



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Student Advice and Engagement Team / Student
Services Centre

Applying for a Student Visa

General Course (RQF 6)

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Student Application Document Checklist

Essential documents to be included by ALL students

- Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) – CAS number written on form
- Current valid passport

Documents which may need to be included by some students (read the guidance)

- Any previous passport/travel document used for travel to the UK
- Biometric Residence Permit for the UK (if you have an old BRP card and are applying from within the UK)
- Tuberculosis (TB) Certificate – not required for visa applications made in the UK.
- Official translation of any document not in English
- Financial documentation with the required amount of money in your bank account
- Financial documentation showing that the required amount of money is in your parent(s) bank account or partner's account

If using parent's account as evidence:

- Original Birth certificate or a certified copy; and
- Letter of consent from your parent(s) confirming your relationship and permission to use their money

Other forms of financial evidence:

- Evidence of any scholarships (LSE scholarships are listed on your CAS)
- Loan letter (US/ Government/ Official educational loans only)
- Evidence of Official Financial sponsorship if you are being wholly sponsored (tuition fees and living costs)
- Letter of consent if you have been officially financially sponsored within the last 12 months by a government or international scholarship agency. You are not required to provide a letter of consent if you received a university scholarship (including an LSE scholarship).

This guide is for students applying for a Student visa for the General Course at LSE. If you are on another programme at LSE, please read the relevant guide for your cohort.

Part One: Before you apply

Are you eligible for a Student visa?

- **Cap on degree level studies**

IMPORTANT: Read the section “*Student: time limits for study*” in the [Student Guidance](#)

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) cap the amount of time that a person can spend studying in the UK on student immigration permission. LSE can only sponsor you for a Student visa, if your programme at LSE will not take you beyond five years and 11 months study at undergraduate degree level. You must provide details of all previous study at degree level in the UK to help the General Course team assess this before issuing your CAS to avoid the risk of refusal.

Read the UKCISA web pages on [“Time Limits”](#) to find out how LSE will calculate if we can sponsor your visa.

- **Academic Progression**

IMPORTANT: Read the section “*Student - academic progression*” in the [Student Guidance](#).

UKVI rules state that:

- Justification for study at the same level which shows that the new course relates to previous study and aids the applicant's career plans (you may also be required to justify this in a credibility interview);
- No study at a lower level is permitted – your application will be refused;
- Academic progression does not apply if the applicant is applying from overseas.

- **Short-term Study Visa**

This visa is only for English Language courses and you must not apply for this if you are coming to study the General Course at LSE.

The visa you should apply for is the Student visa: <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa>

You cannot study the General Course as a Standard Visitor (tourist) as it is longer than 6 months. If you need immigration permission to enter the UK, you must apply for a Student visa.

Your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number

Your eligibility for a CAS will depend on your previous study in the UK and the reason you require a CAS e.g. a refusal.

The CAS is the most important document you need from LSE for your Student application. You cannot apply for a Student visa until you have received your CAS number. You only need the CAS

number not a hardcopy of the document to apply for your visa.

Check your CAS number carefully when you receive it. If there are any errors on the CAS e.g. you have a new passport or your name is not correct, you must contact the team who issued the CAS to get it amended (which you can do by replying to the CAS email) before applying for your Student visa. Errors on CAS numbers can lead to refusals, so it's important that it's right first time.

Receiving your CAS does not guarantee you a visa. It is extremely important that you read all the guidance given to ensure you meet the immigration rules. Your academic offer is separate to the immigration rules and you need to meet both the conditions of your offer and the immigration rules to join LSE.

Find out more about our [getting a CAS for LSE](#) on our info sheet.

Where can you apply for your Student visa?

- Applying outside the UK**

You can apply up to six months before the start of your programme as stated on your CAS if applying from outside the UK. You apply in the country where you are living e.g. either your home country or another country where you might have the right of residence. If you are just visiting another country (eg. as a tourist) you will need to return to your home country or a country where you have the right of residence to apply for a Student visa. The visa application form is online (except in North Korea), but you will have to travel to give your biometric information and submit your passport and supporting documents. There isn't a visa application centre in every country so you may need to travel to another country for the visa appointment.

