

## STUDENT VISA INFORMATION (FOR STUDENTS WITHOUT INTERNSHIP)

### What are the changes to the Immigration Rules for students and visitors?

*Effective from 1 September 2007*

- A new Student Visitor category will be introduced for short term students who wish to study in the UK for six months or less but who do not wish to take part-time employment or seek an extension to their student visitor status. It is recommended that students who might extend their stay beyond six months should apply for a Prior Entry Clearance Student Visa. If entering as a "Student Visitor" (without a visa), you will not be able to extend your stay beyond 6 months.
- Students will be required to apply for a Prior Entry Clearance Student Visa if their length of stay is 6 months or more, they are applying for an internship, or if they are participating in paid employment in the UK.

### What does this mean for you?

Students participating on the regular study program in London will be granted entrance to the U.K. as a STUDENT VISITOR. A letter from I.E. will be sent to all program participants prior to departure stating:

1. Your acceptance into the program and approval from your sponsoring college or university.
2. All accommodation, tuition and program fees have been paid by you prior to your departure for the U.K.
3. You hold a valid roundtrip airline ticket.
4. Your program dates showing the duration of your stay to be less than six (6) months.

The letter will also state that I.E., on behalf of the participating colleges and universities is:

1. On the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Register of Education and Training Providers – reference No. 18764.
2. A member in good standing of the Association of American Study Abroad Programs – U.K. (AASAP/UK).

Please carry this letter with you in your hand luggage or with your passport. You may be called upon by the U.K. Immigration Office to show this letter when you enter the United Kingdom.

#### **Intern Students Only:**

Students expecting to do a non-paid internship as an integrated part of their U.K. study abroad program must now apply for a PRIOR ENTRY CLEARANCE VISA. Information on obtaining this visa is attached.

## INTERNSHIP STUDENT VISA INFORMATION

### How do the changes to the Immigration Rules affect internship students on the London Program?

You will be required to apply for a Prior Entry Clearance Student Visa. The UK Visa Website offers answers to many questions including those listed below. For more information, please see [www.ukvisas.gov.uk/](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/) Guidance - Students (INF 5) (04/01/08).

### What is a visa?

A visa is a certificate that is put into your passport or travel document by an Entry Clearance Officer at a British Consulate Office in the United States. The visa gives you permission to enter the UK. When you arrive in the UK, an Immigration Officer may ask you questions, so take all relevant documents in your hand luggage.

The British Consulate offers general information on visa applications at [www.britainusa.com/visas/](http://www.britainusa.com/visas/). Visa services for the UK are offered at the Chicago, New York and Los Angeles British Consulate Offices.

### When should I apply?

You should apply in ample time for your entry clearance so that you are not delayed in getting into the UK. Please do not wait until the last minute as the application process can take several weeks and you will not be able to board your plane unless the visa is in your hands. It can get very busy in visa offices, especially over the summer when lots of students are applying. Note: You cannot have your clearance post-dated by more than three months.

### How do I apply for a visa?

**You will need your passport to apply for the visa.** If you have not already obtained a passport, it is imperative that you apply ASAP. In order to receive your passport and visa prior to departure, I.E. highly recommends paying the additional costs associated with expediting the passport application process (\$60.00).

You can apply for a visa in a number of ways, for example by post, by courier, in person and online. The British Consulate offices listed above will tell you about the ways in which you can apply.

Some visa offices will only accept applications made online. To find out if you can apply for your visa online please visit [www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk](http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk) (online site for visa applications). If you apply online, there will be a page entitled "Your Visa Requirements." You will fill out the blanks as follows:

- Current Location: United States
- State: (Your state of residence)
- Country of Nationality: United States (or whatever your nationality)
- Purpose of Visit: Student
- Type of Visit: Up to six months

If you cannot apply online you will need to fill in a visa application form (VAF3 Student Form). You can get a form from the UK Visa website ([www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk)), or get one free of charge from one of the British Consulate offices mentioned above.

### What are the steps required to apply for a visa?

The three main steps required for the visa application process are as follows:

1. Submit an Application

You will need to make your application online or fill in the visa application form (VAF3 Student Form), but be advised that online applications are the easiest and fastest way to process your visa. Please note that your application will be refused if the agency finds any documents are forged or if there are contradictory statements.

