



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

Study Visa Options

This guide provides some basic information about applying for your visa overseas and the different types of visa available to help you choose the correct visa for your period of study at Stranmillis University College

You will require a visa to study in the UK (of which Northern Ireland is part) if you are a non-UK or non-Republic of Ireland national.

Note: If you are an EU/EEA/Swiss national coming to the UK to study and do not hold EU Settled or Pre-settled Status you will require a visa.

*This guidance has been produced in good faith by Stranmillis University College Belfast to help students understand UK immigration procedures and to assist students making an immigration application to study in the UK. This guidance has been written in line with UKVI guidance which may change at any time if there are changes to the UK Immigration Rules. Our guidance has been carefully checked at the time of publication, however it is the responsibility of students to ensure that any immigration application complies with current UK Immigration legislation. Stranmillis University College Belfast accepts no legal responsibility for the accuracy of this guidance and if there are any discrepancies found between Stranmillis University College guidance and UKVI guidance, guidance issued by **UKVI will take precedence.***

STUDENT VISA / STUDENT ROUTE (previously Tier 4)

Student visa route is a category under the UK Immigration Points Based System (PBS). Stranmillis University College has a Sponsor Licence to sponsor Student visas. If you are coming to study in the UK on a main course of study for either **MORE** than six months, or **LESS** than six months **AND** you have selected a **placement** module/course or a module course that has a **placement element** you must apply for a Student visa.

You must score points in different eligibility categories in order to be granted a Student visa. While the Student visa permits, working in the UK it is not possible to do so as the placement element counts as working and takes up the permitted hours.

Students should also note that they are not permitted to volunteer, in addition to placement hours under the regulations.

Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

When you apply for a Student visa, you must have a **Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number**. This will be issued to you by Stranmillis University College once you have met certain conditions including:

- you must have accepted an unconditional offer of a place to study at Stranmillis before your CAS can be issued;
- if you have ever studied before in the UK, you must provide additional information about your immigration history; and
- applicants for postgraduate taught programmes must pay a tuition fee deposit before your CAS can be issued.

Your CAS number will be included in your 'CAS Statement', Which will be emailed to you once you have met the conditions and are deemed eligible for a CAS. You will receive your CAS statement from International@stran.ac.uk

Your CAS statement contains essential information you will need to fill in your Student visa application, including:

- The University College's Sponsor Licence number;
- Your course title, course level and course start/end dates
- Details of your course fees and any deposits paid or any scholarships or stipends awarded;
- Details of your entry qualifications ('evidence used to obtain offer' section of CAS) which were used to make the decision to offer you a place.

Check your CAS statement carefully and let us know if any information is not accurate. If you have paid any further course fees since your CAS was issued we will be able to update this information on your CAS statement before you make your visa application. If you change your mind about your course, or your circumstances change after you make your visa application or after you have arrived in the UK, you must inform the Stranmillis University College's International Office immediately, International@stran.ac.uk The College will make any necessary reports to UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI).

Applying for Permission to Enter the UK Visa (Applying from Overseas)

When you apply for a Student visa **overseas** you are applying for Permission to Enter the UK. You must apply online in the country where you live. **You cannot apply for your visa more than six months before the start date of your course.** You must prepare certain documents for your application such as certificates/transcripts of your academic qualifications and financial evidence to prove that you have sufficient funds to meet the Student visa maintenance requirement. For further guidance about the supporting document requirements please [visit UKVI's website](#).

Certain nationalities will also be required to take a tuberculosis (TB) test if they are coming to the UK for more than six months. You can find further information about TB Test requirements on [UKVI's website](#).

For further information from UKVI about how to apply for a Student visa, the documents you must provide, and to access the link to the online application form please visit [UKVI's website](#). You should also read [UKVI's Student and Child Student Guidance](#) to ensure that your application complies with the UK Immigration Rules.

We recommend that you use your CAS statement for reference when you are filling in your visa application form.

You can find current visa application fees on [UKVI's website visa fees](#). If you are going to be in the UK for more than 6 months, you will also be required to pay the [Immigration Health Surcharge \(IHS\)](#) at the time of your application.

The standard processing time for a Student visa application overseas is three weeks, however this may vary depending on what country you are in. You can find current visa processing times in your country on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-decision-waiting-times-applications-outside-the-uk> [UKVI's website - processing times](#). You may be invited to a face-to-face visa interview at a local Visa Application Centre (VAC) as part of the application process. If this happens, you must be sure to know lots of details about your course, including information about the modules.

If you submitted your visa application through a Visa Application Centre and you are notified that your application is successful, you will receive a 90-day visa 'vignette' in your passport. This will enable you to travel to the UK. Once you have arrived in the UK you must collect your **Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)** from the designated collection point within ten days of your arrival. Your BRP is your immigration permission for the UK. Please note, if the end date on your BRP Card states 31 December 2024, but your immigration permission expires after this date, this is not an error. From 01 January 2025, you can prove your immigration status online and will not require a BRP Card.

If you submitted your application using the UK Immigration : ID Check App, you will receive an email from UKVI advising you of your next steps. If you applied using the app, you will not receive a physical document confirming your immigration status, instead you can prove your immigration status using digital verification.

Student Visa Terms & Conditions

When you accept your unconditional offer you will agree to the Stranmillis University College's Terms and Conditions for Student visa holders. As a Student route sponsor, Stranmillis University College is required by UKVI to carry out certain recording and reporting responsibilities in relation to Student visa holders. These include:

- keeping a record of your passport and visa/immigration documents;
- keeping an up-to-date record of your contact details in the UK, and
- keeping a record of your attendance in classes and placement

Stranmillis is also obliged to inform UKVI if you defer your studies before arriving in the UK or if you do not arrive on the expected date to start your course.