Check on the UKVI website to find out where your nearest visa application centre is:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre>

Many of the visa application centres are managed by private companies (such as VFS Global and TLS Contact) on behalf of UKVI. These centres administer the application process but do not make decisions on visa applications; decisions are made by UKVI employees.

- Applying in the UK**

IMPORTANT: Read the section 'Switching' in the Student Guidance

You can apply up to three months in advance. Not everyone is able to apply for their Student visa in the UK based on their immigration status and the expiry date and course start of their new programme. UKCISA have produced [helpful guidance](#) which advises if you are able to apply in the UK.

If you do not think you can apply for your Student visa in the UK e.g. because your current permission does not allow you to switch, you must allow yourself plenty of time to return home and submit your application. Do not risk applying in the UK because if you receive a refusal, you may be unable to join your programme.

- **Overstayers**

If your visa expires and you haven't made a valid visa application, you will become an '**overstayer**' in the UK. This means that you have no legal status in the UK. **There is no 'grace period' of overstay; even one day beyond the expiry of your visa is breaking the rules and may affect all future immigration applications.** If you do become an overstayer, contact the Student Advice and Engagement team as soon as possible. We can advise you on your options, as it may affect your ability to remain in the UK and enrolled on your course. We will share this information with other LSE departments.

Immigration Healthcare Surcharge (IHS)

Details of the IHS and how to calculate it can be found on the UKVI website: <https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application>. The sum is an annual amount and you will be charged the annual amount for each year of the maximum period of leave at the point you apply for your visa. The IHS is currently £776 per year and General Course students will be required to pay this amount. Only British Overseas Territories citizens who are resident in the Falkland Islands are exempt from payment for an IHS number.

Preparing your Supporting Documents

You must have all your documents in place before you apply. You can prepare before receiving your CAS number, but we advise you not to start the online application until you have all documents in place.

Differentiation arrangement for "Low Risk" nationals

IMPORTANT: Read the section "Appendix ST22" in Appendix Student of the Immigration Rules

Some nationalities do not need to submit their financial documentation with their Student application. However, you do need to have these documents and you may be asked for them at any time during the application process. LSE has cases where low-risk nationals were asked to provide their paperwork as part of their application. If you cannot provide documentation when requested, your application is likely to be refused, which will impact your immigration history and your ability to join your programme.

The UKVI Student caseworker guidance and the immigration rules call them 'differentiation arrangements' for "low risk" nationals.

Find out more about being a "["low-risk"](#) national in our info sheet.

Every year we receive refusals from General Course students who are not low risk nationals but who think that they are low-risk because they study in the USA/have been advised they are low risk in error by their Study Abroad Adviser. Being considered low risk depends on your nationality not your current location of study. If your country of nationality is not low-risk, even under the new

rules, you must submit your financial documents.

Understanding what money you need to show to avoid a refusal

IMPORTANT: Read the section "Student: financial requirement" in the [Student Guidance](#) and [Appendix Finance](#)

What do I need to do?

1. You must read the essential sections of the Student caseworker and Financial Requirements guidance you are referred to.
2. Read our info sheet on [Meeting the Financial Requirements](#).
3. Calculate how much money you need.
4. Decide which documents you are going to use as evidence and plan to get them dated near to the time you will apply.
5. Check that they meet the requirements and obtain any translations required before applying.

You need to show:

- ***Tuition fees for your programme as stated on your CAS ; plus £1,529 per month living costs up to a maximum of nine months (£13,761)***

If your institution pays your tuition fees to LSE, check your CAS statement to see if the tuition fees have been paid before declaring this in your application. The General Course team run daily checks for tuition fee payments and they will send you an updated CAS once the funds have cleared in LSE's accounts. If you are unsure if your institution pays your tuition fees contact GC@lse.ac.uk for advice.

If your institution has yet to pay LSE, it cannot be stated on the CAS and cannot be used as evidence for your application. We recommend you speak to your institution in advance of submitting an application if you are paying your tuition fees directly to them rather than LSE.

What documents can you use as evidence of finance to avoid a refusal?

