Visiting Europe and the USA

The information provided in this guide is correct at the time of publication (May 2015) however it is subject to change without notice. For the most up-to-date information, please check the online version of this guide at www.nottingham.ac.uk/internationalstudents/guides

Visiting Europe

If you are planning to travel to Europe for a holiday or to attend a conference, you may need to apply for a visa.

Countries in the Schengen Visa Scheme

Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland

The above countries have signed up to the Schengen Visa Scheme. This scheme allows those wishing to visit certain countries within Europe to travel using only one visa. These countries share a central immigration database and common visa processing and issuing procedures.

You will still be subject to immigration control at each port of entry, but having a valid visa for one of the countries usually enables you to travel freely throughout the Schengen space for up to three months.

Nationals of the EEA do not have to obtain a Schengen visa. Neither do nationals of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Costa Rica, Chile, Croatia, El Salvador, Honduras, Hong Kong (SAR), Guatemala, Japan, Korean Republic (South), Israel, Macao, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Singapore, Uruguay, USA or Venezuela. This list isn’t exhaustive and can sometimes vary even between Schengen member countries. Other countries in Europe have their own individual visa requirements. It is advisable to check with the embassy or consulate of the country that you are visiting to confirm if a visa is required.

Types of Schengen visa

The short stay or travel visa is suitable if you wish to visit the Schengen states for up to three months in any six-month period. This is the most common type of visa for students wanting to travel in the Schengen space as tourists or to attend conferences.

If you wish to travel more than once into the Schengen space during a three-month period, you can apply for a multiple entry visa. This will allow you to return to the UK between visits to the Schengen countries. The application for a multiple entry visa may not be successful unless you have evidence of all the travel arrangements and bookings.
Applying for a Schengen visa

If you are visiting only one country in the Schengen space, you should apply at the embassy or consulate of that country.

If you are visiting several countries, you should apply at the embassy or consulate of the country that is your main destination - the country where you will spend the most time.

If you are spending an equal length of time in each of several countries, you should apply at the embassy or consulate of the country that you will enter first.

Processing times

The length of time that it takes to process an application varies between one and several weeks. It is very important that you apply in plenty of time before your planned trip. The embassies and consulates become extremely busy around Easter and summer vacation times, and visa processing may take longer than usual. It can also be difficult to secure a visa if you are coming towards the end of your course in the UK so it is vital to start planning as early as possible.

Contacting Schengen embassies and consulates

Some embassies and consulates will accept postal applications and some operate appointment-only services for in-person applications. Sometimes you can submit your application in person, and provide a Special Delivery envelope for your passport to be returned to you.

If you need an urgent appointment, such as for visiting a very sick relative or for attending a funeral, it may be possible for you to arrange this by contacting the embassy or consulate with your request and evidence of the need for urgent travel.

If you telephone any of the recorded information lines, ensure that you have enough money to call as most lines have a high cost per minute.

For information on the application procedure you should follow, start by checking the detailed information on the website of the relevant embassy or consulate website. Please see below for contact details listed A-Z.

Countries inside the Schengen area

Austrian Embassy
Visa Department
18 Belgrave Mews West
London
SW1X 8HU
t: 0203 002 5936 (must pay booking fee with credit card of approximately £11)
e: london-ob@bmeia.gv.at
w: www.bmeia.gv.at/en/embassy/london

Belgian Embassy – VFS Visa Application Centre
1-8 Bateman’s Building
South Soho Square
London
W1D 3EN
t: 0871 376 0023
w: diplomatie.belgium.be/united_kingdom

Embassy of the Czech Republic
Visa Department, 30 Kensington Palace Gardens, London, W8 4QY
t: (information line) 09065 508 931
e: visa.london@embassy.mzv.cz
w: www.mzv.cz/london/en

Exchange and study abroad students holding a UK short-term student visa valid for 6 months or less

The French Consulate, London, is no longer able to process visa applications of holders of ‘C-Visit’ visas or of a British visa valid for 6 months or less. People must apply for their Schengen visas before travelling to the UK in their country of residence.

Potentially, it is risky to apply to other Schengen countries, although information is not clear on this at the moment. Only the French Embassy has posted this information on their website at present.

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Royal Danish Embassy
55 Sloane Street
London
SW1X 9SR
t: 0207 333 0200
e: lonemb@um.dk
w: www.denmark.org.uk

Embassy of Iceland
2A Hans Street
London
SW1X OJE
t: 0207 245 9649
e: info@iceland.is
w: www.iceland.is/iceland-abroad/uk

Estonian Embassy
16 Hyde Park Gate
London
SW7 5DG
t: 0207 838 5388
e: london@mfa.ee
w: www.estonia.gov.uk

Consulate of Italy in London
14 Three Kings Yard
London
W1K 4EH
t: 0207 312 2200
e: ambasciata.londra@esteri.it
w: www.amblondra.esteri.it

Embassy of Finland
38 Chesham Place
London
SW1X 8HW
t: 0207 838 6200
e: sanomat.lon@formin.fi
w: www.finemb.org.uk

Latvian Embassy
45 Nottingham Place
London
W1U 5LY
t: 0207 312 0040
w: www.am.gov.lv/en/london/visas

