

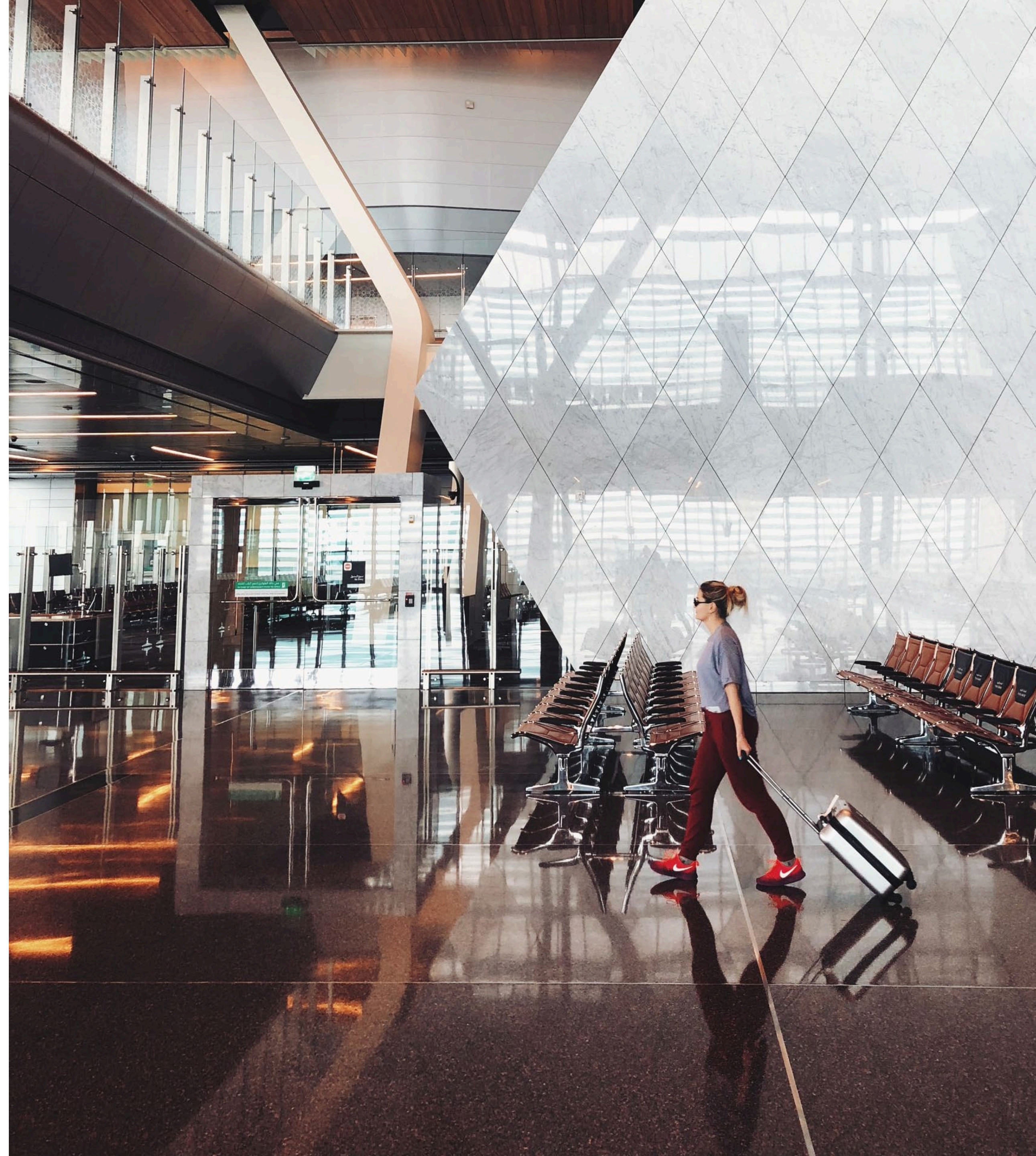


# Visas for ELT students: all you need to know

Naadiya Rawat

English UK

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# Overview

1. What is English UK?
2. Changes since December 2024
3. Different visa options
4. An overview of the visa application process
5. How you can help your students
6. Actions after the decision is received
7. Other useful information





# What is English UK

English UK is the national membership association of accredited English language teaching (ELT) centres in the United Kingdom.

We support, promote and represent quality English language teaching in the UK.

[www.englishuk.com](http://www.englishuk.com)





# Visa changes since December 2024





# Recent changes to the UK immigration rules

- eVisa
- ETA roll out
- No ETA required for under 18s in French school groups
- Credibility assessment on short-term study route
- Visa fees





# Different visa options





# Visas: definitions

## What is a visa?

Leave to enter the UK

## What is entry clearance?

Permission to travel to the UK on the selected visa route

## Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)

Permission to travel to the UK for non-visa nationals for all visits of up to six months

## eVisa

Online record of the immigration status





## Visa nationals and non-visa nationals

**Visa nationals** always need to apply for entry clearance before travelling to the UK (e.g. students from Turkey and China).

**Non-visa nationals** now have to apply for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) if they are visiting the UK for up to six months (e.g. students from Saudi Arabia, Japan, Italy).

Non-visa nationals have to apply for entry clearance in the correct visa category when staying for longer than six months.







# Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) - part 1

- For non-visa nationals
- Required for all visits of up to six months
- Cannot check-in without one
- Price: £16 from 9 April 2025
- 2-year validity or passport end date (whichever is the shortest)
- Apply via app or online application form
- Photo will be checked as part of ID checking process
- Contact details of guardian needed for under 18s
- Address and purpose of visit not required





# Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) - part 2

- Quick decision – around 20 minutes
- Can take a maximum of 3 days
- Application can be refused
- If ETA is refused, student must apply for a Standard Visitor visa
- No limit on number of times the ETA can be used to travel to the UK during the validity period

The ETA is not a visa – it is permission to travel to the UK. Entry is granted at the border.





