

Dependants and CSC Family Allowances

FAQs

Q. Can I bring family members with me to the UK?

A. You may bring dependants with you to the UK, subject to the immigration rules. However, please note that living costs in the UK are very high and you will need to ensure that you have the financial means to support them. Scholars on programmes of 18 months or longer may be able to claim a [family allowance](#) from the CSC to contribute to the living costs of family members in the UK. Master's and split site scholars who are single parents can also claim family allowances.

The CSC recommends that you wait until you receive your own visa and are settled in the UK before you apply for your dependants to join you in the UK.

Q Which family members can I bring as dependants?

- Your husband or wife (age 18 or over)
- Your civil partner, same-sex partner, or unmarried partner if lived together for at least 2 years akin to a marriage (age 18 or over).
- Your children (aged under 18 in their first visa application)

Q. What visa will my dependants need to apply for to come to the UK?

A. The visa that your family members will need to apply for will depend on the visa that you have to study in the UK, and also on the circumstances of your families stay in the UK. UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) has strict requirements for dependent visas, and eligibility for family allowances from the CSC does not guarantee that your dependent(s) will be eligible for a UK visa.

If you have or are applying for a student visa and you intend your family to stay with you for the duration of your programme, then they will need to apply for a [Student Dependant visa](#), as long as the programme is longer than 6 months. You are responsible for all costs associated with your dependants' visas, and for ensuring that they meet the visa requirements, including the financial requirement set by UKVI.

There may be other visa options available to them depending on their own personal circumstances. For more information about this then please speak with an international student adviser at your university.

Q. How do my dependants apply for a Student Dependant Visa?

Your dependants should apply for their visa using the [UK Government's online visa application form](#). For applicants applying outside of the UK, they will need to complete the form, upload their documents, and submit their biometrics details, most likely by attending a visa appointment at a visa application centre in their home country.

Q. When should my dependants apply for a Student Dependant Visa?

Your dependants must apply for a dependant visa either at the same time as you or once you have already been granted a Student Visa. If your dependants apply at the same time as you then you can provide their visa application details on the visa application details survey that is part of the confirmation of award email that will be sent to you. We share these details with UKVI who help with the processing of visas for our scholars.

Q. Do my dependants need to pay for the visa fee and Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)?

Yes, your dependants will need to pay for the visa fee and IHS to access free healthcare in the UK. We are aware that there is an error with [the IHS calculator on the Government's website](#) which will show that dependants of Commonwealth Scholars do not need to pay the IHS, but this is incorrect. You can get a more accurate result from the calculator by completing it as if your dependants were applying with a non-CSC sponsored scholar. The current IHS fee is £470 per year per dependent and £235 for any additional period of time which is more than a year but less than 6 months.

You may find that your dependants are not asked to pay the IHS at the time of application, and they may subsequently receive an e-mail asking for the IHS to be paid.

Q. Will the CSC be able to provide immigration and visa advice to my dependants?

No, we can only provide detailed immigration and visa advice to our scholars. If you require more visa advice for your dependants, then please speak with an international student adviser at your university.

Q. How can I receive a family allowance letter from the CSC?

To receive a family allowance letter, you will need to request one from your programme officer. We will only be able to provide family allowances for spouses and children. In order for a family allowance letter to be drafted you will need to send a copy of your dependants passports, marriage certificate (for spouse allowance) and birth certificate (for child allowance). You should allow up to a month to receive a family allowance letter so please request it in good time if you need it for a visa application. If you are a single parent claiming an allowance for a child, or children, only, then you will need to send evidence of status as a single parent.

Q. Can the family allowance letter be used to show how dependants meet some of the maintenance requirements of the Student Dependant Visa?

Yes. One of the requirements of the student dependant visa application is showing that you have [adequate financial means to live in the UK](#).

You will need to ensure that you have access to a certain level of funds to meet the financial requirement. The level of funds that will be required depend on the length of immigration permission you have been granted on your student visa.

