference number unique to the individual which the educational institution will have generated for you. This CAS is generated

through the UKVI website using information about you (your name, nationality, passport number, course of study, duration of study, required tuition fees, tuition fees paid so far), so will be recognised when you come to apply for your student visa. Only the specified individual will be able to use the unique CAS generated for them and only approved institutions are able to generate a CAS. No student visa application will ever be successful without a CAS. We are only able to issue a CAS once a student has accepted their offer of a place at Bruford and met the conditions of your offer. Your CAS number will be emailed to you; you do not need an original hard copy of this letter to support your student visa application – having the information in email form is sufficient.

2. You must be able to cover your **tuition fees** for the first year of your course as well as your living costs for nine months. For most students, living costs are determined by UKVI to be £1,570 per month, so at the point of making your visa application you must have the funds to cover the tuition fees plus at least 9 months (£14,130) living costs. UKVI are very strict about what they will accept for evidence of your ability to fund your studies.

3. You must have met **English Language** by way of a SELT if required.

How do I prove I have sufficient funds?

You can prove that you have sufficient funding in three ways.

1. Self Funded

You must provide original bank statements showing that you have cleared sufficient funds to cover the required amount (see above). These must be either in your name, held jointly in your name, or be your parents' bank account. These funds must have been in the account for at least 28 consecutive days, ending no more than 31 days before you submit your student visa application ie: If you submit your application on 1 January 2026, you'd have to show that the funds were in your bank account for at least the 28-day period ending on 1 December 2026. If it is your parents' bank account then you will also need to send an original, signed and dated letter of guarantee from your parents confirming their relationship to you and consent for funding to be given for study. You will also need to include official documentation, such as your birth certificate, to prove the relationship.

2. Full or Part Bank Loan

You must provide a letter confirming the loan in your name and clearly showing the amount. The bank providing the loan must be regulated by an official regulatory body. If your loan is to cover part of your tuition fees and maintenance costs you must also provide financial evidence as detailed in "Self-Funded" for the remaining balance.

3. Official Financial or Government Sponsorship

You must provide a letter confirming the sponsorship from the official financial sponsor. This must be on company letter-headed paper and have the official stamp of the organisation on it. The letter must also detail the length of the sponsorship and the amount of money you will receive (or a statement that your official sponsor will cover all of your tuition and maintenance expenses).

When the evidence you provide is in an overseas currency you must write the closing balance in pounds sterling according to the exchange rate on the Currency Converter at **oanda.com**. It is recommended that you print off the conversion from the site and include it with your application.

Your statements should be in English or officially translated.

Further information on money you need can be found here: Student visa : Money you need - GOV.UK

What if I have already paid some of my tuition fees?

If some, or all your tuition fees have already been paid (such as your deposit) you need to make sure this is referred to in your CAS letter. In generating the CAS we input the amount of fees you have paid up to that point in time. The CAS record can be updated by ourselves to show any changes in your status (e.g.; if you have made an additional tuition fee payment) at any time up until you submit your student visa application.

Do I need to provide evidence of qualifications?

Applicants are required to submit with their application the originals of all academic qualifications that the College has used in reaching the decision to make an unconditional offer to the student. As all offers at Bruford will only be made after an applicant has undertaken an audition or interview, we will simply write on your CAS the following statement;

“The student was interviewed by the Programme Director and offered a place based on successful interview.”

As such, you would not need to submit any academic qualifications with your visa application. You just need to enter in your student visa application that your offer was made based upon your performance at audition/interview. You will be asked “What type of sponsor will you be studying with” here you should select the option: **Higher Education Provider with a track record of compliance**.

How do I prove my English language proficiency?

Both Bruford and UKVI need to be satisfied that all students coming to study at Bruford have the necessary level of English language proficiency to enable them to successfully

complete their course of study. Nationals of non-English speaking countries will need to prove that they have the required level of English. Bruford will list on your CAS that we have assessed your English language ability. This will be assessed using one of the accepted SELT's on the Bruford and UKVI websites.

All students studying at undergraduate level must obtain a minimum B2 level on the CEFR scale. Below outlines the grading equivalent to this by SELT

Provider	Minimum score for UG	Minimum score for PG
IELTS for UKVI	5.5 overall, no less than 5.5 in each component	6.5 overall, no less than 6.0 in each component
TOEFL IBT	4.0 overall, no less than 4.0 in each component	4.5 overall, no less than 4.0 in each component
IB Diploma English	English Language or English Language and Literature HL 4 or SL 5	English Language or English Language and Literature HL 5 or SL 6
LanguageCert B2 Communicator	33 overall, no less than 33 in each component	HIGHPASS overall with no less than 39 in each component
LanguageCert Academic	60 overall, no less than 60 in each component	70 overall, no less than 60 in each component
Trinity College ISE	ISE II - Pass	ISE II –merit
Pearson Academic UKVI	59 overall, no less than 59 in each subcomponent	65 overall, no less than 60 in each subcomponent
PSI (Skills for English) 4SB2 Upper Intermediate	4SB2 Upper Intermediate 'Pass'	4SB2 Upper Intermediate 'Pass'

Whatever we have listed in your CAS you should enter in the student visa application.

Must all applicants provide all this evidence?

If UKVI consider that you are 'low risk', you will not normally need to provide all the supporting documents (to prove your funding, etc.) listed here. If you are a low risk applicant you will be able to apply under the 'differentiation arrangements'.