## eVisa

- Digital immigration status for visas longer than six months (e.g. Short-term study visa)
- Replaces Biometric Residence Permits (BRP)
- Can only be accessed via a UKVI account
- Students need to share a special code with their education provider to show they have their visa
- Students with a BRP end date of 31 December 2024 must register for a UKVI account





## Visa types

Three visa options:

- Standard Visitor visa (up to 6 months)
- Short-term study visa (for students studying English language courses for 6 - 11 months)
- Student visa (generally 6 months+)

The choice of visa depends on three factors:

- Length of the course
- Age of students
- Current level of English



## Standard Visitor visa

- Study up to six months
  - Any courses, any accredited providers but must be completed within six months
  - Students can switch course and provider
  - No prior course booking required for visa application
  - No work rights – up to 30 days of volunteering allowed
  - No set amount of funds needed but must demonstrate own funds are available
- Cost - £127 for visa nationals (from 9 April)

Note: Not recommended for students who intend to study for more than 6 months





## Short-term study visa – for English language course only

- For students who are already 16
- Study for 6 to 11 months
- Cannot change course/ provider - study only on the course and with the provider named on the application form
- Course can be extended – e.g. from 7 months to visa end date (11 months)
- No work rights - up to 30 days of volunteering allowed
- Visa required in advance - £214 (from 9 April)
- International health surcharge payable at point of application - £776
- 90 day entry vignette issued to enter the UK; Visa status displayed digitally as an 'eVisa'





## Student visa

- Minimum English language level required (B1); evidenced via a Secure English Language Test (SELT)
- Centre must be on the Home Office register of licenced sponsors
- Work allowed when studying with a 'sponsor with a track record' and the course is at degree level and above
- Can apply for a new visa in the UK (new course must be at a higher level)
- Government sponsored students can bring dependants
- Cost: £524 (from 9 April) + International Health Surcharge - £776 per year, additional £388 for every 6 months





# An overview of the application process



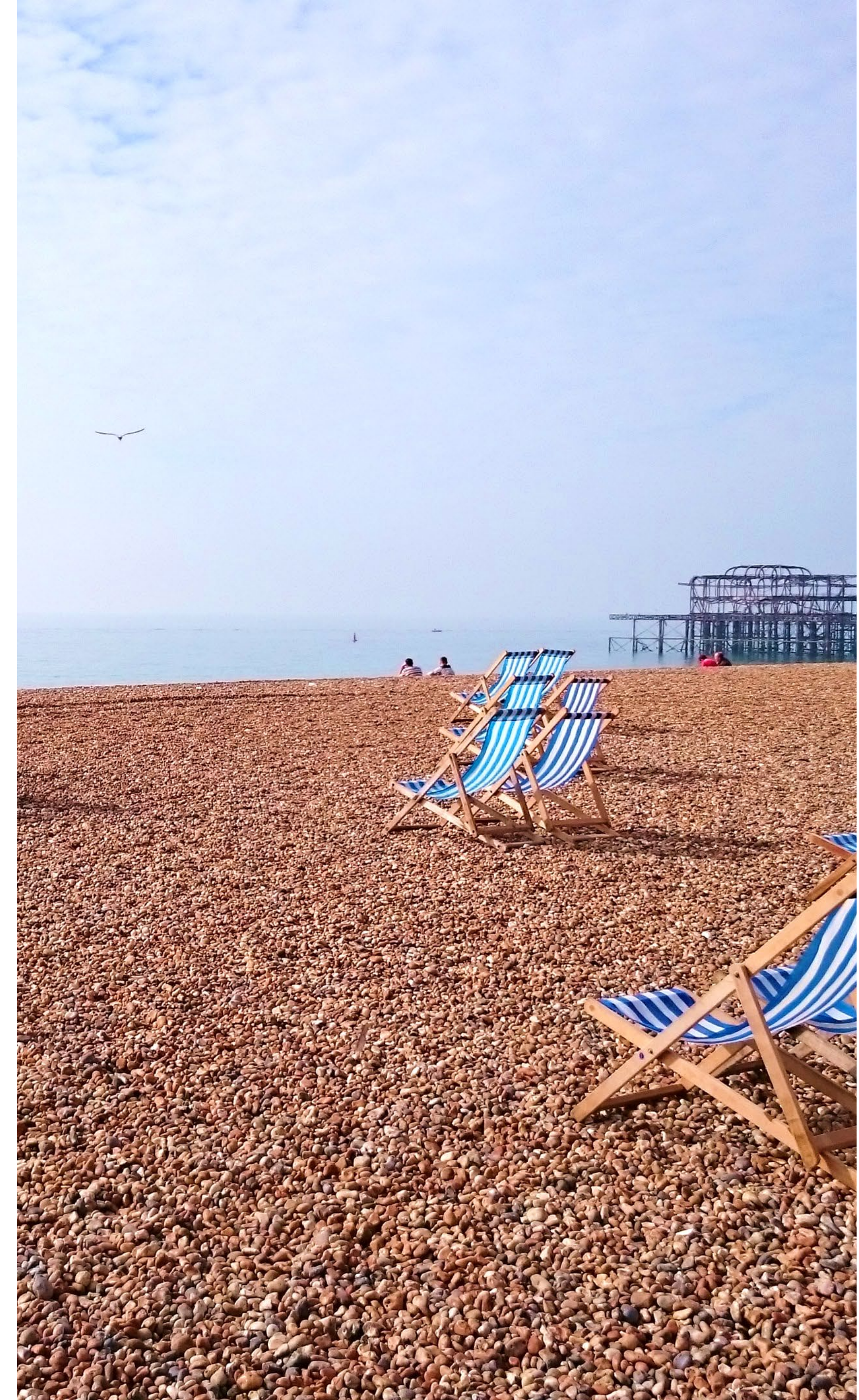




# Submitting an entry clearance application

Students fill in an application form and book an appointment at a Visa Application Centre

- Take a TB test if necessary (for stays over six months)
- Get all documents translated into English (or Welsh)
- Submit applications up to three months before the expected date of travel
- EU/ EEA students can use an app to submit their biometrics

