South Africa Visa Arrangements

Please be aware that Study Abroad Office staff are not qualified to offer consultations or in-depth advice regarding visa applications. Immigration laws are complex and subject to frequent changes, and you should note the date of last revision at the bottom of this document. If you do have any further questions about the process of applying for your visa you will need to contact the appropriate embassy or consulate directly. The information below is intended as guidance only and unless otherwise stated applies only to UK citizens without exceptional circumstances.

Students should apply for a Study Visa for the duration of their time in South Africa.

You cannot begin applying for a visa until you have received your acceptance pack from your host university. Acceptance packages will usually be sent via the Study Abroad Office and you will be emailed at your Leeds email account to collect them in person.

Full details of the procedures below and links to all necessary forms can be found on the South African High Commission’s website: http://southafricahouseuk.com/visas/vis_studyprmt.html

South African visa applications are facilitated in the UK by VFS.Global, whose website also details the procedures below in a more user-friendly format: http://www.vfsglobal.com/southafrica/uk/study_visa.html

Applying for a visa

To apply for a visa to study in South Africa, you will need to go in person to one of the South African Visa Facilitation Centres in London, Manchester or Edinburgh. You should apply for your visa no more than 90 days before you travel but bear in mind that the current processing time for a Study Visa is minimum 34 days.

The visa application service is by appointment only. Make sure to print your Appointment Letter and the email confirming payment of your application fee and bring them with you to your visa application appointment.

Appointments can be scheduled here: http://www.vfsglobal.com/southafrica/uk/Schedule_an_Appointment.html

Documents required

- Passport valid for at least 30 days after the end of the study period and at least three blank pages
- Visa application form* (DHA 1738 Form 8)
- You will be provided the Fingerprint Form referred to in the DHA 1738 Form 8 at the Embassy
- Two passport size photographs
- Medical report* - to be completed and signed by your GP

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Documents required (contin.)

- Radiological report* - to be completed and signed by a radiologist, which can be organised through the NHS or through a private medical practice
- Police clearance certificate (see detail below)
- An official acceptance letter from your University in South Africa
- Marriage certificate (if applicable)
- Divorce certificate (if applicable)
- Proof of medical insurance cover from a South African insurance provider
- Proof of sufficient financial means – you need to show you have access to R8500 per month

*Links to the DHA 1738 Form 8, Medical Report Form and Radiological Report Form can be found on both of the websites listed above.

It is advisable to take both the original and a photocopy of each required document with you when you apply for your visa.

ACRO Criminal Records Office in the UK offers a police certificate service for visa purposes. The certificate shows your criminal record in the United Kingdom and is required for all visa applicants. A police certificate costs £45.00 for the Standard Service and £80.00 for the Premium Service. You can apply for a police certificate here: https://www.acro.police.uk/police_certificates.aspx

Visa Fees

Applying for a South African Study Visa costs a total of £70. This fee is paid in two parts - £35 will be chargeable online when you book your visa appointment and a further £35 will be chargeable in person when you attend your visa appointment. These are two separate fees and cannot be paid at the same time. You must bring a print out of the confirmation of payment email you receive for the online fee to your visa appointment.

There is also a separate fee of $14.95 for return postage of your passport. This is optional if you apply in London and compulsory if you apply in Manchester or Edinburgh. The postage fee can be paid for either in advance online or in person when you attend your visa appointment.

You can pay the in person fees by credit card, debit card or cash.

Processing times

At the time of writing these guidelines, the processing time for a Study Visa is a minimum of 32 days if applying in London and a minimum of 34 days if applying in Manchester or Edinburgh.

Your visa application can be tracked here: http://www.vfsglobal.com/southafrica/uk/after_submission.html

Contact details

Contact details and addresses for the South African High Commission in the UK and the South African Visa Facilitation Centres can be found here: http://southafricahouseuk.com/visas/vis_studyprmt.html

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