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
23 Belgrave Square
London
SW1X 8PZ
t: 0207 824 1465 for general visa enquiries
(Mon-Thurs 13.30-15.30)
w: www.london.diplo.de

Embassy of Greece
1a Holland Park
London
W113TP
t: 0207 313 5600/0207 313 5609
w: www.greekembassy.org.uk

Embassy of the Republic of Hungary
35 Eaton Place
London
SW1X 8BY
t: 0207 201 3440
e: mission.lon@mfa.gov.hu
w: www.mfa.gov.hu/emb/london

Embassy of Luxembourg
27 Wilton Crescent
London
SW1X 8SD
t: 0207 235 6961
e: londres.amb@mae.etat.lu
w: londres.mae.lu/en/visas-passports

Malta High Commission
Malta House
36-38 Piccadilly
London
W1V 0PQ
t: 0207 292 4806
e: visa.mfa@gov.mt
w: www.foreign.gov.mt

Netherlands Consulate
38 Hyde Park Gate
London
SW7 5DP
t: 0207 590 3200
Visiting Europe and the USA

Embassy of Sweden
11 Montagu Place
London
W1H 2AL
t: 0207 917 6413/6418
e: ambassaden.london-visum@foreign.ministry.se
w: www.swedenabroad.com

Embassy of Switzerland and Principality of Liechtenstein
16/18 Montagu Place
London
W1H 2BQ
t: 0207 616 6000
e: visaswiss.uk@vfshelpline.com
w: www.swissembassy.org.uk

Countries outside the Schengen area

Cyprus and Ireland are outside the Schengen space. If you would like to visit either of these countries, you should apply for a visa at their individual embassies.

Cyprus High Commission
13 St James’ Square
London
SW1Y 4LB
t: 0207 3214 101/102/103/104
e: cyprusconsulate@btconnect.com
w: www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/highcom/highcom_london.nsf

Embassy of Ireland
Passport and Visa Section
114a Cromwell Road
London
SW7 4ES.
t: 0906 6610197 (calls cost £1.50 per minute)
w: www.embassyofireland.co.uk

Please note that individuals that hold a type C (single, double, multiple entry), valid Schengen visa do not require a Cyprus visa provided that they have a valid residence permit (not an entry clearance) for the United Kingdom and that they have already entered a Schengen state with this visa at least once. Those who are eligible to travel under this directive may do so provided that their Schengen visa is valid on their return from Cyprus.
Documents to include in a Schengen visa application

Although you should find out the exact visa requirements for each individual embassy or consulate from their websites or telephone information lines, there are some standard documents that you should provide with your application.

All documents must be originals, and most embassies and consulates ask for you to provide photocopies as well.

- a completed application form (download from the website)
- 2-3 recent passport photos
- a passport for each person travelling, with a UK visa valid for at least three months beyond the date of your expected visit to Europe
- the appropriate fee paid either by postal orders, card or cheque (see individual websites for exact amounts)
- a confirmation letter from the University giving details and dates for your course registration. Request the letter online at store.nottingham.ac.uk (Product Catalogue> Student Documents and Letters> Letters)
- a tuition fee receipt may also be useful to show that your school fees are up to date. You can get this from the Student Services Centre
- evidence of sufficient funds for the trip. This may be recent bank statements or credit card statements. Most countries do not state the exact amount required but Austria and the Netherlands suggest budgeting for a minimum of £30 per day
- proof of purpose of the visit, for example bookings and reservations, an itinerary of a tour if applicable or an invitation letter from your host. Some countries expect invitation letters from friends or conference organisers to be verified by the local town hall or police station
- you may also be asked to provide evidence of travel insurance for medical care

Good practice for travelling abroad

- Make sure you have adequate travel insurance. Some holiday companies include insurance with your booking, but otherwise it is wise to buy your own. Investigate various insurance companies at competitive prices on a comparison website like www.moneysupermarket.com.
- While away, leave your valuables, passport, tickets and spare cash in the hotel safe or other secure place. Carry only a photocopy of your passport and the minimum amount of cash that you need for the day.
- Remember to always be aware of your personal safety when travelling. This is particularly important when travelling in an unfamiliar environment. Be safe and sensible and make sure to keep a close watch on your belongings at all times.
- Do not overstay your visa and remember that the laws and procedures may be different to those in the UK or in your home country.
- If you have anything stolen, report it to the local police right away and obtain a police statement about the loss as you will need one to claim against your insurance.
- Contact your bank before travelling to obtain the relevant 24-hour emergency telephone number to report your cards stolen and to cancel them if necessary. Similarly, take the contact details of the issuing agent for your traveller’s cheques and tickets.
- The network service that allows you to use your UK mobile telephone abroad is called international roaming. Contact your network provider to ensure your phone is enabled for this.
- Record on paper or pre-programme into your mobile the telephone number of the appropriate embassy/consulate for your nationality in the country you’re visiting.
- Leave your contact details with a friend in the UK so they can get in touch with you if there is a problem in Nottingham.
Visiting the USA

The US Embassy is very careful in checking visa applications. We recommend that you enclose a concise, point form cover sheet addressed “To Whom It May Concern” listing all the main points supporting your application and to keep all the information brief and relevant. Explain any points that you anticipate causing the embassy concern.

