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RCS Student visa guide

This guide is produced to help support RCS applicants coming to the UK to study on a Student visa. The rules, guidance and ultimate decision maker on your Student visa application is the United Kingdom Visa and Immigration (UKVI) service and is part of the Home Office Department. Guidance and rules for visas can and does change throughout the year so please make sure that you read and meet the full eligibility criteria and information on the gov.uk website [here](#).

This guide will cover the following topics;

- Preparing for your visa
- Applying for your visa
- Getting your decision and travel to the UK
- Important things to remember



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Preparing for your visa application

You can apply for a Student visa to study in the UK if you're 16 or over and you:

- have been offered an unconditional place at RCS
- been assessed as eligible for a Student visa sponsorship (CAS)
- have enough [money to support yourself and pay for your course](#) - the amount will vary depending on your circumstances (details below)
- have consent from your parents if you're 16 or 17 - you'll need evidence of this when you apply

Unconditional offer

You need to have accepted your unconditional offer of study at RCS on UCAS.

Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

This is an electronic document that confirms to UKVI that RCS wish to sponsor your study in the UK. It is a legal declaration that RCS has completed a range of checks regarding your suitability to study in the UK and confirms that RCS will maintain our sponsorship during your studies. Further information about when you will get your CAS is outlined below in "[When to apply for your visa](#)".

Finances

How much you will need and how you need to show that is different for every applicant. There are several things that can impact this such as your tuition fee, any scholarships and what country you are from.

The finance requirements are set by the UKVI and RCS have no discretion over these, full details can be found [here](#).

The fee for the visa application is currently £490. In April this will increase to £524.



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Other fees

Some Visa Application Centres offer a range of “user pays” services. It is up to you if you want to add any of these services and meet the cost of these. E.g. Priority visa processing timescales.

Depending on how you apply you may be required to pay a fee for submitting your biometrics. This is around £20.

Immigration Health Surcharge

The immigration health surcharge (IHS) is a fee that gives you access to the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK. It is currently charged at **£776** per year.

You can use the [immigration health surcharge tool](#) on the Home Office website to check how much you will have to pay.

The Student route application form will calculate the amount that you need to pay and ask you to pay it before you can complete your application. After you have done this, you will receive an email containing your IHS reference number. This number will automatically be included on your application form cover sheet.

Maintenance

The Home Office recently announced an increase to the Student visa finance requirement to **£1171** per month (for up to a maximum of 9 months) for Student visa applicants applying on or after 2 January 2026. For students on a full-time programme this will equal **£10,539**.

Accommodation

Base Glasgow is not owned by the RCS therefore you cannot deduct any money already paid to Base for housing from the total amount of money you need to show.

Tuition fees

These are listed on your CAS and can be found on the website [here](#). We will include any money you have paid towards your fees. This will be confirmed on your CAS. If you make additional payments after your CAS has been issued you should contact international@rcs.ac.uk to update your CAS.

Scholarships

RCS Scholarships will be listed on your CAS. If you have an external scholarship that you are using it must meet the Home Office requirements listed [here](#).



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US Loans

If you are borrowing US Federal loans or Sallie Mae Loans and you have not been in touch with RCS about this, please email usloans@rcs.ac.uk and we will arrange this.

Using your parents' funds

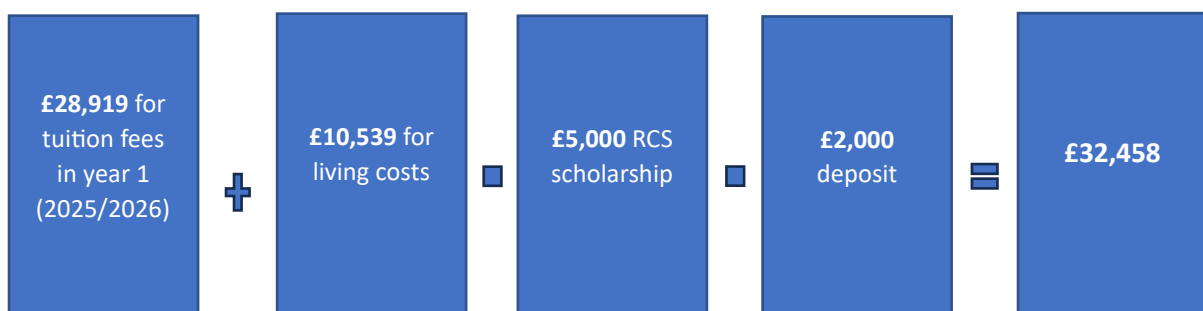
You can use cash funds in the name of your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) but you must provide your original birth certificate (professionally translated if not in English), adoption certificate, official court documentation confirming legal guardian status and a signed letter from your parent(s)/legal guardian(s) confirming that you can use their money for your education in the UK.

Funds that are not acceptable as evidence (examples)

- Overdrafts
- GoFundMe
- Cryptocurrency, shares, stocks, bonds, overdrafts, credit cards, and other non-cash funds such as salary, government pension schemes and property value.

Example

Matías Arezo from Uruguay has accepted an offer of a place on the Bachelor of Music Performance programme. It is a 2-year programme. He has been awarded a RCS scholarship of £5,000 for the first year of his course and he has paid £2,000 as a deposit. For his visa application he needs to show he has **£32,143**.



Differential evidence requirement

Nationals from some countries may not have to provide certain documents supporting their Student visa application. For example these could be documents that show you meet finance requirements or your academic qualifications.



