

Which immigration route should I use to come to the UK:

Standard Visitor visa or Student visa?

If you are coming to the UK for a period of study lasting up to and including 6 months you have two options for the type of immigration permission (visa) you can apply for: **Student visa** or **Standard Visitor visa**. Each route has advantages and disadvantages and the following list of 'pros' and 'cons' may help you decide which one is best for you.

Please note that if you are a citizen of a country which is on the UK government's [visa national list](#), you must apply for a visa BEFORE leaving your home country or country of residence, whichever route you choose.

PROS

Student visa

- You can take part-time work in UK subject to certain restrictions;
- You can undertake work placements as part of your studies e.g. internships;
- You may be able to extend your student visa in the UK if you change your study plans and need to stay longer to complete your course;
- Your visa will be multi-entry so travelling in and out of the UK is straightforward for the duration of the visa;
- If you are eligible for a work-based immigration category following your studies, you can usually switch to a different type of visa from within the UK eg. graduate visa.

CONS

Student visa

- You must obtain Entry Clearance/Visa from a Visa Application Centre in your home country before travelling to the UK;
- You must have a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies) from the University of Manchester
- The visa application fee is £363;
- Very strict rules must be followed regarding the documents required for your visa application;
- You must have a set amount of funds to cover living costs and tuition fees in a bank account for 28 days before applying (see the link to further details below);
- You must pay an immigration healthcare surcharge as part of your visa application, which is £470 for each year of your visa;
- The University must monitor your attendance throughout your studies and report non-attendance or other problems to UKVI

More information about applying under the Student route can be found on the University's website [here](#).

PROS

Standard Visitor visa

- Quicker to obtain and less expensive than a Student visa;
- Suitable for short courses including English language courses under 6 months' duration;
- Suitable for a short period of research that is linked to your overseas degree course – you will need to provide the UKVI with a document from your overseas course provider that confirms that the research or research tuition is part of, or relevant to, the course you're doing overseas;
- Suitable for optional elective placements if you are a studying medicine, nursing or dentistry or for unpaid clinical attachments if you are a graduate from a medical, dental or nursing school;
- You will need a visa letter from your academic school or department at the University of Manchester confirming the details of your proposed study; no CAS is required;
- No set amount of money is needed in your bank account; instead you must show 'sufficient funds' to cover fees and living costs;
- No requirement to assess or give details about your English Language ability;
- Can be obtained at port of entry to the UK by non-visa nationals* – free of charge;
- For visa nationals the visa application fee is £100;
- Visa nationals can apply for the visa from any country;
- Course can be any number of hours per week and any duration up to 6 months

CONS

Standard Visitor visa

- Maximum duration is for 6 months;
- Cannot be extended;
- You cannot switch to any other type of visa from within the UK;
- You cannot take any kind of paid or unpaid work during your stay unless it is an unpaid clinical attachment and you have documentary evidence that are a graduate from a medical, dental or nursing school;
- You cannot take any work placements, unless it is an optional additional elective placement and you are a medicine, dentistry or nursing student.

More information about coming to the UK under the Standard Visitor route can be found on [our website](#) and on the [UKVI website](#).

Travelling in Europe

If you want to travel to Europe during your time as a student and you require a Schengen visa, you must have at least 3 – 6 months left on your visa when you intend to return to the UK. This means if you are coming to the UK for six months or less on a Student visa it is unlikely that you will qualify for a Schengen visa. If you want to travel to Europe from the UK you need to check the visa requirements of the country that you want to travel to as each country has different visa conditions. For further information visit about Schengen visas visit our [website](#).

Further useful information on all the above is available from the independent organisation the [UK Council for International Student Affairs \(UKCISA\)](#).