- If you are studying in London, each dependant must show £845 for each month of immigration permission you have been granted (if your dependants are applying after you have received your permission) or will be granted (if your dependants are applying at the same time as you). This is up to a maximum of 9 months (therefore, a maximum figure of £7,605).
- If you will study somewhere other than London, each dependant must show £680 for each month of immigration permission you have been granted (if your dependants are applying after you have received your permission) or will be granted (if your dependants are applying at the same time as you). This is up to a maximum of 9 months (therefore, a maximum figure of £6,120).

If you are eligible to receive a [family allowance](#), we will confirm this to you in a letter explaining how much funding we will provide for each family member. This letter can be used to contribute to showing how your dependant can meet the financial requirement of the Student Dependant visa. For

example, if you are studying in London, and your partner will receive a family allowance of £266 per month, then they will only need to provide evidence, along with the family allowance letter, that they have access to funding of £579 per month, up to a maximum of 9 months, depending on the length of your course. You should allow up to a month to receive a family allowance letter so please request it in good time if you need it for a visa application.

you should also note the following:

- You cannot apply excess money from your scholarship funds towards your dependents' maintenance.
- You must use money held in a bank or building society, or an account with an officially regulated financial institution, and provide evidence of this.
- The money must have been in the account for a minimum period of 28 consecutive days up to the closing balance. The account must not have dropped below the amount required at any time during the 28-day period. The final date of the 28-day period must be no more than 31 days before the visa application is made.
- You must read [UKVI guidance](#) for further information about the financial requirements and the supporting evidence that you should include with a visa application.

Q. How do I claim the family allowance once I am in the UK?

You can only claim family allowance once you and your dependants are in the UK. You will need to complete a family record form, which can be found on [our website](#). You will also need to send a copy of your dependants' visas. You will only be able to claim a family allowance for family members who intend to live with you and remain in the UK for 3 months or more.

Q. Will the announcements in July 2023 about changes to the dependant visa rules affect me?

The [changes regarding the Student Dependant Visa announced in July 2023](#) will not affect international students who are in receipt of a Government Scholarship, as long as you will be studying full time on a programme which is longer than 6 months.

Q. Can family members come and visit me for a short period of time during my scholarship?

Your family members (including those not eligible for a dependant visa) can visit you for a short period of time while you're in the UK. They can apply for a [visit visa](#). We cannot provide any advice and guidance on visit visas for dependants and we are not able to provide any letters or supporting documents for these applications.

Q. Will the CSC be able to help find suitable accommodation for me and my dependants?

We will not be able to find or arrange accommodation for you and your dependants. Likewise, Universities will not automatically make any arrangements for accommodation for you or your family. Some universities do provide family accommodation, but these are often very limited in number and are taken up very quickly. If you are interested in family accommodation managed by your university then you should enquire about this with your university as soon as possible.

Finding suitable family accommodation in the UK can be difficult and we would advise that you start making any arrangements as soon as you can. If your university is in a city centre, then it is likely that family sized accommodation close by will be very expensive and you may need to consider moving to the outer area of the city or nearby areas within commuting distance.

If you have not made any accommodation arrangements for your family before you come to the UK, then we would ask you to consider travelling to the UK on your own to begin with and then bring your family over once you have been able to secure housing for your family.

Q. Is there any other support available in the UK for my dependants?

If your dependants have a student dependant visa, then there is going to be little other support available to you in the UK. There will be a condition attached to the Student, and Student Dependant Visa which states 'no recourse to public funds'. If you and your partner both have this condition on your visa then you would not be able to access UK Government support such as child benefit, universal credit, tax credits for childcare, or tax-free childcare.

You may be entitled to a limited number of free childcare hours, and your school age children will be eligible to apply for and attend a state school. Also, as you will need to pay the IHS as part of the Student Dependant Visa, your dependants will be able to access NHS care in the same way as anyone else who is ordinarily resident in the UK.