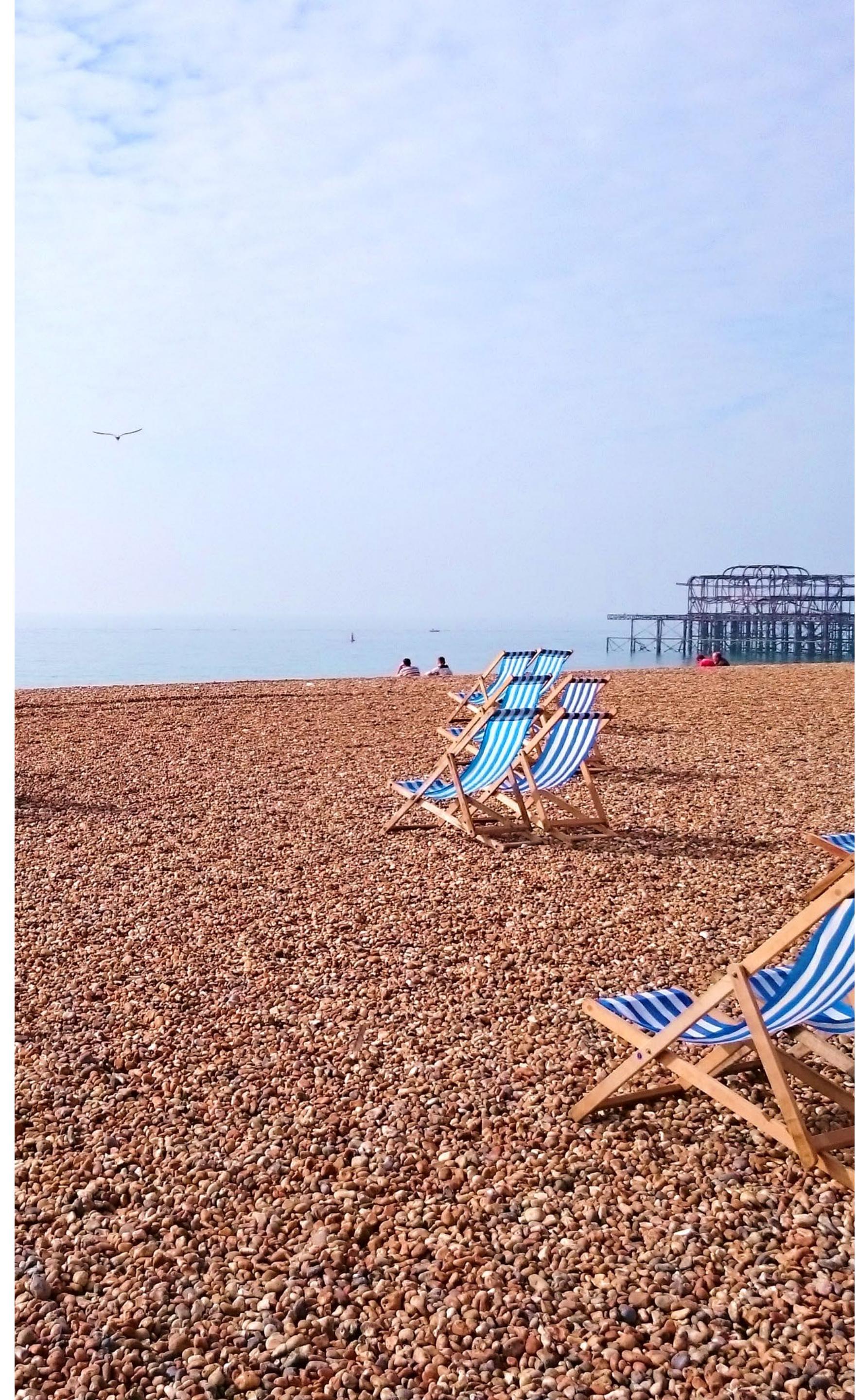




# Avoiding a visa refusal - part 1

Students must provide:

- A course confirmation letter
- Parental consent form if under 18
- Host family/accommodation details, especially if under 18
- A letter from their education provider/employer confirming permission of absence and the period of agreed leave
- Financial documents which are thorough: income should match payslips; additional evidence for recent cash deposits; avoid business accounts