Stranmillis will monitor your attendance in class for the duration of your course and will inform UKVI if you miss expected contact points, if you change or withdraw from your studies, if you change to another Sponsor or change your visa status, or if you breach any of the conditions of your visa.

VISITOR STUDY VISA

Students who are coming to the UK to study a short programme for **less than six months** (for example on a Study Abroad or Exchange Programmes) that does not include a **placement element** can apply for this visa. You are **not** permitted to work under this route and you cannot extend this visa. You will not require a CAS for this type of visa application but you will need a **Visitor Study Visa letter**. This visa letter will be issued to you from Stranmillis University College's International Team. Students are not permitted to switch and apply for a Student visa whilst in the UK as a Visitor study visa holder. If you want to apply for a Student visa, you must return home and apply from the country where you live.

Visa Nationals and Non-Visa Nationals

How and where you apply for a Visitor Study visa will depend whether you are a (a) Visa national or a (b) Non-visa national.

(a) Visa national

A [visa national](#) is a national of a country that is required to apply **in advance of travelling** for a visa to come to the UK for whatever purpose they intend and for any length of time. You can check if you require a visa before you travel to the UK on [UKVI's website](#).

(b) Non-visa national

A non-visa national is a national of a country (for example USA, Canada, Japan, South Korea and Australia etc.) who may apply in advance for a visa to come to the UK **OR** may choose to apply for a Visitor Study immigration permission endorsement (stamp) when they arrive at a

UK Port of Entry (i.e. a UK airport). Most Study Abroad and Exchange students studying in the UK for less than 6 months that do *not* plan to work choose to apply for Visitor immigration permission at the airport on arrival. However, if you have a criminal record, have previously had a visa refusal or been refused entry to a country or you have recently held a UK visa it is strongly recommended that you apply for a Visitor visa in advance.

Applying for the Visitor Study Visa

When applying for a Visitor study visa you must ensure that you submit the required supporting documents with your application:

- **Visitor Study visa letter** issued from Stranmillis
- A valid passport
- Several months' bank statements showing that you have enough money to support yourself during your stay in the UK. We recommend showing evidence of around £1023 per month of your visit.
- Evidence of where you will be staying in Belfast for your studies (if you have reserved University accommodation we will confirm this in your visa letter).
- Evidence that you intend to return home at the end of your studies, i.e. return ticket (or enough money to buy a plane ticket)

If applying for a Visitor study visa **in advance** of travelling to the UK you must complete and pay for the online application and submit the above supporting documents. You will either need to need to attend a Visa Application Centre (VAC) to have your fingerprints and photograph taken at a) as part of your application or some eligible students will be able to apply using the UK Immigration: ID Check App. You will be advised on the steps you need to take when you are submitting your visa application. The application fee for the Visitor Study visa is £100 (or equivalent in your local currency) when you apply for the visa in advance.

There is no charge if you are a non-visa national and you apply at a UK airport. The standard application processing time is three weeks; however we recommend that you do not book your flights to the UK until your visa has been granted. You can find further information about applying for a visitor visa on [UKVI's website - standard visitor](#).

TRAVELLING TO THE UK

We recommend that you arrive in the UK via a **UK port of entry** e.g. Belfast, London Heathrow, Manchester etc. When your visa is issued to you overseas, it grants you entry clearance to arrive in the UK. When you enter a UK port of entry your visa will be stamped by a UK immigration officer.

If you are applying for immigration permission to enter the UK as a visitor at a UK airport, please read the following important advice:

ePassport Gates

If you are permitted to use an ePassport gate, it will be possible for you to use this gate on arrival into a UK airport and receive 6 months' Visitor Study immigration permission. Using an ePassport gate will mean that you do not receive a stamp in your passport – this is okay. When you arrive At

Stranmillis University College you will need to provide evidence (such as a boarding pass) that will allow us to confirm you passed through a UK airport [ePassport gate](#) on arrival. **You can check if it is possible for you to use an ePassport gate [here](#).**

If you come via the Republic of Ireland e.g. Dublin, you will **not** receive this stamp as the Republic of Ireland is **not** part of the UK.

Arriving in the UK via the Republic of Ireland

If you are arriving into the UK via the Republic of Ireland (ROI) you will need to consider the following:

You will need to **check if you require a ROI visa**. Nationals of some countries require a visa to enter ROI and travel on to the UK. You can check if you require a Republic of Ireland visa here: www.irishimmigration.ie <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/>

You must arrive into ROI on or after the start date stated on your UK visa and you must provide evidence of this when enrolling at Stranmillis University College (e.g. a flight boarding pass).

If you are a **non-visa national studying at Stranmillis for less than 6 months** and intending to apply for immigration permission on arrival, you will not have the opportunity to do this because there is no immigration control at your UK arrival point (i.e. between Dublin and Belfast). However, when you arrive into the Republic of Ireland you may be granted statutory immigration authorisation known as 'deemed leave'. If applicable to you, deemed leave will permit study in the UK for up to 6 months, further information is available on the [UKCISA website](#).

If you are a **non-visa national studying in for less than 6 months** planning to travel in and out of the Republic of Ireland on multiple occasions during your time study at Stranmillis you are strongly advised to apply for a UK visa in advance of travelling. A visa applied for in advance of your travels is multi-entry and will allow you to travel in out of ROI on multiple occasions.

For further details about arriving via the Republic of Ireland, please visit the [UKCISA website](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about all of the available visa options, visit the UKCISA website [here](#)

or

Stranmillis University College International Office international@stran.ac.uk