You can provide more detailed information on a separate sheet in your application.

Important information to provide

**Purpose of visit:** Give as much detail as possible if your visit is related to your study, for example by including itineraries and bookings or invitations. State if the trip is an integral part of your course. If applicable, ask your supervisor for a short statement about the importance of this trip to your study and to the department or institution. If you are going to present a paper at a conference in the USA, it is helpful to take along the work you’ve prepared so far.

**Proof of studies:** If you have spent a considerable time in the UK pursuing a degree or if you have a strong desire to complete your course or attend graduation, this may show that you are unlikely to jeopardise your future education by attempting to stay illegally in the USA. To show your intention to return here, give evidence such as results obtained or research planned.

**Cost of study:** You or your sponsor may have invested large sums of money in your UK education. Give details of how much you are spending on your course and accommodation, including receipts for any tuition or accommodation fees paid in advance. This helps to show an incentive to return to the UK to complete your studies.

**Scholarship conditions:** Make it clear if a sponsor requires you to return home after your studies, especially if you face penalties, such as financial repayments, for failing to do so.

**Prior travel:** Providing that you did not stay illegally or break the conditions of stay, prior trips to the USA or to European countries may be viewed favourably. Include old passports in the application as evidence of your travel history if the present passport does not show this evidence.

**Future plans:** Include any information you have on a career plan in your home country and any links with sponsors or employers.

**Family:** State if you are leaving dependent relatives behind in the UK or in your home country as this can demonstrate a strong reason to return from the USA.

Documents to include in your application

All documents must be originals. Keep photocopies of everything you send, particularly your passport.

- relevant completed application form(s)
- a passport for each person travelling
- recent passport photos
- University confirmation letter giving course details and start, end and graduation dates of your course. Request the letter at **store.nottingham.ac.uk** (Product Catalogue > Student Documents and Letters > Letters)
- a tuition fee receipt may also be useful to show that your school fees are up to date
- recent bank statements - you must demonstrate that you have access to at least £30 per day for basic living expenses during your trip
- evidence of destination and travel arrangements such as conference and hotel bookings or an invitation letter from your host. Please note that you should not buy non-refundable tickets until you have secured a visa
- you may also be asked to provide evidence of travel insurance for medical care
Factors that may hinder the application

International student visa applications can be refused because it is difficult to show that you have sufficiently strong ties to the UK to compel you to return. Living temporarily in the UK can be a problem for your application, so it is especially not advisable to apply for a US visa within the first 6 months of your stay here. If you knew before coming to the UK that you would travel to the USA, you would normally be expected to have applied for a US visa at the embassy in your home country before arriving here. Similarly, do not apply for a US visa close to the end of your stay in the UK either. This is because the embassy will not consider that you have sufficient incentive to return to the UK at the end of your trip.

If you have previously been refused a visa for the USA, this will hinder your application. Refusal in your home country almost guarantees that the application will not succeed elsewhere.

If you have relatives in the USA you should fully explain why they are there, for example job title, earnings etc. It is unlikely that having relatives there will be a decisive factor in the embassy granting you a visa and it may further weaken an already weak application.

US Embassy contact details

24 Grosvenor Square
London, W1A 2LQ

t: Operator Assisted Visa Information:
09042 450100 (This is NOT a London number. It does not require any other prefix or dialling code.)
Monday - Friday, 8am-9pm
Saturdays from 9am-4pm
(£1.23/min; only available in the UK, within UK may be unavailable from some business telephones and mobile networks).
w: www.usembassy.org.uk
We’re here to help, get in touch:

We offer a professional and confidential advisory service to all international and EU students both before they join the University and once they have arrived.

You can contact us by email, telephone or in person. We run a regular service where you can meet an International Student Advisor, Monday to Friday throughout the academic year. To find out more about our service times and locations, please visit: www.nottingham.ac.uk/internationalstudents/advisors

The International Office is located at:
C Floor, YANG Fujia Building
Jubilee Campus
Wollaton Road
The University of Nottingham
NG8 1BB

t: +44 (0)115 951 5247
f: +44 (0)115 951 5155
e: international-support@nottingham.ac.uk

We are always looking for ways to develop and improve our support service and welcome feedback from staff and students.

The information in this leaflet is given in good faith and correct at the time of writing. It has been carefully checked in line with UKCISA and Home Office guidance, but The University of Nottingham accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information.

If you would like any further information or assistance, please contact us. The advisors, Rosemary Gibson, Melanie Bentham-Hill, Ruth Hudson, Amy Newham, Hong Sun and Deborah Webb are authorised to provide immigration advice and services by an order made under Section 84 (4) (d) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

If at any time you are not happy with the advice you have been given by the International Office, in the first instance you should raise this with the Head of International Support and Engagement or the Director of the International Office. If the matter is not resolved or you are still unhappy, you can make a complaint to the OISC (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner) via their website www.oisc.gov.uk

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e: alternativeformats@nottingham.ac.uk