IMPORTANT: Read the section on "Evidence of Finance" in the [Student Guidance](#)

Most refusals for Student applications by LSE students are because the financial documents don't meet the requirements. The UKVI requirements are:

- the closing balance (the most recent transaction or balance date) must be no more than 31 days before your date of application (meaning that the document cannot be more than 31 days old at the time you submit and pay for your online application);
- your bank statements must show that the entire amount has been in your account for 28 consecutive days prior to the closing balance of your statement (check the transactions not just the dates of the statement);
- at no point during the 28 days must it go below the required amount or you will be refused;
- use www.timeanddate.com to calculate if you have held your funds for 28 days;
- you can only use personal accounts not business accounts;
- the money must be in a **cash** account (not stocks, shares, pensions or investments (that cannot be accessed immediately), credit cards or overdrafts);

- the documents must be issued by a bank that the UKVI accepts.
- if it is not a GB Sterling account, you must use the exchange rate on [OANDA.com](https://www.oanda.com) on the day you submit your application;
- you cannot use an account held by a financial institution that does not keep electronic records;
- you cannot use an account held by a third party that does not meet the requirements.

Make your documents easy to understand. You can submit an explanatory note about your bank statements if you think that anything is unclear. For example, some savings accounts look like investment accounts. Although the UKVI says it will make checks with your bank, it rarely does so. It is in your best interests to make your statements clear and understandable.

Documents not in English: If your bank statements are not in English, you must provide an official translation that can be verified by the UKVI. Even if your documents are bilingual, any sections not translated into English could lead to a refusal.

Multiple accounts: If you are using multiple accounts, the UKVI will look at the combined total of all your accounts during the 28 days before your closing balance. It will use the closing balance of the account that most favours you (has the highest amount of money) as the start of the 28 day period, so you should use the same date.

If you are using multiple accounts, you should complete the *Multiple Account Calculator* to check you have the required funds for the 28 consecutive days. Contact the Student Advice and Engagement team if you require this.

Using your parents'/ legal guardians'/partner's money or a joint account

IMPORTANT: Read the section "Funds held in parents' accounts" in the [Financial Requirement Caseworker Guidance](#)

You can use your parents'/legal guardians' financial documents as proof that you meet the financial requirements. They must meet the same requirements as if you are submitting your own bank statements. In addition to submitting your parents' bank documents, you must provide:

- your birth certificate showing the name of your parents ; or
- a certificate of adoption showing your name and the name of your parent(s);or
- a court document stating the name of your legal guardian(s) and your name.
- a letter from your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) confirming their relationship with you and that they consent to you using their funds to pay for your tuition fees and living costs in the UK.

You cannot use:

- **bank statements from any other family members e.g. grandparents, spouses or siblings unless they are your legal guardian as recognised by the courts**
- **an affidavit confirming your relationship to your parents/legal guardian**

It is possible to use a joint account as evidence providing that you are named on the account.

You can use your partners' account so long as they are applying for a visa at the same time as you or have already been granted UK immigration permission. You must provide evidence of your relationship with the application.

Scholarships

IMPORTANT: Read the section "Funds provided by an Official Financial Sponsor" in the [Financial Requirement Caseworker Guidance](#)

This guidance states that an **official financial sponsor** is '*Her Majesty's Government, the applicant's home government, the British Council or any international organisation, international company, university or an Independent school*'. If you are receiving financial support from another type of body or organisation, or from your relatives, this does not count as official financial sponsorship.

TIP: US Federal loans are not scholarships – they are educational loans. This is explained later in the document.

Please note the following:

- **Current sponsorship/scholarships:** If you are receiving financial sponsorship or a scholarship to study on your current course, you will need to show evidence of this.
- **Past sponsorship/scholarships:** If you have received a scholarship from a government or an international scholarship agency within the last 12 months which covered tuition fees and living costs, you will need to show evidence that they consent to you continuing to study in the UK and permit you to extend your visa.
- **If you are receiving an external scholarship:** You will need a letter from your official financial sponsor. If your home institution is sponsoring your studies, the letter must include the amount of money they are providing for tuition fees and living costs.
- **An international company:** refers to a company that trades internationally and not just that the company is not a UK business.

