

UKVI FAQs for student visa applicants (April 2024)

1. General

How long will my student visa application process take?

The UKVI aims to process visa applications within 15 working days. The latest global decision waiting times can be found [here](#).

How will I know that UKVI has made a decision about my visa?

UKVI will send your decision letter by email. Please note that you do not use your decision letter to prove your immigration status. You will prove your rights in the UK digitally by using the [view and prove service](#) on gov.uk.

My university hasn't issued my CAS reference number yet; can I apply for my visa?

You must have your CAS reference number from your educational sponsor to be able to apply for a student visa.

If you have not yet received your CAS, email admissions@chi.ac.uk to find out what you need to do.

Will I get a refund if it takes too long to make a decision on the visa application?

The UKVI aim to process all applications as soon as possible. Some applications can take longer to process if made during busy periods where there is global demand, or if it is complex case.

The UKVI will refund fees as follows:

If you were told to attend an appointment

Your fee will be refunded if you have not yet given your fingerprints and photo.

Your fee will not usually be refunded if you have already given your fingerprints and photo.

If you used the smartphone app

Your fee will be refunded if:

You have not selected 'confirm and upload in the app' - either to upload your evidence of confirm you do not have anything to upload.

You withdraw your application before the deadline.

For more information on refunds, please visit [Gov.uk](#).

When can I get a refund and how long does it take?

You can ask to cancel (withdraw) your Student visa application. You will get a refund on the immigration health surcharge if you cancel before a decision has been made about your application. You may get a refund of the application fee. This depends on what stage your application is at when you cancel. It can take up to 28 days to get your refund. For more information please visit [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

What happens if I have an urgent or compassionate reason to travel?

Where there are extremely compassionate or compelling circumstances, we may consider speeding up certain cases. However, the bar for this is very high and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Customers should make these circumstances known at the visa application centre or by contacting the UKVI. For more information please visit [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

How can I get a faster decision on my visa application?

If your application is urgent, you may opt for a priority service available for an additional fee. You could receive a decision within 5 working days using Priority service or by the end of the next working day using the Super Priority service. Remember that once you have submitted your biometrics at the VAC you will not be able to change to a priority or super priority visa service. For more information, visit [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

2. Financial Evidence

Can I help with bank verifications if I provide a letter confirming contact details for my bank?

Yes, you can provide a letter confirming contact details for your bank to assist with verifications. However, it's important to note that each case will be reviewed individually, and there's no guarantee of approval. We might not be able to use personal or local branch contact details, and documents will typically be verified with the financial institution's main office.

While not mandatory, providing cover letter to explain the source of funds, especially if the source isn't clear (like large deposits in a short time), can help the decision-making process. If there are concerns about whether the money is genuinely available for use in the UK, the student may be asked for more information.

3. Dependants

Can I bring my partner and children with me?

Your partner, or children aged under 18, may be able to come to the UK providing you are:

- Studying for a course of study which the provider has confirmed is a PhD, other doctoral qualification, or a research-based higher degree.
- Financially sponsored by the UK or an Overseas Government.

Undergraduate students are not normally permitted to bring dependants, and this has not changed.

You must provide proof of your relationship and proof of finances to fund their maintenance. This is in addition to the proof of finances that you will show as part of your own application. For further information visit [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

What do you mean by a research-based higher degree?

A research-based higher degree means a postgraduate program comprising a research component (including a requirement to produce original work) that is larger than any accompanying taught component when measured by student effort. The University of Chichester has the following research-based degrees: D Prof, PhD by Publication, PhD, MPhil and MRes.

Can dependants remain in the UK if a Graduate visa holder switches back to the student route on or after 1 January 2024?

Dependants that are already in the UK are permitted to apply for further leave to remain. If family members do not already have a Dependant visa, the student will need to meet the eligibility criteria to bring dependants into the UK

What type of scholarships qualify for the dependant's exemption?

To be eligible to bring dependants on a scholarship it must be:

- A Government funded scholarship.
- From a central Government department
- Covering all fees and living costs for the student

If a scholarship does not cover dependant living costs, then they need to provide separate financial evidence to cover them.

Will there be a concession for disabled students to be able to bring carers?

There are currently no concessions for disabled students to bring carers and this will continue to be the case until further notice

4. Switching visa routes

What changes are being made to the rules on switching?

Students will no longer be able to switch out of the student route until they have completed their course.

The only exception is for PhD students who will be permitted to switch into the Skilled Worker route after they have completed 24 months towards their PhD.

Why are you stopping students switching to the Skilled Worker route part way through their course?

The main purpose of the student route is to enable applicants to undertake a course of study within the UK. We want to ensure that applicants are coming to the UK to study rather than to work. There are other routes available for those whose primary focus is to work.

5. Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)

Why do I have to pay IHS

You will need to pay a healthcare surcharge as part of your immigration application if you are applying for a stay of more than 6 months in the UK. This payment of the IHS entitles customers to access the NHS on broadly the same basis as a permanent UK resident for the duration of their visa, without the need to pay for treatment

How much is the immigration health Surcharge (IHS) for students?

The cost of the IHS varies depending on the duration of the visa granted. It's important to note that the visa duration might exceed the length of your course. The IHS fee is £776 per person per year. For more information, please visit [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).