



University of
Nottingham

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International Student Guide

Visas for family and friends



nottingham.ac.uk/go/guides

Visas for family and friends

The information provided in this guide is correct at the time of publication (February 2019). However, it is subject to change without notice. For the most up-to-date information, please check the online version of this guide at nottingham.ac.uk/go/guides

Inviting family or friends to visit the UK

Any family member or friend can come to visit you in the UK for a short period of time while you are studying here. Depending on their nationality, they can either apply for a standard visitor visa on arrival in the UK or they will have to apply for their visa before they travel to the UK.

To determine their situation, check online: www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa

Please note, if the above website states that you will “not need a visa” it means that they don’t need to obtain a visa prior to travel. They will still need to make a visa application on arrival at the UK border.

Standard visitors will normally be able to visit the UK for a maximum of six months. The six-month period cannot be extended. It is important that visitors are genuinely seeking entry for a limited period and plan to return home at the end of their stay.

They are not permitted to work while they are in the UK and they will also not be entitled to claim public funds. This means that they must be able to prove that they have sufficient funds to finance their stay in the UK. Visitors are also not eligible for healthcare under the National Health Service (NHS). It is essential for visitors to have medical insurance or travel insurance that covers medical needs if they are a non-EEA national here on a standard visitor visa. Visitors should purchase this in their home country before they travel to the UK.

Obtaining a standard visitor visa on arrival to the UK

Dependant on nationality, some visitors can be issued with a standard visitor visa when they arrive in the UK*. This will be issued as a stamp in their passport. In order to issue a visa for a maximum of six months, the immigration officer at the airport will ask to see documentation such as:

- proof of visit (for example, letter of invitation from the student and proof that they are enrolled on a course of study)
- proof of finances available (for example, recent, original bank statements belonging to the visitor, or evidence of financial support from the student)

These documents must be in the hand luggage of the person seeking entry in order to show to immigration officers at the airport.

It is also helpful to show return tickets so that your visitor can prove that they do not intend to stay in the UK.

If the visitor does not speak English, you may wish to write a letter for them, to present on arrival which explains the purpose of their visit.

* If the visitor has a complex immigration history or previous experience of being refused a visa, they should consider applying for and securing the visa before they travel. Please contact the Visa and Immigration team if you have any questions about this.

Applying for a standard visitor visa prior to departure from home country

If your visitor is required to apply for a standard visitor visa before they travel to the UK, they must apply via a visa application centre in their home country. This process is usually undertaken online. Please visit: www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa

If they are successful in securing entry clearance as a standard visitor, they will be able to enter the UK for up to six months. The six-month period cannot be extended. In some cases, it is possible to apply for a multi-entry visitor visa, which can have a validity of up to five or 10 years. Each visit must still last less than six months on each occasion and the visitor should not spend more than six months in the UK in any 12 month period. Usually, a multi-entry visitor visa can only be secured where there is an ongoing, long-term reason for visiting the UK and it would not normally be issued where the applicant is making their first standard visitor visa application to come to the UK.

More information on standard visitor visas, how to apply and what documents to prepare can be found online:

www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa/documents-you-must-provide

Our guidance opposite should also help you to prepare documents to assist any visitors in making their application for a standard visitor visa.

Documents a visitor should submit with their visa application

Items in list A are to be provided by the applicant themselves.

Items in list B have to be supplied by you and posted to your family / friends so that they can include the original copies with their visa application. We recommend that you always post via special courier (such as DHL or UPS) as this is quick and reliable.

List A

- Online visa application form: www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa/apply
- Valid passport
- Visa fee (£93 in local currency at the time of writing)
- Recent passport photographs
- Evidence of funds to cover all expenses, for example, personal bank statements or evidence of earnings. As a rough guide, estimate £30 per day for basic expenses in addition to accommodation, travel and entertainment costs
- Evidence of medical insurance, perhaps as part of an overall travel insurance policy. Visitors are not eligible for NHS treatment
- Evidence to show that they intend to return home at the end of their visit. This might be proof of a job, family members, study or a mortgage

List B

- A university letter giving course details and start, end and graduation dates of your course. Request the letter online at store.nottingham.ac.uk (Product Catalogue> Student Documents and Letters> Letters)
- An invitation letter from you. This should provide details of any costs you will cover, accommodation such as a hotel reservation or a room in the student's house (in which case you can also include a copy of the tenancy agreement), an itinerary of planned activity and the dates and purpose of the visit. An example letter is provided at the end of this guide
- If you wish, you can fully fund a visitor to come to the UK and can send bank statements of your own to your friend or family member, though this is less common and you may want to seek advice from the Visa and Immigration Team in this situation
- Certified photocopies of your passport and visa. Please bring the originals and photocopies to our drop-in session and the Visa and Immigration Team can certify them for you

Sample invitation letter which you should write

Dear....