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However, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) can reserve the right to request your evidence that you meet finance requirements - even if you qualify under differential arrangements.

If UKVI requests you to provide evidence, you'll have a very short time to provide it. If you fail to provide the requested evidence, this will result in a visa refusal.

You can find the list of nationals in the differential evidence requirement in [Appendix Student, paragraph ST 22.1](#). Currently this includes:

- Australia
- Canada
- China
- France
- Spain
- United States of America

Tuberculosis (TB) Certificate

Some students are required to provide this. This depends on a number of factors including your nationality. You should check [here](#). If you are required to submit this and fail to do so, it will likely result in a visa refusal.

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

No RCS programmes require this.

Dependents

Some students are allowed to bring family members with them to the UK however, this is heavily restricted. For further information please see the information [here](#).



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Applying for your visa

Where to apply for your visa

Most students will need to apply from their home country. In some circumstances students can apply from another country but you must speak to international@rcs.ac.uk if you plan to do this. Applying from out with your home country when you are not eligible to do so is likely to result in a visa refusal.

How to apply for your visa

You apply online for Student entry clearance outside the UK, in the country where you live – use the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa/apply>.

The Student visa application form is not standardised and will alter in the information requested to reflect your previous to your answers. You should answer all questions fully and honestly and if asked to provide further information this should be comprehensive.

RCS will be in contact with you to ensure that you are supported throughout your visa journey.

When setting up your UKVI account use an email address that you have regular access to and remember to check your junk folder frequently. The UKVI will not communicate with RCS about your visa application, and you will receive all communication directly from them.

You will be given clear instructions what documents you need to submit with your visa application. You must submit these documents within the timeline, format and method request or your visa could be refused.

When to apply for your visa

Begin the process of applying for your new visa no more than 6 months before the start date of your course. RCS will begin to prepare CAS at the end of April. You need to have completed the following steps before being issued with a CAS. RCS deadline for CAS issuing for a 2025 start is 22nd August 2025.

- Accepted an unconditional offer to study
- Paid your tuition fee deposit of £2,000 (if required)
- Submitted a copy of your passport
- Submitted a [Student Route CAS Evidence Request Form](#) (available on the induction portal for successful applicants)



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- If you're under the age of 18 before enrolment at RCS, submit a Parental Consent form (available on the induction portal for successful applicants)

You must check all the details on your CAS are correct. If you submit a visa application with incorrect details on your CAS, your visa could be refused. If you notice anything wrong with your CAS, please contact international@rcs.ac.uk immediately. In some cases, a new CAS will have to be issued, and your old CAS will be withdrawn and will no longer be valid.



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Getting your decision and travel to the UK

You will be notified of your visa outcome via email (remember the tips from above).

Successful

Check all the details on your visa vignette. If you have any questions, get in touch with RCS as early as possible. Depending on the issue this may need to be addressed before you travel to the UK.

It is important that you familiarise yourself with the [conditions of your visa](#) so that you understand your permission and its restrictions.

Receiving your eVisa

Applicants will receive their full immigration permission for the UK in the form of an eVisa. UKCISA have an [eVisa webpage](#) that outlines commonly asked questions about digital status and what to do in case there are any errors.

eVisas require you to register for a UKVI account before being able to access them. You should be invited to complete this process upon your immigration application being successful. Once you have registered for a UKVI account, you will be able to login and view your permission at any time. You must keep your passport details up-to-date in your account so that your eVisa remains accurate.

You will be able to use the [View and Prove service](#) to demonstrate your permission to third parties in the UK (i.e., educational institutions, landlords, or employers). The service generates share codes that you can give to third parties to securely share proof of your immigration status in the UK.

Unsuccessful (Visa refusal)

In the unlikely event that your visa is refused please contact international@rcs.ac.uk as soon as possible to notify them of the decision and to request further guidance. In your email you should include a copy of your refusal notice.



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How long will it take?

Student visa applications should be processed within 3 weeks of attending your appointment or (if using the IDV Check app) within 3 weeks of submitting your application. Do not make any definite travel plans until your new visa has been granted and your documents have been returned to you. Unfortunately, RCS cannot influence or speed up your visa application process.

Student visa validity period

Type of Course	Period Before Course Start	Period After Course End
Course of 12 months or longer	1 Month	4 Months
Course of 6 months or longer (but shorter than 12 months e.g. MA Music or Artistic Diploma)	1 Month	2 Months
Course shorter than 6 months	7 Days	7 Days



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Important things to remember

Ask! Ask! Ask!

If you have any questions at all please email international@rcs.ac.uk and we will get back to you as quickly as possible. Please be aware that we work on CAS issuing throughout the summer and will reply to you as soon as we can.

Changes in circumstances

We understand that situations can change and if you no longer intend to study at RCS please confirm this to allow us to withdraw your CAS. Cancelling your visa application needs to be done directly with the Home Office [here](#).

Biometric Residence Permits

As of 31 October 2024, the Home Office no longer issues biometric residence permits (BRPs).

Credibility Interviews

Some students are selected for a Credibility Interview as a part of their visa application. You will be notified about this directly and it is not something to be scared of. The caseworker assessing your visa application must be satisfied that you are a genuine student and to do this they have to consider all of the information given in your application and, if necessary, conduct a credibility interview. If you fail to attend the interview your visa application could be refused.

Further information

- <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa>

Finally

Good luck and we look forward to welcoming you to Scotland and RCS soon.