



16 March 2009

VISITING THE UK FOR SPORT VISA INFORMATION

If you are visiting the UK for a short time for a sports event or for business or tourist reasons related to sport, you may require a UK Visitor Visa and should read the information below.

If you are coming to the UK to take up an employment offer from a UK employer related to sport, you will not be eligible for a UK Visitor Visa. Instead you should apply under the UK's Points Based System and be invited by a UK registered sponsor to come to the UK – see <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/doineedvisa>.

1. Do I need a visa to visit the UK?

Yes, you will need a visa if you hold a valid passport from one of the countries set out on the list at the end of this note (see also www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/doineedvisa/visadatvnationals).

No, you will not need a visa if you hold a valid passport from a country not on that list (eg Australia, Canada, USA, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, etc.) if you are coming to the UK each time as a visitor for **6 months or less**. (But note section 4 below on the requirement for supporting documents to be shown on landing in the UK.)

No, you will not need a visa to come to the UK for any length of time if you hold a valid passport from a country in the European Economic Area (which includes all the European Union countries plus Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein) or Switzerland.

Note: the UK is not a member of the Schengen group of countries, so a **Schengen visa** (applicable in other European countries) **will not be valid** for travel to the UK.

2. Which visa do I need to apply for?

(a) Sports Visitor Visa

You will be able to apply for a Sports Visitor Visa if you are invited by an event organiser in the UK to take part in a one-off sports event or a series of sports events as a competitor. Coaches, officials, event volunteers or support staff accompanying the sportsperson would also qualify. If you are an athlete coming to train in the UK you may also apply for this type of visa, provided you are not going to stay in the UK for longer than six months. If you are under 18 years of age you should apply for a Child Visitor Visa.

(b) Child Visitor Visa

All applicants under 18 years of age require a Child Visitor visa. You will need written consent to travel from your parent/guardian in your home country and you will need to show that you have proper travel, reception and care arrangements in place for your stay in the UK. If you apply as an "Accompanied Child", you must travel with the adult named on the visa; if you apply as an "Unaccompanied Child", you may travel alone or with any adult.

(c) Business Visitor Visa

If you are visiting the UK for a business meeting or conference, to sign contracts, undertake site visits, or for fact-finding missions, you should apply for a Business Visitor Visa. If you are a member of the media, you will also be classed as a Business Visitor, provided you are employed or paid by an overseas company and visiting the UK to gather information for an overseas media organisation.

(d) General Visitor Visa

If you are coming to visit the UK as a spectator, dependant or spouse/partner of a sportsperson, guardian to a child under 18, or simply for general tourism, you should apply for a General Visitor Visa.

(e) Long-Term Visitor Visa

People with a good history of travel in recent years may wish to apply for a Long-Term Visitor Visa valid for 1, 2, 5 or 10 years for multiple entries to the UK, provided that you spend no more than six months in any twelve months in the UK. This could be helpful if you will be making several trips to the UK over the next few years. It also means you will only have to give your biometric details the first time you apply for a visa.

If you have a Sports or Business Visitor Visa, you may also enter the UK as a tourist. But you may not enter as a sports person or attend business meetings if you have the General Visitor Visa. (Note that: (a) you may also need a visa to transit the UK on your way to other countries, and (b) special requirements will apply in 2012 for accredited participants in the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (more detail to follow in 2011 from LOCOG).)

3. How and where do I apply for my visa?

You should apply well in advance of travel (at least two months) to ensure there is sufficient time for your visa to be processed. Details of where to apply can be found at www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/wheretooapply.

In some countries you must apply online: see www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/ApplyNow.aspx. You may also be able to make an appointment during this online process to submit your printed and signed form in person at your nearest Visa Application Centre (VAC) or at a British mission (Embassy/Consulate-General etc) overseas. If your country does not have the online application facility, you will need to complete a Visa Application Form - see www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/vafs/. This also needs to be signed and presented in person at a VAC.

You will have to provide **biometric data (10-digit finger scans and a digital photograph) by attending in person** at a VAC or British mission each time you apply for a visa. The same process will apply for visa applications to all EU countries by 2012.

4. What documents do I need to support my entry to the UK?

If you are not an EEA or Swiss national, you will need to provide documentary evidence to Immigration on landing at a UK port or airport of the reason for your visit to the UK – eg the invitation from the sporting organisation. You may also be asked for evidence that you can support yourself financially and accommodate yourself in the UK, do not intend to base yourself in the UK and will leave at the end of your visit.

If you need a visa to visit the UK, you will also have to include supporting documents with your visa application. As an applicant for a Sports Visitor Visa, you will have to provide evidence of previous sports participation that resulted in your selection for the event in the UK, a contract of employment or letter from an employer saying you can return to your job and an original invitation letter from the sports federation inviting you to the UK. A full list of supporting documents is set out at the end of the Visa Application Form.

5. How much will my visa cost and how long will it last?

All the 6 month visitor visas listed above are generally valid for six months with multiple entries to the UK during that time and cost **£67**. The Long-Term Visitor visas are £215 (1 or 2 years); £400 (5 years) and £500 (10 years). (*Fees correct as from 6 April 2009.*)

6. Where do I get more information?

More detailed comprehensive information on how and where to apply for a UK visa can be found on the UK Border Agency's Visa Services website (www.ukvisas.gov.uk) or at your nearest VAC or British mission.

Countries whose nationals need a visa to come to the UK

Afghanistan	Central African Republic	Georgia	Laos	Pakistan	Tajikistan
Albania	Chad	Ghana	Lebanon	Peru	Tanzania
Algeria	China, People's Rep.of	Guinea	*Lesotho	Palestinian Authority	Thailand
Angola	Colombia	Guinea Bissau	Liberia	Philippines	Togo
Armenia	Comoros	Guyana	Libya	Qatar	Tunisia
Azerbaijan	Congo, Democratic Republic of	Haiti	Macedonia	Russia	Turkey
Bahrain	Congo, Republic of	India	Madagascar	Rwanda	Turkmenistan
Bangladesh	Cuba	Indonesia	Malawi	Sao Tome & Principe	Uganda
Belarus	Cyprus, northern part of	Iran	Mali	Saudi Arabia	Ukraine
Benin	Djibouti	Iraq	Mauritania	Senegal	United Arab Emirates
Bhutan	Dominican Republic	Ivory Coast	Moldova	Serbia	Uzbekistan
*Bolivia	Ecuador	Jamaica	Mongolia	Sierra Leone	Vatican City
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Egypt	Jordan	Montenegro	Somalia	*Venezuela
Burkina Faso	Equatorial Guinea	Kazakhstan	Morocco	*South Africa	Vietnam
Burma (Myanmar)	Eritrea	Kenya	Mozambique	Sri Lanka	Yemen
Burundi	Ethiopia	Korea (Dem. People's Rep)	Nepal	Sudan	Zambia
Cambodia	Fiji	Kosovo	Niger	Surinam	Zimbabwe
Cameroon	Gabon	Kuwait	Nigeria	*Swaziland	
Cape Verde	Gambia	Kyrgyzstan	Oman	Syria	

*Check www.ukvisas.gov.uk for these countries as rules being phased in during 2009.