I am writing to invite you to visit me in Nottingham on..... for days/weeks. I am a full-time registered student at the University of Nottingham, and I've enclosed a letter from the University confirming the details of my course.

I confirm that I will be responsible for the cost of your accommodation whilst you are staying in the UK. You will be able to stay in a spare bedroom in my rented house for the duration of your stay. I've enclosed a copy of my tenancy agreement to prove that I am renting this accommodation, and three months' recent bank statements to show that I have sufficient funds to pay for your room.

(Or...) I confirm I have arranged local hotel accommodation for you, please see reservation enclosed for the following hotel:

I also enclose copies of relevant pages from my passport to show that I have valid leave to remain in the UK as a student until.....

For further information, I can be contacted at the above address.

Best wishes...

Name

Please note that this is only a sample letter. You should amend it according to your own circumstances.

Travelling to the UK

All visitors should carry relevant documents in their hand luggage to explain the purpose of their visit and their finances in case the immigration officer at the airport asks for more information before allowing the visitor to enter the UK.

Visitor accommodation

If you need to arrange accommodation for your visitors, you can check with the University Accommodation Office who can provide information on a number of visitor accommodation options either on campus, or close to campus:

nottingham.ac.uk/accommodation/visitoraccommodation

For accommodation in other areas of the UK, the choice is wide and varied. In cities, particularly in London, the cost will be higher but if you consider all of the options from hostels and serviced apartments, you should find something to suit every budget. In more rural destinations it is common to stay in a B&B (bed and breakfast) or guest house, or any number of self-catering options. There are many websites which you can use to plan holiday accommodation in the UK, including:

www.booking.com

www.expedia.co.uk

www.lastminute.com

UK tourist information

We recommend all visitors to the UK take a look at www.visitbritain.com. Here you will find a wealth of information on things to do, places to visit, maps and travel tips. There is also information on travelling around the UK, discounts which can be obtained and advice on choosing the most suitable accommodation.

Visiting Europe

If the visitor plans to go to any other European countries in the course of their visit to the UK and requires a Schengen visa, they should apply for this from the appropriate Embassy in their home country before travelling to the UK as it will not be possible for a visitor to secure that visa in the UK.



Bringing your family to live in the UK

If you and your family are EEA or Swiss nationals, your spouse (husband or wife) and children up to 21 years of age may accompany you to the UK without any restrictions.

If you are an EEA or Swiss national but your dependants are not they must apply for an EEA Family Permit before travelling to the UK. There is no charge for this. Applications can be made online: www.gov.uk/apply-uk-visa

If you are a national of any other country, your spouse/civil partner (and in some cases unmarried partner) may come with you as a Tier 4 student dependant if you can show one of the following:

- you are studying a postgraduate course that lasts 12 months or longer at a higher education institution
- you are a government-sponsored student on a course that lasts six months or longer
- you are applying for or you were last granted leave to remain on the Tier 4 (Doctorate Extension Scheme).

You must also show that:

- you are married or have registered a civil partnership or can prove that you have been living in a relationship akin to marriage for at least two years (you will need a marriage/civil partnership certificate. If unmarried, you need proof of your joint living arrangements covering the past two years at least)
- you can adequately accommodate and maintain yourselves without recourse to public funds
- your spouse will not stay in the UK beyond the period granted to you

Your children may accompany you as dependants if, in addition to the above, you can show that:

- they are your children and they are under the age of 18 (you will need birth certificates or your household register)

- they are unmarried and do not lead independent lives
- they will be adequately accommodated and maintained without recourse to public funds
- the parents of the child (you and your husband/wife/partner) both intend to be present in the UK (unless deceased or in sole custody of the child) and
- they will not stay in the UK beyond the period granted to you

Bringing children to the UK without the other parent

If you are planning to travel to the UK with your child/ren but not with your spouse/partner, you should be aware of the immigration rules (part 8, paragraph 319H, section f) in relation to this situation. The immigration rules state that both parents must be applying for a visa or be present in the UK at the same time as the child/ren. There are some exceptions and we can advise further on this scenario in individual cases. Please email us with any questions you have: immigration-support@nottingham.ac.uk

Permission to work in the UK

The dependant partner should only intend to take employment in the UK if permitted to do so by the Immigration Rules. Family members of Tier 4 students who take courses which are below degree level will not be permitted to work. Permission to work is usually granted if the dependant spouse is given leave to remain for 12 months or more.