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Please visit the Student route: caseworker guidance webpage on the UK Government website to see which documents you are normally exempt from providing if you are 'low risk'. Despite this, be aware that UKVI reserves the right to request all the documents from any student. If the UKVI does ask you to submit any documents, they will refuse

your application unless you submit them by the date stated in the request. To be considered 'low risk' you must be applying for a Student visa in your country of nationality. Additionally, you must be a national of one of the countries below:

Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech, Republic, Denmark, The Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, British National (Overseas), Hong Kong SAR, Macau SAR and Taiwan (those who hold a passport issued by Taiwan that includes the number of the identification card issued by the competent authority in Taiwan)

What information should I include in my visa application?

There are a number of sections in the student visa application which will require you to enter information about Bruford and the course you will be studying. For these sections you should enter exactly what we have listed in the CAS letter which we will email to you. Entries such as the School name, course title, start date, end date, course tuition fees, how many fees you have paid so far, how we have assessed your English language proficiency, what evidence we have used in deciding to offer you a place - for all of these you must enter in your visa application the same information that we have entered in your CAS letter. The information in your CAS letter will be exactly what we have entered into UKVI's systems when creating the CAS – what you put in your visa application must match this. If any of this information is incorrect you must let us know before submitting your visa application. It can be changed up until that time, but not once your application has been submitted.

You may also be asked for the address at which you will be living in the UK. We know that not all students will have their accommodation confirmed when completing the student visa application. If this is the case it is okay to list Bruford's address (Rose Bruford College, Burnt Oak Lane, Sidcup, Kent, DA15 9DF)

Do I have to pay an Immigration Health Surcharge?

Yes, all Student Visa applicants must pay this surcharge. This entitles you to use the UK's National Health Service (NHS) when you arrive in the UK. You will have to pay for any regular prescriptions and dental appointments, however, will be able to access medical care, including emergency treatment, for free.

You must pay this surcharge prior to submitting your visa application. Please note that if your visa lasts for more than one year - even if the course does not – you may have to pay a portion of a second year of the surcharge. When receiving your visa, your leave generally starts a month before your course start date with an additional 4 months added following your course finish date. For more information on how much and how to pay this, please visit the Immigration Healthcare Surcharge webpage on the UK Government website. There is also a calculator function there which will tell you exactly how much you need to pay.

Is there anything else I need to provide?

You will need to have your biometrics taken as part of the visa application process. This involves a full-face digital photograph and a digital scan of all your fingerprints being taken. These will be stored on a central government database in the UK and checked against government records.
Your biometrics can be taken at several centres worldwide and in most cases, you will have a biometrics appointment confirmed for you when you submit your visa application. For a list of visa application centres at which you can submit your biometrics, please visit the Find a Visa Application Centre webpage on the UK Government website. This should only be done once you have submitted your online visa application.

Will I be interviewed as part of the visa application?

Some applicants may be interviewed by UKVI as part of the process. This might take place when you are applying for your visa in your home country or when you arrive in the UK. This is quite normal and you should not worry about it. UKVI staff will be carrying out interviews to ensure that only genuine students are travelling to the UK to study here.

When can I enter the UK?

If you are successful in your Student Visa application and you are granted permission to enter the UK, you will be written to confirming the details of your visa. This will include the start and end dates of your visa, and any conditions attached to it (such as permission to work whilst in the UK). ***You cannot enter the UK before the student visa start date.*** If you try to enter the UK before or after that time you may be refused entry and may have to return home to apply for a new Student Visa.

In your Student Visa application you will be asked your intended date of travel to the UK. You will be able to come to the UK either one month before your course start date or seven days before your intended date of travel, whichever is later. It is advisable not to book your transport to the UK until your Student Visa application has been approved and your student visa start date has been confirmed to you.

What are my immigration responsibilities?

UKVI regulations mean that as the holder of a Student Visa you will have certain responsibilities when you enter the UK. These will be as follows:

- Once your student visa has been granted, this will be a digital format. You must prove your immigration status but providing the College with a sharecode prior to studies. Failure to do this will prevent you from registering onto the course
- You must update the College with any changes to your contact details, passport and visa details.
- You must be using your stay for study purposes – this means you will need to have good attendance and no significant gaps or absences. You must comply with the College Academic Engagement Policy
- You must follow the official processes set by the College if you decide that you would like to defer, suspend your studies, or withdraw from the course.
- You must return home if you stop studying in the UK (e.g.; if you defer, suspend your studies, withdraw from the course or your course is terminated);
- You must notify UKVI by email if you change your course or your institution after you arrive in the UK – it is a criminal offence to register for studies at an institution other than the one shown on your visa. Bruford will also notify UKVI if you defer, suspend studies, withdraw, change course or change institution;
- You must observe the Immigration Rules and not work more than 20 hours a week during term time.

How long will I be able to stay in the UK after my course ends?

For courses that last 12 months or more, you will receive a further 4 months after the course end date listed on your CAS. For example, if your course end date on your CAS is 30th June 2028, your visa end date will generally be 30th October 2028

Do I have to apply for a new visa each year?

No. The CAS start and end date will cover the full duration of your course.

Any further questions?

Our strongest recommendation would always be to read all the relevant information in this document, as well as on the UKVI website, and in any guidance notes they provide to accompany the application process. Every year we do encounter a number of students whose visa applications are unsuccessful because they have not provided the correct evidence to prove that they have sufficient funding or have completed the visa application form incorrectly.

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If anything is unclear, please do ask. We will be more than happy to help to ensure that the whole process is worked through with a minimum of disruption. You can reach us at: international@bruford.ac.uk.

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