

UK Student Visa FAQs for Students

Do I really need a UK Student Visa? I've read that US citizens can study in the UK for up to six months without a visa.

Students who participate in the London Internship Program, London Summer Graduate Mass Communication Program, or London School of Education program **DO** require a UK Student Visa. Because you are participating in an internship or work experience, this changes your permissions to be in the UK and requires you to apply for the UK Student Visa specifically. There is no exception to this.

Does this visa allow me to work for pay while in the UK? I typically have a job on campus.

No, it does not allow you to work for pay, this includes jobs like babysitting, etc. Essentially you are permitted a certain number of hours working without pay, and that is completely taken up by your internship. In addition, the schedule of the program and local competition for employment would make working extremely difficult if it were allowed.

That said, there are very limited employment opportunities (for pay) directly through the BU London office – London Program Assistants and Program Representatives. You can find applications for these positions on your London Personal Page.

Will this visa restrict my time in the UK at all?

Yes, all UK Student visa holders will have a range of time they are allowed to be in the UK. Typically, the UK consulate will grant 7 days of time both before and after the program start and end dates for students to be in the UK under the visa.

If you wish to arrive to the UK greater than 7 days in advance of your program start date, you may still do so, but you would be entering as a tourist and therefore would need to exit the UK and re-enter under your UK Student Visa sometime after your UK Student Visa validity has started. NOTE: some nationalities would require a tourist visa in order to do this.

All UK Student Visa holders must make plans to exit the UK within 7 days after the program ends. You do not have to return home within that 7-day period, but must exit the UK borders to any another country. You can then re-enter the UK as a tourist if you wish to stay longer.

I am incredibly busy with coursework and extracurricular activities. Can someone else fill out my visa application?

No. Students need to fill out the application themselves. You are responsible for the information and will need to know what was entered into the system, especially at the port-of-

entry into the UK. Parents may assist you if you have questions but we then would suggest doing it together. You can contact your Program Manager with any inquiries regarding the visa.

What is a CAS number and where can I get it?

CAS stands for Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies. The CAS number is generated through the London Personal Page after you have submitted a copy of your passport. The number can be found on your London Personal Page after BU London has reviewed your passport details. You cannot begin your visa application until you have been allocated your CAS number.

What is a biometric appointment and how can I schedule one?

It is an appointment in which an office approved by the UK government takes your electronic fingerprints and photograph and stores it a database. The biometric information is then made available to the UK government, and they will use it when issuing your visa. Appointments typically take place at an USCIS Application Support Center or at a Premium Application Centre.

You can only arrange a biometric appointment through your online visa application. Please schedule your biometric appointment as close as possible to when you mail or submit your visa application to the consulate, as biometric information is only valid for a short amount of time.

What do I need to bring to my biometric appointment?

- Your actual passport, signed
- Biometric Appointment Details Sheet (this will be stamped at the appointment)
- Printed UK Student Visa application

There are no biometric appointment available before the visa mailing deadline. What can I do?

In this case, you should see if there are available appointments further away from your preferred location. You cannot change locations after confirming a time, so you may need to drive to a different, less convenient location. Appointments are limited due to Covid-19. Please reach out to your Program Manager if you find yourself unable to find an appointment before the given deadline.

The UK Student Visa application is asking me about the Biometric Residency Permit (BRP) and indicating that I must choose an address to pick the card up. What is this about?

Currently the application system does not distinguish between students who are studying for less than six months (or one semester) and students who are studying for more than six months (more than one semester).

Students need to put in the UK postal code (SW7 4JU) for our program under the BRP section of the application, even though the consulate is basically going to ignore this. Since a BRP is only needed for students who will be in the UK 6 months or more, its fine if you say you would pick up a BRP (all students have to do this to get through this section).

Students still have to have schedule a regular biometrics appointment, so please make sure one is booked before payment. You will be able to schedule a regular biometrics appointment in the US once you have gotten through the BRP section.

The visa fee is very expensive! Is there any way to waive the cost?

Unfortunately, no – the visa fee is set by the UK government and BU Study Abroad has no ability to change or waive it. We try to let students know early on to expect this cost and plan for it. If you have questions about financial aid, please see the [Financial Considerations section](#) of our website. BU students can also contact the Office of Financial Assistance.

Do I have to include my actual passport when submitting my application materials to the UK consulate?

Yes, the UK Student Visa is a sticker that is attached to a page in the passport after the visa application has been approved.

How long does it take to get my visa and passport back from the consulate?

The standard processing time is between 14 – 21 business days. We recommend allotting for more time, especially this year.

I need my passport back in less than 14-21 business days, how can I expedite it?