Scholarship from LSE

In most cases, a scholarship provided by LSE will be shown on your CAS. It may be shown as an overpayment of tuition fees; check the information on your CAS carefully. If your scholarship funding is shown on the CAS, you do not need to submit a scholarship letter with your visa application. If the scholarship is not on your CAS, contact the team who issued your CAS before you apply for the visa; they will be able to check and add it to the CAS if required. If the scholarship cannot be confirmed on the CAS, you must submit an official letter confirming the scholarship with your visa application.

Scholarships provided by your Home Institution

It's very important that any letters from your home institution confirming your scholarship meet the requirements of the '***Funds provided by an official financial sponsor***' section of the [Financial Requirements caseworker guidance](#). This is especially important if you are not a low-risk national as incorrectly formatted letters from non-UK universities have led to refusals for General Course students in the past. We appreciate that it may sometimes be difficult requesting these letters, but it's important they are right.

Tuition Fees Already Paid to Your Home Institution

LSE will normally only list tuition fees on your CAS that have been paid by your home institution and have cleared in the LSE bank account. The Student application form no longer gives you the opportunity to state that you have paid your tuition fees to your home institution, so you may need to discuss this with your Study Abroad Adviser if you planned to use this option.

Loans - read FIN 8.3 and FIN 9.2 in [Appendix Finance](#) of the Immigration Rules

You can only rely on an educational loan as evidence of funds for your visa application if it is part of an educational loan scheme. You cannot rely on letters confirming arrangements for other loan types which are not part of an educational loans scheme.

US Loans:

US Federal loans are an educational loan scheme. The US government is not your official financial sponsor.

If you are using a US Federal Direct loan which is confirmed in a letter by LSE, you can use this as evidence for your application. You should not apply for your visa until you receive your US loan letter from LSE because this is your official confirmation of your funding.

If you are using a non-Federal Direct loan which has not been verified by LSE, you will need to hold the required funds for your Student application in your bank account for the required 28 days before applying for your visa.

All other loans: If you are using a loan from any other source (a bank, a personal sponsor, a relative etc.) which is not an educational loan which is part of a government educational loan scheme, you cannot submit a loan letter as evidence. You must receive the funds and transfer them into your own bank account (or that of your parents / legal guardian or partner) and wait 28 consecutive days before you can apply for your Student visa.

How can I prove I meet the English language requirements?

IMPORTANT: Read [Assessing the English Language Requirement guidance](#)

LSE will state how you have met the English language requirement in the 'Evidence Used to Assess Suitability' section of your CAS. LSE is a Higher Education Provider with a track record of compliance, and we can use several ways to show how you have met the language requirements.

Getting your documents translated

IMPORTANT: Read the section "[Translating documents](#)" in the [Student Guidance](#).

Any documents that are not in English or Welsh must have a translation that can be independently verified by the UKVI. This includes bank statements if they are not bilingual.

The translation must show:

- details of the translator / translation company credentials
- confirmation that it is an accurate translation of the original document
- the translator's contact details
- the date of the translation

the translator's full name and signature or signature of an official of the translation company

Passport

You must upload / submit any passport that you have used to travel to the UK. The passport you use for your application **must** match the passport details on the CAS or your visa may be refused. Check your CAS is correct before submitting your visa application.

Tuberculosis (TB) Test Certificate

If your course is for more than 6 months and you are applying from or have been resident in a [country where TB testing](#) is required for visa purposes, you may need to obtain a TB certificate or your visa may be refused.

Find out more about [TB testing for Student applicants](#) in our info sheet.

Step 2: Your Student application

What is the date of application?

- **Applying outside the UK**

The date of application is the day you submit the online application form or pay the fee for your application. This varies between countries as it depends if you pay your fee when you submit your online application form or when you attend an appointment.

If you have paid your fee at the point you submit the application form, this is your date of application so any supporting documents must be prepared before this. Any documents prepared and dated after you have submitted your application may lead to a refusal.

You can apply up to six months in advance of your programme start date on your CAS.

Applying in the UK

The date of application is the day that you submit and pay for your application online. If you do not have your supporting documents prepared, do not pay for your application until they are available to you. Upon payment you will receive a document checklist which confirms your date of submission and the documents you need to provide. You will also receive an email confirming your payment. Check your junk mail folder if you do not receive the email.