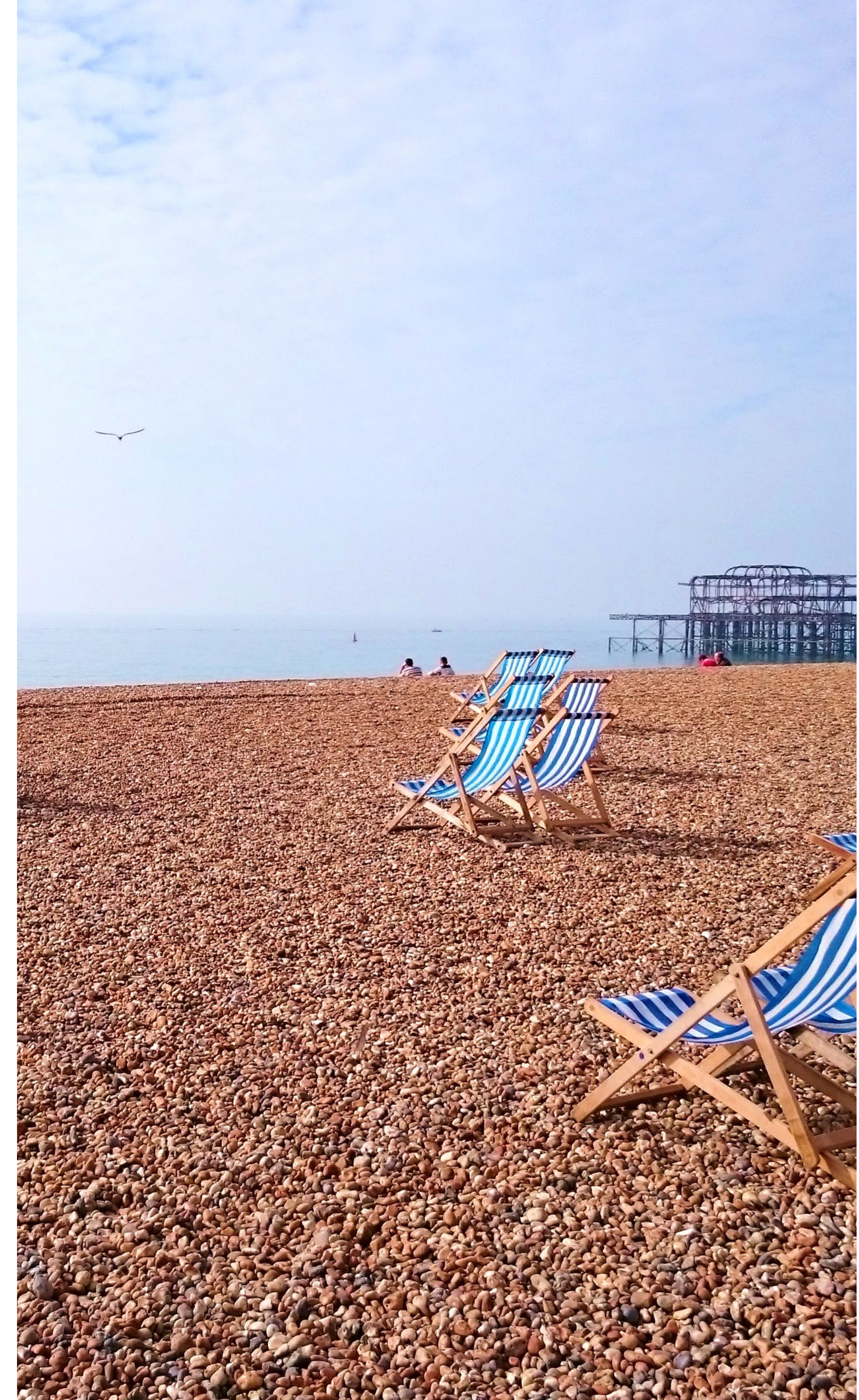




# Avoiding a visa refusal - part 2

- If sponsored by their employer, students must also submit their personal bank statements
- If sponsored by relatives, include a letter from them and evidence of the relationship
- Provide a lot of information about the reasons for doing the course now and in the UK eg list any previous English language study or job opportunities if relevant
- Explain why they have chosen not to study in their home country even if it would be cheaper
- Show evidence of the intention to leave the UK at the end of the course (does not have to be a return flight)

Note: All documents submitted must be in English

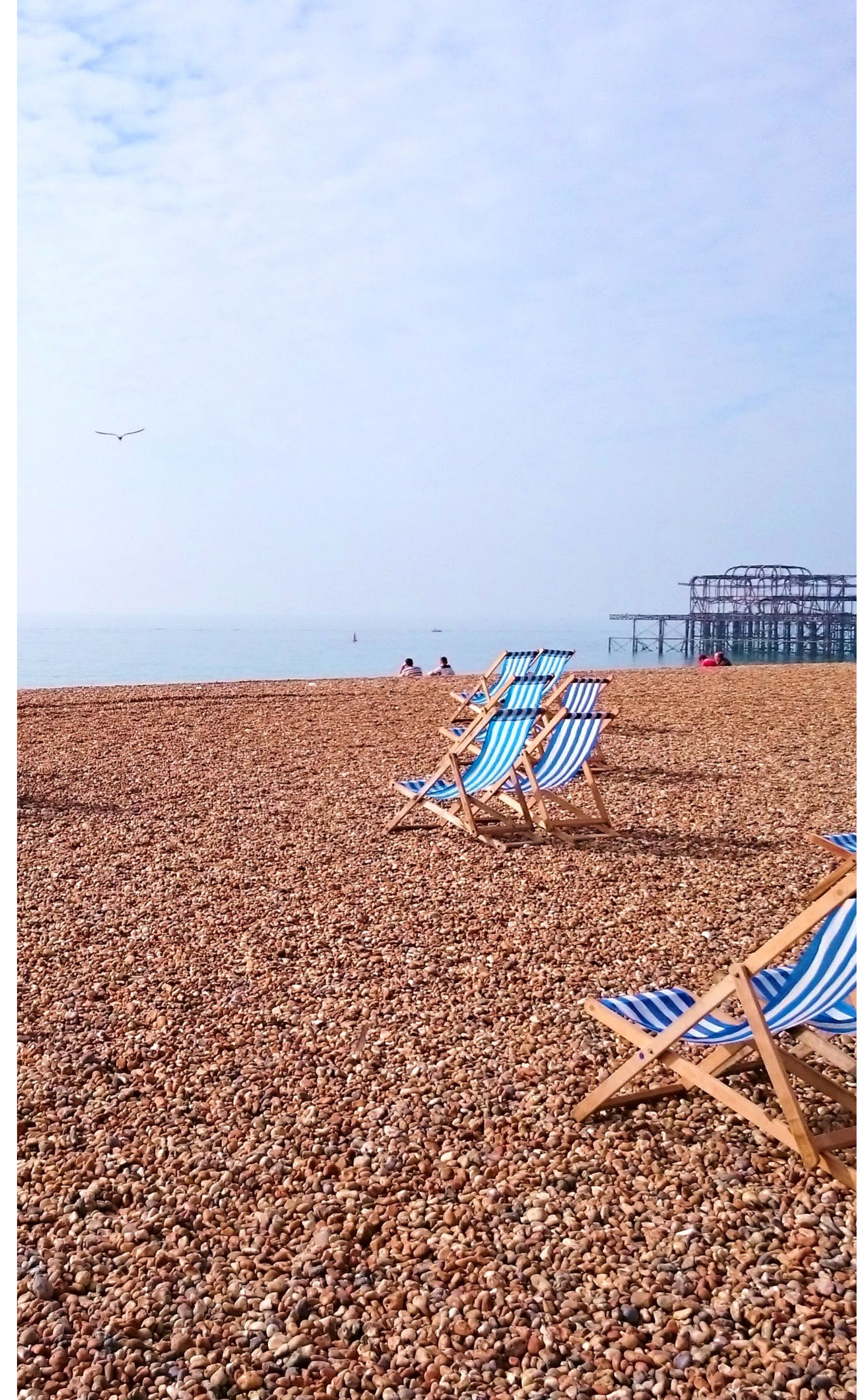




# Application process - is the student genuine? - part 1

Caseworkers will assess whether the student genuinely intends to study in the UK by looking at:

- Age, nationality and education history
- Current level of English/evidence of (previous) study (in home country)
- Previous immigration history, including visits to the UK and other countries
- Is there evidence the student has complied with immigration rules?
- Duration of previous visits especially if there were any extensions of stay
- What were the reasons given for the number and duration of previous visits?





# Applying for a visa - is the student genuine? - part 2

Financial circumstances of the applicant and family members if relevant

- How much money is available; how were the funds acquired?
- Who is paying for the course; are there other dependants?