## 2. Send Required Documents & Information

After you have submitted your online application, a list of required documents will appear. You will need to send in all pertinent information as it relates to your application including, but not limited to:

- Your current passport.
- Your old passport or a copy of it (if applicable).
- A recent passport-sized (45mm x 35mm), color photograph of yourself (scanned or copied photos are not acceptable). This should be:
  - taken against a light-colored background
  - clear and of good quality, and not framed or backed
  - printed on normal photographic paper, and
  - full face and without sunglasses, hat or other head covering unless you wear this for cultural or religious reasons
- A letter or a certificate confirming you have continuing studies. **(I.E. will include this signed and sealed letter in your initial orientation packet – please look for it!)**
- A letter from your university or college (London Program Director) that you have been accepted on a course of study in the UK, details about the course, length of program, and an estimation of the costs of your studies.
- Your educational qualifications (unofficial transcripts) or copies of them
- Evidence of government sponsorship (if applicable)
- Evidence of funds available to you, in the form of bank statements covering at least the last three months
  - Evidence of funds is needed to show that you (or your parents) can pay for your stay and academic program in the UK. Forwarding the last 3 months of bank statements from you or your parents' account should be sufficient. If the Consulate needs further information, they will contact you. The letter we gave you will emphasize to the authorities that your program costs, accommodations and round-trip travel are required to be paid prior to departure (they want to ensure you are not working in London to pay your program costs).
- The visa fee (approximately \$208 + \$12 mail handling charge = \$220). This cannot be refunded and you must normally pay it in the local currency of the country where you are applying. Credit card is the easiest method of payment. For those unable to pay by credit card, a money order or certified check will be accepted.

\*NOTE: When mailing your application documents, I.E. strongly recommends sending the items by a postal method that can be tracked in case your passport is lost in the mail.

## 3. Provide Biometric Information

Effective December 3, 2007, the British government introduced biometric data collection (10-finger scans and a digital photograph) as part of a world-wide biometric identification process, designed to protect an individual's identity, facilitate future entry to the UK, combat visa fraud and abuse of the UK's immigration and asylum systems.

All visa applicants are required to provide their biometric data when they apply for a visa for the United Kingdom. The application cannot be processed if an applicant refuses, or cannot provide, acceptable biometric data.

To enable visa applicants to do this, the UKvisas visa service has established an arrangement whereby the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) collect the biometric data of applicants for UK visas from their network of 129 Application Support Centers (ASCs). This arrangement with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) provides wide coverage of biometric collection points in the USA.

All applicants must make an appointment to visit one of the 129 ASCs through the UKVisas online appointment booking system at <http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/>. If a visa application is submitted online, the applicant will be automatically directed to another Web site to make a biometrics appointment. If you are not automatically redirected to the online appointment booking system, or if you have submitted a paper application, the online appointment booking system is available on the UKvisas online system (see above).

To find the closest ASC by zip code or state, see the USCIS Service and Office Locator on the USCIS website under “Services & Benefits” and then “Application Support Centers”. However, please note that applicants will be directed to make an appointment at a specific ASC location based on the address submitted with their application.

Upon arrival at the ASC, applicants will be required to provide their fingerscans and a digital photograph in support of their application. Fingerscans will be collected from each applicant by using an electronic scanner. No ink, liquid or chemical will be used. A digital photograph will be taken at the same time and the whole biometric capture procedure should take no more than 10 minutes to complete, however, students and faculty will need to plan accordingly for travel to the designated ASC.

Excerpts from [www.britainusa.com](http://www.britainusa.com) and [www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org)

### **What will happen after I complete the visa application process?**

The Entry Clearance Officer will try to make a decision using your application form and the supporting documents you have provided. If this is not possible, they will need to interview you.

Your passport with visa will be mailed back to you. Use careful consideration when using your home or campus address during the application process to ensure your passport and visa are returned to you at the correct location.

Please check your visa when you get it. You should make sure that:

- Your personal details are correct,
- It correctly states the purpose for which you want to come to the UK, and
- It is valid for the date on which you want to travel. (You can ask for it to be post-dated for up to three months if you do not plan to travel immediately.)

If you think there is anything wrong with your visa, contact the visa office immediately.

***\* Please Note: The information International Enrichment has provided above is how we understand the new visa application process. The British Consulate may contact you to clarify the above or request further information. If you find out anything different from what we have mentioned, please let us know immediately so we can revise our materials and notify other students.***