



Graduation Ceremony and Visas

Completing a course and preparing for the graduation ceremony is an exciting time, but students should carefully consider the visa that they and their guests may require to attend the ceremony.

Your course visa

If the visa for your course will still be valid on the date of your ceremony, you will be able to remain in the UK to attend the ceremony.

However, you should apply for a **Standard Visitor visa** if:

- You leave the UK after your course finishes and intend to return for your ceremony. Even though the visa for your course may not have expired, there is a risk that border officers will not allow you to re-enter the UK as you have completed your course and as such have fulfilled the purpose of that visa.
- The visa for your course expires before the date of your ceremony, in which case you must leave the UK before it expires.

Applying for a Standard Visitor visa

Applications must be made outside the UK, in a country in which you legally live. You can apply up to 3 months before you wish to travel to the UK and it usually takes around 3 weeks to get your visa.

Note that people with some nationalities (e.g. USA) may not need to apply for the visa before travelling to the UK, and can instead just request a Standard Visitor permission stamp when they arrive at the UK border; search 'check if I

need a visa' at gov.uk. In both cases, the same documents will be required.

Information about the application process, the required documents and specific processing times for each country can be found on the UK Government website; search for 'standard visitor visa' at gov.uk.

In addition to the documents listed on the UK Government website, we recommend providing those described below.

Documents for your visa application

Documents you must provide include evidence for the main reason for coming to the UK. You can use the confirmation e-mail you receive after registering for your place at the ceremony on the University's website. Note that it will only state your name and not those of your guests.

Documents for your guests' visa application

As your guests will be coming to the UK to attend your graduation ceremony, you must provide them with the following documents to support their visa application:

- An invitation letter from you, inviting your guests to the UK for your graduation ceremony (see example on next page)
- A copy of the ID page of your passport
- A copy of your UK visa
- A student status letter from the University (if you have not yet completed your course). You can get this online (registry.arts.ac.uk/student-details) or from the Programme Administration office at your College.

- The letter you received from the University confirming you have successfully completed your course (if you have completed your course).
- Bank statements, showing that you can cover your guests' costs (if you will be providing financial support to your guests when they stay in the UK).

Your invitation letter

The invitation letter that you write to support your guests' visa application must be addressed to the Entry Clearance Officer at the British embassy at which your guests will be applying for their visa.

In your invitation letter you must state:

- The full name and date of birth of each of your guests and their relationship to you (for example your parent, sister, child or friend)
- That your guests will be visiting the UK to attend your graduation ceremony
- The dates on which they plan to arrive in the UK and leave the UK
- The address of the accommodation at which they intend to stay. If your guests will be staying with you, you should provide a letter written by your landlord which gives permission for this (if you live in private rented accommodation) or from Accommodation Services (if you live in UAL accommodation; search for 'accommodation' at arts.ac.uk).
- The type, start date and end date of your UK visa.
- That you will provide all of the money that your guests will require during their stay in the UK, if they will be relying on you for financial support.

An example of an invitation letter is on the right side of this factsheet.

Entry Clearance Officer
British Embassy, Beijing
11 Guanghai Lu
Jianguomenwai
Beijing, 100600
China

12 May 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

I recently completed a course at University of the Arts London and I would like the following family members to visit the UK in order to attend my graduation ceremony held on 9 July 2018.

Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth	Relationship
Chen	Jianyu	09/09/1969	My father
Chen	Xiaoli	15/01/1996	My sister

They plan to visit the UK from 7 July to 20 July 2018 and will be staying with me in my accommodation. The address is 33 Evington Road, London W5 7AP. This is a private rented house and I have included a letter from my landlord, which gives permission for them to stay with me during this period.

Note that I have a Tier 4 (General) visa that is valid until 14 October 2018.

Yours faithfully,

Your name
Your date of birth
Your address

Student Advice Service

Your money and immigration specialists

student.advice@arts.ac.uk 020 7514 6250

Search for 'Student Advice' at arts.ac.uk

Illustration by Ewelina Skowronska, UAL Graduate

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