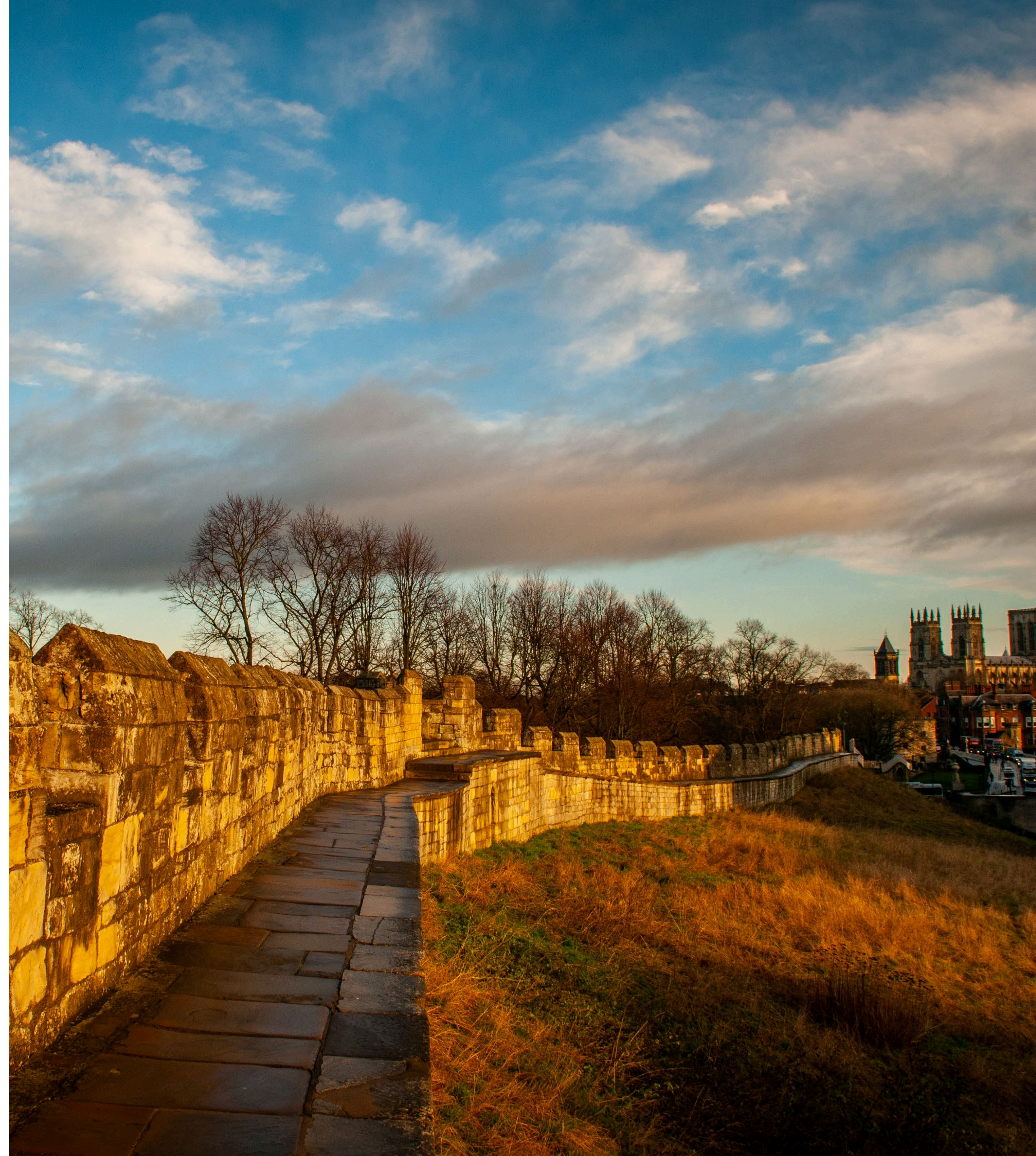
Personal and economic circumstances in the home country

- Is the student working or in education?
- Do they have a stable income/property in their name?
- Do they have any dependants?