Contact your Program Manager if this is the case for you. You will need to purchase expediting (called “Priority Service” by the consulate) BEFORE mailing/submitting your visa application materials to the consulate. You cannot expedite after the materials have been sent. Expediting will speed up the processing of your visa to 6-10 business days plus shipping time to and from the consulate – plan your travel accordingly. This will incur an additional cost above the cost of the visa itself.

You can elect to pay for Priority Service within your online visa application by selecting “Priority Service” as the payment method or you can purchase it separately after you finish your online visa application via the VFS Global website. We recommend the latter option.

Keep in mind that late arrivals in London are not permitted. If your timeline is especially tight, you may want to pay extra to make sure your return package can be delivered by UPS on a Saturday.

I'm confused about the return label. Why do I provide a pre-paid shipping label in my visa application materials?

When you mail/submit your application materials, the consulate needs to be able to mail your passport and visa back to you when it's issued. You must provide them with a pre-paid shipping label through VFS Global or UPS. If you are mailing your materials to the consulate yourself, you would purchase "Round Trip Courier Service" to get both shipping labels. If you are submitting your materials at an appointment or to BU Study Abroad as part of the group mailing, you would purchase "Return Courier Service" to just get the return label.

Think about where you will physically be located at the time your passport is being mailed back to you. Students have typically had their passports sent to their home address for safe keeping. Please do not use a PO Box as your return address.

NOTE You can only use UPS as your shipping method. Please DO NOT use Fed Ex, USPS, DHL, or any other shipping method besides UPS for your shipping materials. VFS Global will automatically use UPS for your shipping labels.

I made a mistake on my application and printed it out. The system won't let me fix it online. What can I do to fix the mistake?

If you have accidentally entered incorrect information on your online application, such as wrong birthdate, citizenship, or arrival date; you should cross out the information on their printed application and write in the correct information. Additionally, you should include a brief but formal memo to the New York consulate indicating the change on your Tier 4 visa application.

How can I reach the consulate with any questions or concerns I may have about my application?

You cannot reach the visa processing office by phone – they do not release their contact information to the public as it would severely slow down their ability to process visas. You can try to reach them via email at UKVINewYork.Correspondence@fco.gov.uk - please note that they are slow to respond. We suggest starting with your program manager for any questions you might have. Depending on the severity of the situation, your program manager can contact the consulate on your behalf.

Remember to read through this entire FAQ! Many of your questions may be answered right here.

I just reviewed the application materials checklist and I forgot to include something in my mailing to the consulate. How can I send them the missing document?

When a document is missing or incorrect, the consulate will typically email the applicant notifying them of the error and instructions on how to resolve it. These instructions are almost always time sensitive so remember to check your email account associated with your visa regularly. Do not send multiple packages to the consulate unless it's expressly requested by their office. Remember, it can take up to a week for the consulate to open your package, so you may not hear from them right away. Contact your Program Manager if this is the case for you.

I applied for the wrong visa. How can I correct this?

You need to completely apply for the correct visa and abandon your current application. If you have not done your biometrics you may qualify for a refund. If you have already had your biometric appointment, then you would no longer qualify for a refund. Please see the refund policy on the UKVI website. Please contact your Program Manager with any questions.

I want my visa application reviewed. Can someone look it over for me?

Yes! Please email the PDF of your visa application to your Program Manager and they will be more than happy to review it before you mail it in.

I am studying abroad the semester before I go to London. Can I apply for my UK Student Visa while I'm abroad?

Probably not. Most consulates will not let non-nationals apply in their country unless they have some sort of long-term permission to stay (like permanent residency, etc.), which studying abroad typically does not count as. This means that you'll need to plan to return to the United States or your home country and apply for a visa there. That revised timeline may also mean that you must expedite your application.

I am an international student and will be traveling home between semesters. Can I apply for the UK Student Visa in my home country?

Yes, but we strongly recommend students apply in the United States if they can, as BU Study Abroad will have the best chance of being able to assist you if your application is being processed via the UK Consulate of New York. If applying abroad, keep in mind that the process for applying, documents needed, and processing time might be quite different than it is in the

United States. You will need to plan ahead and apply early to ensure that you have your visa in time to depart for London.

When entering the UK, can I use an e-gate at customs or do I need to speak to an immigration officer?

UK Student Visa students can use e-gates to enter the UK.

What documents should I have with me when I enter the UK to start the program?

We recommend the following four documents:

- 1) Your passport with the attached UK Student Visa sticker
- 2) Your immigration letter that can be found on your London Personal Page
- 3) Directions to your residence hall, which can also be found on your London Personal Page
- 4) Your return ticket back to the United States or your home country