



## Immigration Advice at LSE – October 2021

### Who are ISVAT?

ISVAT is the International Student Visa Advice Team at LSE. We are responsible for providing immigration advice to international students, including EU/EEA/Swiss nationals, about study-related immigration in the UK.

- International Student Visa Advice Manager: Bethan Owens
- Senior International Student Visa Adviser: Senior International Student Visa Adviser: Laura Blenkiron
- Senior International Student Visa Adviser: Emerald Southern-Darbar

### I have a question about visas, how can I get advice?

You should check the [ISVAT webpages](#) first. They contain detailed guidance about a range of immigration issues such as applying for a Student visa and working in the UK. If your questions are not answered within our guidance, please contact ISVAT.

### How do I contact ISVAT?

The best way to contact us is via our [online query form](#). If you are a current student, please use the form for current students.

### What can ISVAT help me with?

ISVAT can help international students with immigration issues relating to studies in the UK. We offer advice about subjects like applying for a Student visa, working in the UK, change of circumstances, visa errors, lost/stolen visas, etc. We cannot advise you on when you will receive your CAS.

Our service is only available to LSE Offer Holders, enrolled LSE students and those with a valid LSE Student or Start-up visa. If you move to be an alumni and do not meet the above category, we will be unable to assist you.

### I would like an appointment, how do I book?

Appointments are currently being run virtually. If you require an appointment, please contact the team using our online query form. Unfortunately, we are not always able to provide an appointment and in some instances we may advise that email is better, especially if there is a lot of complex information we need to provide you.

### Can I speak to someone in person at Drop-in?

From Monday 11 October 2021, you can speak to a member of the team from 1:00pm to 2:00pm in the Student Services Centre on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

### Is there another way to get an answer to a quick question?

The ISVAT Live Chat will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00pm to 4:00pm.

Live Chat is not intended to be a replacement for an appointment and you will have a maximum of 10 minutes with an advisor to allow for multiple Live Chat appointments for other students. If you have multiple or complex questions, the team will ask you to complete an enquiry form.

### The Live Chat/ drop-in appointments are only short and I think that my query will take longer, what do I do?

Contact ISVAT to discuss your circumstances. If a longer appointment is deemed necessary, it will be arranged on a case-by-case basis. We guarantee one, 30 minute appointment for students registered with our Disability and Wellbeing Service.

### Why do ISVAT keep telling me to read their guidance first, rather than just answering my questions?

ISVAT are a small team and we are reliant on students reading our guidance in the first instance. Much of our guidance is based on feedback and FAQs from students so it is likely that you will find the answer to your question there. If the guidance doesn't answer your question, contact ISVAT at that point.

### Can you advise my parents/employer/friend/relative/Study Abroad adviser instead of me?

Unfortunately not. We are only able to advise you directly as you are the visa holder.

### **My query is urgent. How quickly will you reply to me?**

Our standard response time is currently three working days for initial queries and any follow-up responses you send. Receiving a response does not necessarily mean you will then receive automatic replies unless your case is urgent. Urgent cases will be prioritised, but ISVAT assesses the urgency based on other cases.

Given the current circumstances, many cases are complex. We regret that we cannot prioritise a case because the enquirer has marked it as urgent. We understand that every query is important. We always reply as soon as we can. Sending multiple queries or chasing a response will not speed it up. Your patience in awaiting a reply would be appreciated.

We are unable to guarantee that a case will be expedited because your department has contacted us on your behalf. All LSE's students are important and we try to provide an equitable service. We will only expedite cases directed to us from a department, if they are complex or urgent as assessed by our team.

### **Can I contact ISVAT staff members directly?**

The ISVAT account (where the online enquiries are received) is monitored closely therefore you should contact ISVAT there rather than individual staff email accounts to ensure you receive the quickest possible reply. If you have already been in contact with ISVAT, the same staff member will continue to advise you except when unavailable, or the case is escalated to the manager, in which case another staff member will take over so that you receive a timely reply to your query.

### **I want to receive advice by telephone, what is the number?**

ISVAT do not publicise a number as we prefer not to provide advice over the telephone. The primary reason being that important information can be misinterpreted and it can also be difficult to verify identity over the phone. We are able to offer Zoom or Team meetings but depending on the complexity may request your permission to record them to ensure all queries are followed up.

### **Will ISVAT prepare, submit and send my Student visa application form for me?**

It is not possible for us to offer this service. We have detailed [guidance on our webpage about applying for a Student visa](#). We rely on students using the guidance to prepare a visa application in the first instance. We also have webinars and other resources over the peak period.

### **I'd like a letter for visa purposes; can ISVAT do this for me?**

ISVAT do not routinely issue documentation for visa purposes. If you have a complex case that ISVAT have been assisting with, ISVAT will provide a bespoke letter outlining the rules for your specific needs when necessary. However if you require a letter for travel or employment purposes, a Certificate of Registration should suffice.

### **Do ISVAT keep a record of advice?**

We keep all emails and a drop-in log with notes of the enquiry and advice. We are required to keep these records under the [OISC guidelines](#).

### **Will my enquiry be treated confidentially?**

Yes. We are bound by [OISC regulations](#) and also the [GDPR](#). Our drop-in sessions take place in a public space. If you have concerns about this based on your query, contact ISVAT if you require a confidential space to discuss a specific issue.

### **Can you give me advice about applying for a visa to another country?**

We can only provide immigration advice for study-specific immigration in the UK. We are not qualified to advise on visas for other countries.

### **I'm a Student visa holder. Can ISVAT give me advice about settlement?**

Regrettably, we are only able to provide advice relating to study-related immigration. The only exception is assisting with the initial part of the EU Settlement Scheme (obtaining Pre-settled status). If you require advice about this or another non-study related immigration permission, you can find external advisors at:

- [OISC](#)
- [ILPA](#)
- [AIRE Centre](#)

### **I'm an EU/EEA national; can ISVAT help me with immigration related applications?**

We are happy to help EU/EEA/Swiss nationals with queries and have detailed advice available here: <https://info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/immigration-advice/eu-eea-nationals>

We are unable to advise on how to apply for Settled Status, especially if you have complex absences.

### **How do I know if the advice is correct?**

ISVAT are regulated to give immigration advice under the [Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner \(OISC\) guidelines](#). This involves continued professional development (training) and keeping up to date with changes in immigration.

### **What if I have a complaint?**

If you are given incorrect advice, there is a formal complaints procedure at LSE and also through the OISC.

- [LSE Complaints procedure](#)
- [OISC Complaints procedure](#)

We expect all users of our service to follow the [Student Charter](#) and the School's [anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy](#).

### **I still have questions, who can I contact for advice?**

You can [contact ISVAT](#).