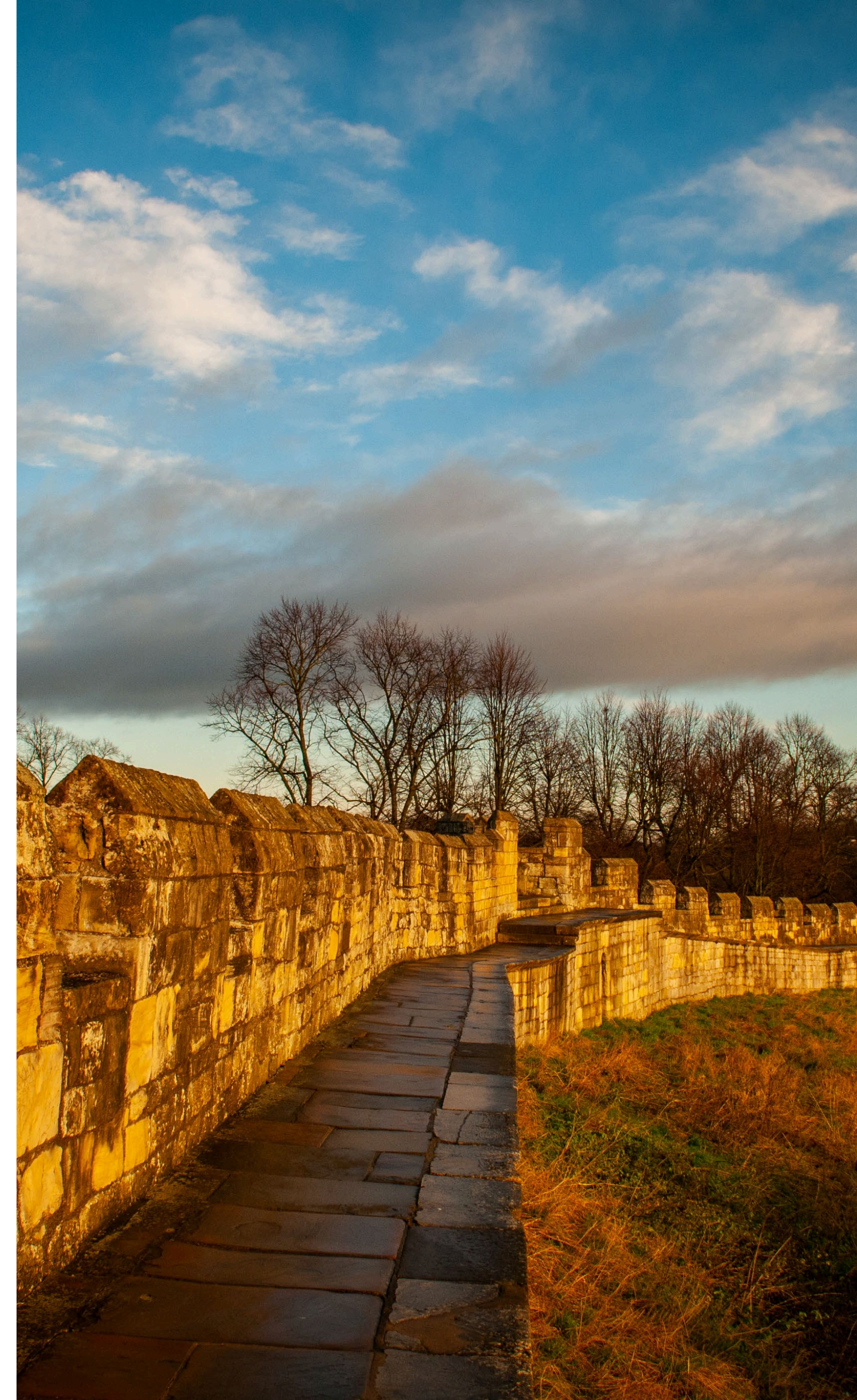
# How you can help your students





# How can you help? - part 1

- Read the caseworker guidance for the different visas
- Keep up to date with UK immigration changes (UKCISA website)
- Find out more about the student's reasons for studying in the UK and whether they have studied English previously





## How can you help? - part 2

Make sure the following information is on the course confirmation letter:

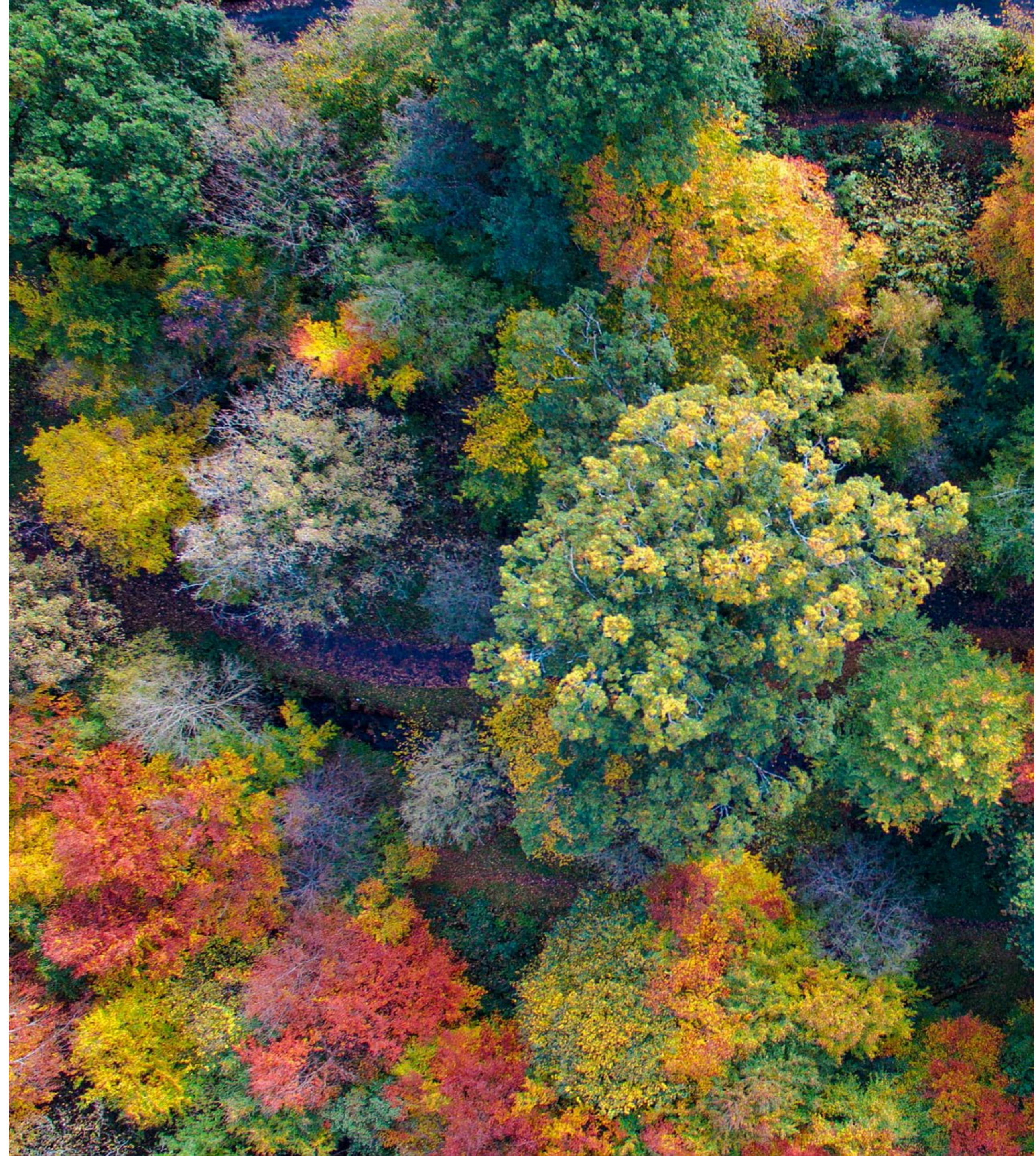
- Course start and end date; not just the number of weeks of study
- Any holiday the student intends to take during the course
- Student's current level of English and the expected level upon completion of the course
- Total cost of the course and amount paid to date (Note: no need for fees to be paid in full)







