



# Visiting the University of Edinburgh

THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

We are delighted to welcome you to the University of Edinburgh as a visitor.

Visitors coming to the University from outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) will need a visa to come to the UK.

It is very important that you are in the UK under the correct visa category for your intended activity at the University. There are restrictions on what you can do, allowed payments and length of your visit – depending on what visa you have.

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## How to apply?

Those coming to the UK for the main purpose of:

- Attendance at a conference, meeting, seminar or interview
- Giving a one off or short series of talks (provided these are not commercial events & the organiser is not making a profit)

can apply to enter the UK under the **Standard Visitor (business) category**.

## Making your application

How and where you apply for a visa will depend on whether you are a **visa national** or a **non-visa national**.

### **Visa Nationals**

You must apply for a visa from outside the UK in advance of your travel.

A list of visa nationals can be found in Appendix 2 of the Visitor Immigration Rules:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor-rules>.

This application is made online here: <https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa/apply>

The application process varies depending on what country you are applying from however you will need to book an appointment at a local visa application centre to enrol your biometric information (fingerprints/photograph) and submit your supporting documentation. You will need to submit a letter of invitation from the University of Edinburgh, as well as other supporting evidence (see below).

### **Non-visa national**

You do not require a visa in advance of travel to the UK. Instead, you will announce the purpose of your visit to the Immigration Officer at the airport on arrival at the UK airport – e.g, that you are visiting the UK for business reasons/to attend or present at a conference. You will receive an ink stamp under the appropriate category.

You should carry the letter of invitation from the University of Edinburgh, and additional supporting evidence, in your hand luggage and present this to the Immigration Officer on arrival.

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### What documents do I need to provide?

As well as your letter of invitation from the University of Edinburgh, you should provide the following evidence/documentation:

- Current, valid passport (you may also need to provide a previous passport, e.g. if this shows travel history)
- Details of accommodation in the UK and return travel bookings
- Evidence of how you will support yourself in the UK (e.g. personal bank statements showing enough savings, evidence of overseas income)
- Evidence that you intend to return to your home country at the end of your trip (e.g. letter from employer/payslips, evidence of family relationships (marriage/birth certificates, evidence of property ownership).
- Information about why you are coming to the UK (e.g. evidence that you are studying/working at a HEI overseas, and that the conference is relevant to your studies/work in your home country)

Even if your travel expenses are being covered, it is very important that you provide evidence of your financial circumstances in your home country. The UK Home Office place significant weight on your financial/economic circumstances as evidence of your intention to return at the end of your visit to the UK.

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### Avoiding a refusal

Some applicants find it difficult to successfully obtain a standard visitor visa, especially if they are from developing countries or do not have a significant travel history. It is very important that you submit as much evidence as possible to show (1) why you are coming to the UK; (2) who is going to pay for it (and that there is enough money to cover costs); and (3) most importantly, that you will return to your home country at the end of your visit.

Some things to consider:

- You may want to include a statement explaining the purpose of your visit and any relevant background to your decision to come to the UK. Why the UK? Why now?
- You need to provide evidence that you have a settled life to return to at the end of your visit – e.g. employment, family responsibilities. Can your employer provide a letter explaining that you have been given annual leave and, if relevant, that the conference relates to your work? Have you made alternative care arrangements for any dependants?
- If the cost of the visit is quite high, especially in relation to your own financial circumstances, you will need to explain why this visit is important, how it is being funded and how you can afford the time/expense of the trip.
- The most common reason for refusal is to do with finances in your home country. You should provide at least 6 months of bank statements, however unidentified deposits in bank accounts should be avoided. If you have a number of large deposits in your bank statements then they must be explained (with evidence, if possible).

- If you are relying on income from your job overseas, you must include evidence of your salary – if your payslips and bank statements don't match, then you must explain why.
- You must complete the application form fully and accurately, and the information must be consistent with the documents you have provided and any information the UK immigration authorities may already have.
- You should also present the documentation in a way that is easy for the UK Visas & Immigration to access and understand.

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## Further Guidance

You may find it useful to look at the UK Home Office Guidance for visitors and their website:

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visit-guidance>

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa>

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Please also familiarise yourself with the visa/entry conditions under the standard visitor (business) route:

- *Intend to leave the UK at the end of the period of your visit*
- *Not exceed the maximum time permitted (business visitors – 6 months)*
- *Be able to maintain and accommodate yourself without using public funds*
- *Be able to meet the cost of an onward or return journey*
- *Not intend to live in the UK for extended period through frequent or successive visits*
- *Not intend to take part in paid or unpaid employment, or produce goods or provide services within the UK*
- *Not intend to take a course of study as the main purpose of your visit (any incident study must not exceed 30 days in total)*
- *Not intend to marry or form a civil partnership, or give notice of a marriage/civil partnership*
- *Not be a child under the age of 18 years old*
- *Not intend to receive private medical treatment*
- *Not be in transit to a country outside the common travel area*