Changes to your course

Tier 4 students are only allowed to bring dependants with them to the UK if they meet the conditions explained previously. If on arrival in the UK you make a change to your course, there may be implications for your dependants and they may no longer be eligible to remain in the UK with you. For example, if you switch from a pre-sessional language course of longer than six months to one that is less than six months, you no longer meet the conditions for having dependants in the UK and we advise that you contact us for advice.

Applying for entry clearance as a Tier 4 dependant

Your family will need to apply for entry clearance as Tier 4 student dependants via the visa application centre in their home country before they travel to the UK. Your family are likely to apply online. See www.gov.uk/apply-uk-visa for information on how to apply from your country.

You and your family should refer to the [PBS Dependant Policy Guidance](#) before beginning the process.

A separate online application must be made for each dependant, and each dependant must pay the application fee of £348. Each dependant should also expect to pay the Immigration Health surcharge (IHS) for use of the health service in the UK. This will be charged at £300 per year. The total surcharge amount will be based on the whole period of the visa which could be granted and it will be payable upfront at the visa application stage. For more information please visit: www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application

Financial evidence required

There are several different ways to show the financial evidence required in support of your family's application. It is important that you check that the financial evidence meets the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) requirements outlined in the [PBS Dependant Policy Guidance](#).

Also, you should check that the funds are held in a registered financial institution. UKVI have produced a list of acceptable financial institutions detailed in Appendix P of the Immigration Rules: www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/

The amount required for each dependant is £680 per month up to a maximum of nine months. An example would be a wife and child, joining a student on a masters programme of 12 months. They need to show

£680 × 9 months for the wife and £680 × 9 months for the child.

Please note that in some cases where dependants are making visa applications for a short period of less than 9 months, dependants may need to show funds for more months than the main applicant (the student) due to the different way UKVI calculate this requirement. Both students and dependants will still only ever need to show living costs for a maximum of 9 months. The Visa and Immigration Team can help you calculate how much money you need to show for dependants' living costs.

It is not possible to use any 'left over' funds from a student scholarship towards the amount required for family members unless the scholarship letter has a specific family allowance.

Funding Method 1 – for self-funding students

The [PBS Dependant Policy Guidance](#) states that the money for dependants can be shown in the student's and/or the adult dependant's bank accounts. The money must:

- a) be in cash funds – not shares/bonds investments
- b) have been in the bank account for 28 days prior to your application. It cannot dip below the required amount, even for one day, otherwise your application will be refused.
- c) have a last transaction date within 31 days of the visa application. The immigration officials will not normally consider the closing balance on the day the statement was printed. This means that if UK bank statements are used, they must be posted off quickly overseas to avoid them becoming too old.

If overseas bank accounts are used, a foreign currency conversion must be printed and submitted with your application from www.oanda.com. Deposit accounts used in China and India can be the most risky form of financial evidence as funds are sometimes considered to be frozen. Statements must be in English or officially translated.

Funding Method 2 – for applicants with official financial sponsorship

Students sponsored by the UK government, the student's home government, the British Council or any international organisation, international company or university can rely on your sponsorship letter to demonstrate funding for your dependants but only if they are mentioned in the letter. Otherwise, you must show the money for dependants living costs in a separate bank account belonging to you or your adult dependant. You should also supplement any sponsor letter with personal bank statements if the monthly stipend from your sponsor is not sufficient to cover all dependants. Please note, if the duration of your funding or permission to stay from your official sponsor is shorter than your course, your visa and your dependant's visas may be granted to the shorter date.

Funding Method 3 – for applicants with a loan

You must show formal evidence of any loan you have taken out in your own name. The bank providing the loan must be regulated by an official regulatory body.

Funding Method 4 – for applicants from 'low-risk' countries

If you and your dependants are considered by UKVI to be a national of a low-risk country you don't need to include your financial evidence with your application. You should still meet the financial requirements however as you can be asked to submit proof at any time during the application process.

This applies to nationals of:

- Argentina
- Australia
- Bahrain
- Barbados
- Botswana
- British National Overseas (BNO)
- Brunei
- Cambodia
- Canada
- Chile
- China
- The Dominican Republic
- Hong Kong
- Indonesia
- Japan
- Kuwait
- Macau SAR
- Malaysia
- The Maldives
- Mexico
- New Zealand
- Qatar
- Serbia
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- Trinidad and Tobago
- United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- United States of America

Important documents information

- All documents must be original (not scans or photocopies)
- If any documents are not produced in English or Welsh, you will need to provide official certified translations
- If your dependants are making their first visa application as your dependants, the marriage certificate and birth certificates for your children will be required
- If your dependant's names have changed at any time in their life, they will need to provide proof of this

Please note that dependants applying for entry clearance from overseas will require the previous CAS number already used by the main applicant (the student). If you no longer have a record of the CAS number used in your visa application, please email: immigration-support@nottingham.ac.uk



Document checklist



Items in list A have to be supplied by you and posted to your family so that they can include the original copies with their visa application. We recommend that you always post via special courier (such as DHL or UPS) as this is quick and reliable.