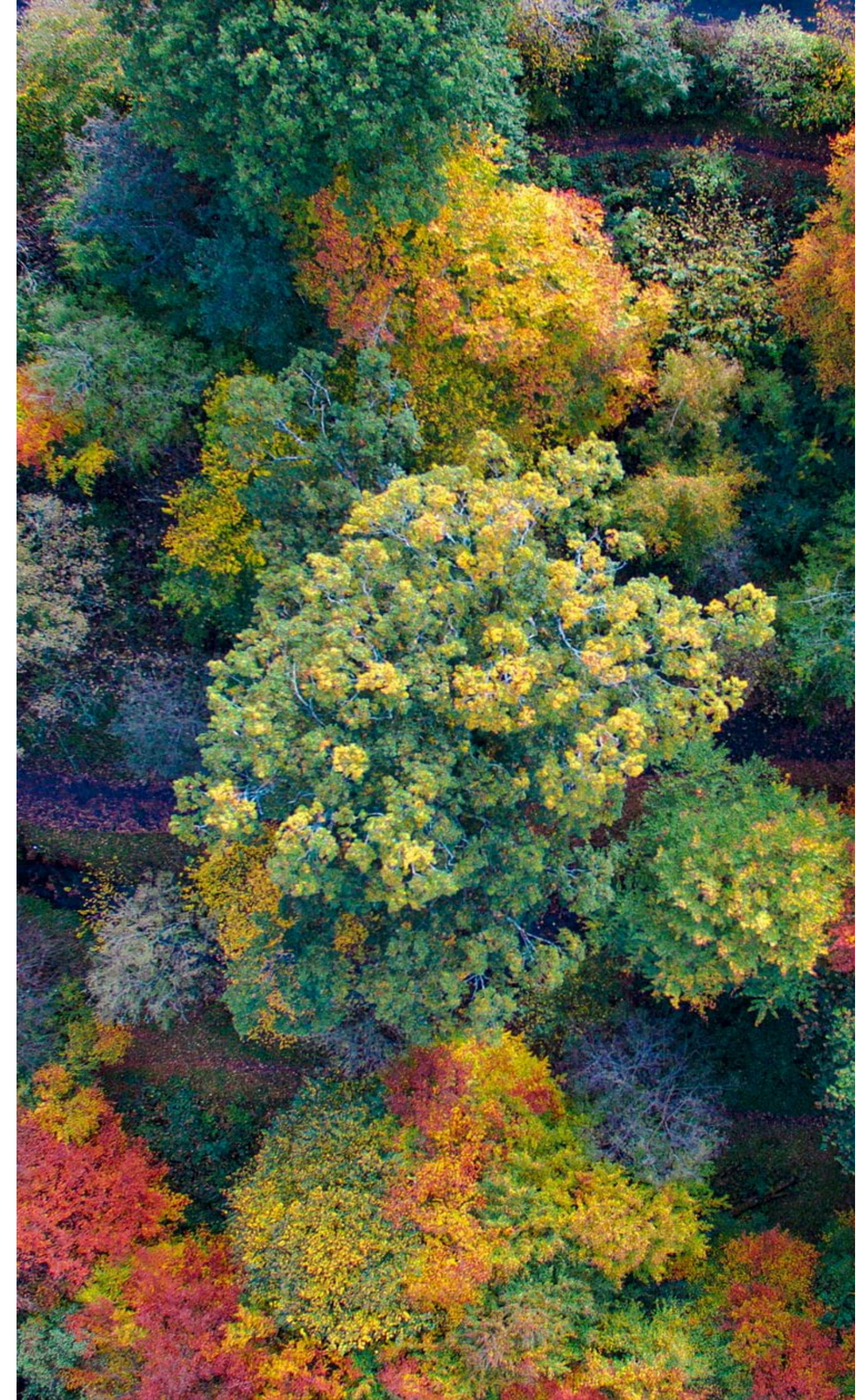
## **Actions after the decision is received**





## Check the details of the visa

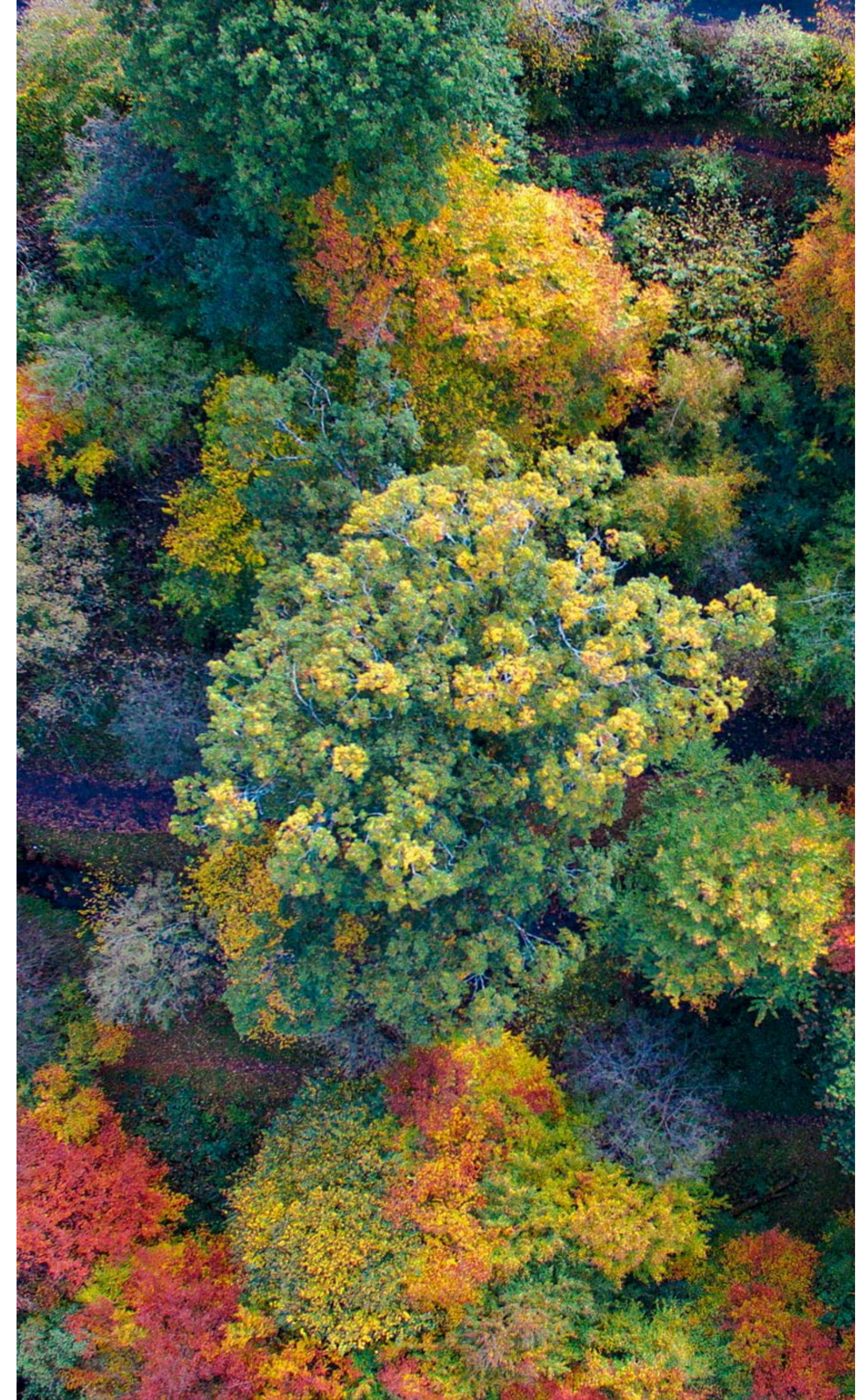
- Remind students to verify they have the right visa and that it covers the duration of the course
  - Vignette in passport (up to six months)
  - Online immigration status check for courses longer than six months (eVisa)
- Education providers need to keep a record of the visa details (type and duration)