You can apply up to three months in advance of your programme start date on your CAS.

How much will your application cost and how long will it take to be processed?

Applying outside the UK

The current cost for a standard application made outside the UK is £524. You can get an indication of recent processing times at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-decision-waiting-times-applications-outside-the-uk>. The times are given in working days and you need to allow time for the return of your documents, as this can often delay the process. [If you are applying in the USA, you should read the official UKVI guidance as this explains the specific process for the USA.](#)

You should ensure you plan sufficient time to submit your Student application and factor in potential delays. Every year some students are unable to make it on time because they have not allowed sufficient time to apply for their visas.

In some countries it is possible to apply using a “premium” or “priority” appointment to get your application processed more quickly. There is usually an additional cost for these services and the average processing times are seven working days. Priority service charges are normally in the local currency. You can find this information under the “User Pay Services” section of the visa application centre websites.

If you receive any correspondence about your application and you are unsure what to do or if you require support, please [contact us](#)

• Applying in the UK

The majority of General Course students are not eligible to apply for their Student visa in the UK. However, if you think you may be eligible, please check with the Student Advice and Engagement team first to avoid a refusal.

If you enter the UK as a tourist without applying for a Student visa, you cannot apply for a Student visa in the UK. We will need to advise you to return home to obtain immigration permission, which could affect your ability to join the General Course.

IMPORTANT: You must not travel out of the UK whilst your application is in progress or you will cancel your application.

The current cost for a standard application in the UK is £524. You should receive your decision within eight weeks of the date of application.

The current cost for a priority application in the UK is £1024. You should receive a decision within 5 working days of the date of application.

The current cost for a super priority application in the UK is £1524. You will receive a decision regarding your application within one working day may be an additional fee for your biometrics.

It is likely that you will need to create a UKVI account to apply and then access your eVisa (electronic visa) as the UKVI is no longer issuing BRP cards.

There are two processes for applying in the UK:

- EU/EEA students or those of any nationality who have a BRP will provide their biometric information via a Home Office mobile app and will receive a digital status
 - Non-EU/EEA students with no BRP will continue to provide their biometrics in person and then need to create a UKVI account to access their eVisa.
-

What are biometrics?

As part of your Student application, you need to provide your biometric information (fingerprints and photograph). Where you provide your biometric information depends on where you are applying from.

- If you are applying outside the UK, you should follow the instructions given as part of your application form. These will differ depending upon whether you are an EU / EU national and eligible to use an app or not.
- If you are applying in the UK using the standard, priority or super priority application process, you will need to book an appointment at one of the UK Visas and Citizenship Application Service Centres or use the UK Immigration: ID Check app if eligible. You will give your biometric information at this centre or via the app. Please refer to our guide to completing the application form in the UK for more advice.

For visa applications of more than six months, you will need to create a UKVI account (may be created during the application process) and then access your eVisa.

Credibility Interviews

As part of your application, you may be asked to attend a credibility interview. During an interview, the UKVI may ask questions about your course of study in the UK, your English language level, why you decided to study at the LSE, what other institutions you looked at, your finances and your future plans. This will usually be done via a video link to an office in the UK. If there are any concerns about your answers, you may be asked to attend a second interview in your country of application.

Problems with your application

Problems outside the UK

Refusals

IMPORTANT: Refusals affect the LSE's Student Sponsor Licence. If you receive a refusal, you will not be issued with a new CAS number until you have been advised by the Student Advice and Engagement team on how to avoid a second refusal. It is at LSE's discretion whether to provide you with a new CAS based on your risk of further refusals.

Find out what to do [if your visa has been refused](#) in our info sheet.

Invalid or returned applications

There are some errors that would make your application invalid, for example:

- You have applied too far in advance of your course start date on your CAS/without a valid CAS
- You do not submit the mandatory documents within the correct timeframe.

This is not a refusal, because your application has not even been considered or processed under the immigration rules. It is simply returned to you. If this happens, usually the UKVI arranges a refund for the application.