Items in list B are to be provided by the applicant themselves

List A

- Certified photocopies of your passport and visa. Photocopies can be certified by the Visa and Immigration Team
- Invitation letter from you confirming you will be responsible for your dependant's stay here. This should provide details of financial support and accommodation arrangements. A sample invitation letter is provided opposite
- A student confirmation letter from The University of Nottingham. Request the letter online at [store.nottingham.ac.uk \(Product Catalogue> Student Documents and Letters> Letters\)](https://store.nottingham.ac.uk/Product-Catalogue>Student Documents and Letters>Letters)
- Official confirmation of any scholarship you have, if it includes the dependant's name/s
- Financial evidence (e.g. bank statements) in the student's name, if applicable

List B

- Online application form for each applicant*
- 2 new passport photos (taken within one month)
- Passport(s)
- Visa application fee of £348
- Marriage/birth certificates as evidence of the applicants' relationship to you
- Financial evidence that appears in the adult dependant's name, if applicable
- Evidence to show the dependant intends to return to their home country at the end of their stay in the UK
- TB test evidence, if applicable

Tuberculosis (TB) testing

Nationals from some countries applying to come to the UK for more than six months will have to produce a certificate showing that they are free from infectious tuberculosis (TB) before their visa application will be considered. For more information, see www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa

Sample invitation letter to provide in support of dependant visa applications

Dear...

I am writing to invite you to join me in Nottingham as my dependant and stay with me for (insert duration) until I complete my degree in (subject) on (date). I am a full-time registered student at the University of Nottingham.

I confirm that I will be responsible for financing our stay in the UK (and that of our children). I will provide for our daily expenses and the cost of our accommodation.

I've enclosed documents with this letter for you to use in your application for entry clearance. The documents are: (list as applicable to you).

I also enclose copies of my passport and visa to show that I have valid leave to remain in the UK as a student until (insert visa expiry date).

Best regards...

Please note that this is only a sample letter. You should amend it according to your own situation.

* To ensure delivery of the Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) to the University (rather than the Post Office), dependants should enter our Alternative Collection Location (ACL) code onto their visa application form.
Our ACL code is 2HE427.

For more details on how the visa will be issued, please see overleaf.

When the visa is issued

Your dependant's visa will be issued as a vignette (sticker) in their passport. In some instances this may be valid for their whole stay in the UK.

If the visa is longer than six months however, then the vignette in the passport should only be valid for 30 days.

This 30 days will start from the intended date of travel to the UK as entered on the visa application form, (or from the date that your dependant's visa is issued, if this is after your intended travel date). If your dependant does not travel to the UK during this 30 day period then the vignette will expire and your dependant will need to apply for another 30-day vignette if they still wish to travel to the UK. The dependant will have to pay a fee for this new application and provide their biometric information again, but they will not have to submit a new Tier 4 dependant visa application.

The 30-day vignette will be accompanied by a letter. When your dependant enters the UK they should show the border force officer their 30-day vignette and this letter.

Your dependant's full visa, referred to as their biometric residence permit (BRP) must be collected within ten days of arriving in the UK from the University. To ensure delivery of the card to the University (rather than the Post Office), dependants should enter our Alternative Collection Location (ACL) code onto their visa application form.

Our ACL code is 2HE427.

There is more information on the UKCISA (UK Council for International Student Affairs) website about the issuing of BRP cards. Please contact us if you have any outstanding questions.

Living in Nottingham

Ahead of your family coming to live in Nottingham, you may have questions about accommodation arrangements, council tax, whether your spouse or partner can work in the UK and in some cases, about schools and childcare.

We would encourage you to take a look at the comprehensive information on our webpages which we hope will answer many of the relevant frequently asked questions.

For more information, please visit: nottingham.ac.uk/go/students-with-families



We're here to help, get in touch:

We offer a professional and confidential immigration 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 Immigration Adviser, Monday to Friday throughout the academic year. To find out more about our service times and locations, please visit: nottingham.ac.uk/internationalstudents/advisers



+44 (0)115 846 6125



immigration-support@nottingham.ac.uk



nottingham.ac.uk/internationalstudents/advisers

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 advisers, Ruth Hudson, Melanie Bentham-Hill, Rebecca Gillespie, Amy Hewitt, Sofia Markopoulou-Moore, Hong Sun, Josie Tanvir and Rebecca van der Steen 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 Visa and Immigration Team in the first instance you should raise this with the Visa and Immigration Team Manager or the Head of Specialist Services. 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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