## Correcting errors on vignettes/ eVisas

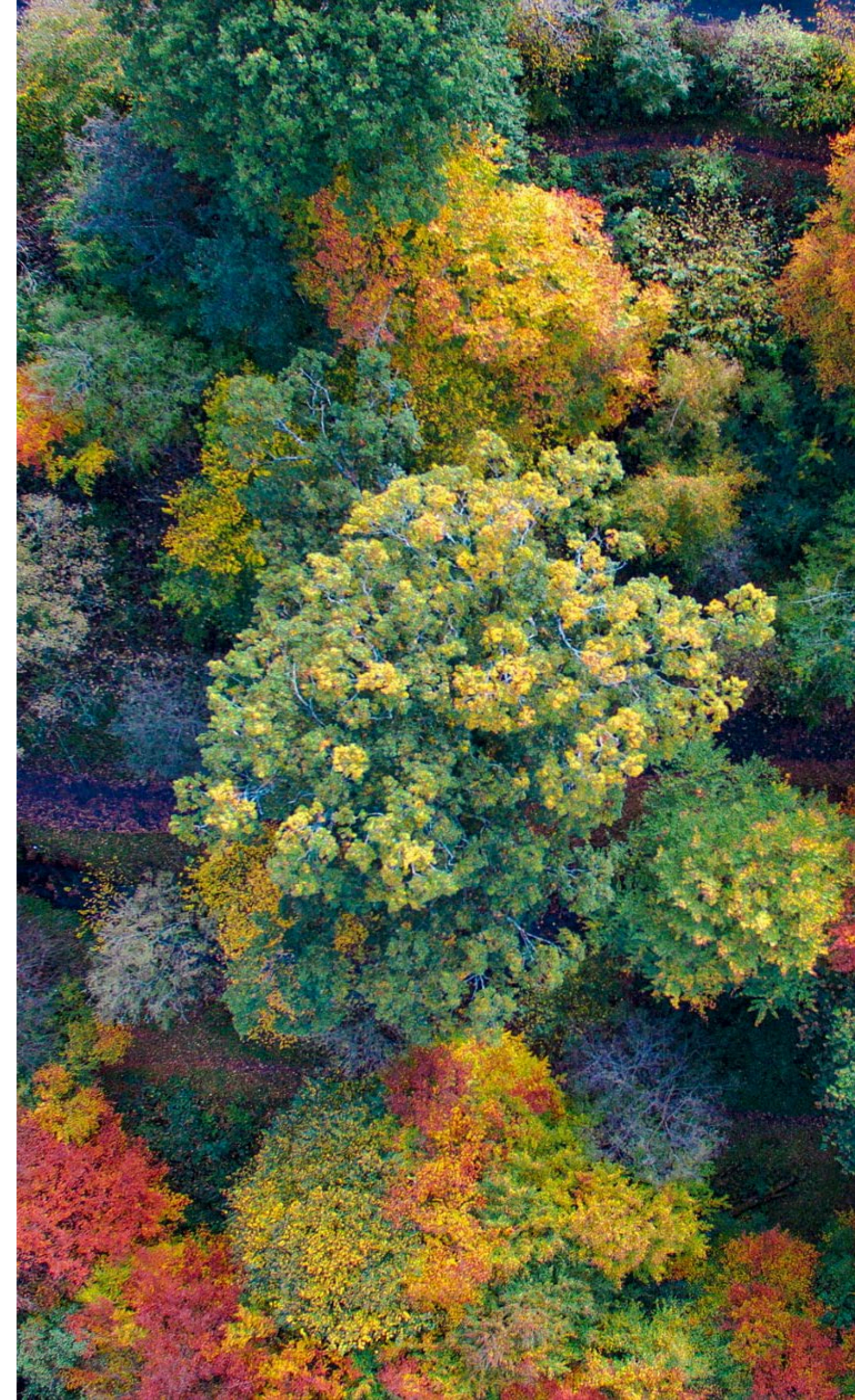
- Easier to correct errors before students travel to the UK
- If still overseas, contact the VAC
- If already in the UK, use the online reporting tool





# Challenging a visa refusal

- No right of appeal for Standard Visitor visa
  - A review can be requested in some circumstances (pre-action protocol for judicial review)
- Administrative Review for Short-term study visa
  - Cost £80
  - Apply within 28 days
  - Review can take up to six months





## Other useful information





## e-Gates

EU/ EEA nationals and some other non-visa nationals, including Japanese and South Koreans, can use e-gates where available so don't get a stamp.

Advise students to keep evidence of arrival in the UK, e.g. boarding pass.





## It's good to know – part 1

- Not all visas permit study - e.g. Marriage Visitor visa and Parent of a Child Student visa
- Number of hours of study: no minimum number of hours under the Standard Visitor and Short-term study; however at least 10 hours of study recommended when studying for more than six months
- Visa applications are processed in hubs located in Liverpool, Sheffield and London





## It's good to know – part 2

- Common Travel Area (CTA) between the Republic of Ireland and the UK
  - Non-visa nationals arriving from Ireland are automatically allowed to stay in the UK for six months
  - No border means no check/ stamps in passport
- Long-term visa holders: should not intend to study for more than six months per visit
- Students who are extending after six months may be questioned by Border Force Officers and not granted entry







# Key sources of information

[What visa do I need?](#)

[Apply for an ETA online](#)

[Apply using the ETA APP](#)

[Creating a UKVI account](#)

[How students can obtain a share code](#)

[eVisa correction](#)

[Pre- action protocol](#)

[List of visa nationals](#)

[List of ETA \(non-visa\) nationals](#)

[French school group travel](#)





# Key sources of information

[UK Council for International Student Affairs \(UKCISA\)](#)

[Standard Visitor visa caseworker guidance](#)

[Short-term study visa caseworker guidance](#)

[Immigration rules](#)

[Appendix Finance](#)

[Right to study checks for students](#)





**Your questions...**