Problems in the UK

Refusals

IMPORTANT: Refusals affect LSE's Student Sponsor Licence and our ability to sponsor Student students. A refusal will also remain on your immigration history. If you receive a refusal, you will not be issued with a new CAS number until you have been advised by the Student Advice and Engagement team on how to avoid a second refusal. It is at the LSE's discretion if we wish to provide you with a new CAS based on your risk of further refusals.

Find out what to do [if your visa has been refused](#) in our info sheet.

Invalid or returned applications

There are some errors that would make your application invalid, for example:

- there was a problem with your payment
- you do not submit the mandatory documents within the correct timeframe.

This is not a refusal, because your application has not been considered or processed under the immigration rules; it is simply returned to you. If this happens, usually the UKVI arranges a refund for the application fee and IHS fee. If your existing visa has not yet expired, you can apply again with fresh documents. This means financial documents must be dated no more than one month before the date that you are submitting the new application and the CAS must still be valid. If you have problems, we advise you to contact the Student Advice and Engagement team. We can advise you on how to avoid repeating errors before submitting a new application. If your visa has expired, you may be an 'overstayer'. We strongly advise you to contact the Student Advice and Engagement team if your application is returned invalid and your visa has expired, as it may affect your ability to remain enrolled on your programme.

Receiving your visa

For visa applications of more than six months, you will need to create a UKVI account (may be created during the application process) and then access your eVisa.

- **Immigration permission granted outside the UK**

IMPORTANT: Check your decision letter/email carefully and do not throw it away or delete it. It will be in the envelope with your passport or sent via email.

From 15 July 2025, visa vignettes stickers in your passports will no longer be issued to successful Student visa applicants. Instead, you will need to follow the instructions in your decision letter or email to create a UKVI account and access your eVisa. You will not receive anything in your passport.

90 day vignette stickers will continue to be issued to successful Student visa applicants until 15 July 2025. Dependents will continue to receive 90 day vignette stickers until further notice.

Your eVisa is your evidence that you have immigration permission to study in the UK and you will need to generate a share code to prove your status and right to study in the UK using the below link: <https://www.gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status>

- **Immigration permission granted in the UK**

Standard/priority applications made in the UK

If your visa application is successful, the UKVI will send you an email informing you of the decision. You should ensure you check your junk and email folders as it may go into these email boxes. Your visa will be in the form of an eVisa.

Checking your eVisa for errors

It's very important to check both your visa vignette sticker and eVisa to see if there are any errors, when you receive them. There are short timeframes to get errors amended and if you miss these, it may not be possible to get an amendment in the future without a new visa application. For example, if you are not given permission to work and do not notice this until after the window to submit a correction request has passed, you will not be able to work during your time in the UK.

Key Contacts

LSE Contacts

- **[Student Advice and Engagement Team](#)** – contact us directly if you have any questions about applying for the Student visa. We are unable to speak to your parents or other family members about your Student application. If you have any questions, contact us directly to avoid any delays in our response.
- **General Course Team** – contact the General Course on gc@lse.ac.uk team if you have any questions about your offer, your CAS number or any queries about your programme of study.
- **[Fees Office](#)** – contact the Fees Office if your US Federal Loan is being approved by the LSE.
- **[Residences Fees Team](#)** – contact them if you require an official receipt of university accommodation payments.

External Contacts

- [**UK Visas and Immigration \(UKVI\)**](#) –part of the Home Office, which is the UK government department which writes the immigration rules. The UKVI contact centre is provided by a third party company at a cost and is not the Home Office. Before contacting the UKVI contact centre, please get in touch with the Student Advice and Engagement team
- [**UK Council for International Student Affairs \(UKCISA\)**](#) - the advocacy body for international student issues in the UK. You can find lots of information on their web pages from applying for a Student visa to how to deal with culture shock.
- [**Immigration Advice Authority \(IAA\)**](#)–the UK Government regulatory body for immigration advice in the UK. Contact the IAA if you wish to find an external regulated immigration adviser or make a complaint about immigration advice you have received.
- [**Immigration Law Practitioners' Association \(ILPA\)**](#) – ILPA is a membership organisation for immigration law practitioners. You can find independent immigration advisers via the website.