

Seeking entry at the border as a Short-term student

Guidance for non-visa nationals

This guidance is intended for [non-visa nationals](#) studying a short course of less than 6 calendar months, where study is the main reason for your visit to the UK. You should have requested or be in receipt of a letter from the University to support your entry as a Short-term student.

The information detailed here relates to obtaining entry clearance as a Short-term student (6 months) on arrival at the UK border. Guidance for applying for a Short-term student visa overseas as a [visa national](#) is available on our [dedicated webpage](#) and on [gov.uk](#).

If you are not sure whether you need to obtain entry clearance for the UK in advance of travel, you can check this on the [Home Office webpages](#).

Use of eGates

Eligible travellers from *Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, United States, South Korea, Singapore, an EEA country or Switzerland* will be able to use the automated eGates upon arrival at immigration at ports of entry, both in the UK and at Eurostar terminals at Brussels and Paris. eGates are available to passengers aged 18 and over (or aged 12-17 and travelling with an accompanying adult) who have a biometric or “chipped” passport. The gates are intended to provide a faster route through the border where a passenger’s main reason for coming to the UK is for the purposes of *tourism*. eGates are able to issue entry clearance to eligible nationals under the *Standard Visitor* category however this immigration route is ***not suitable for those coming to the UK for the primary purpose of study***.

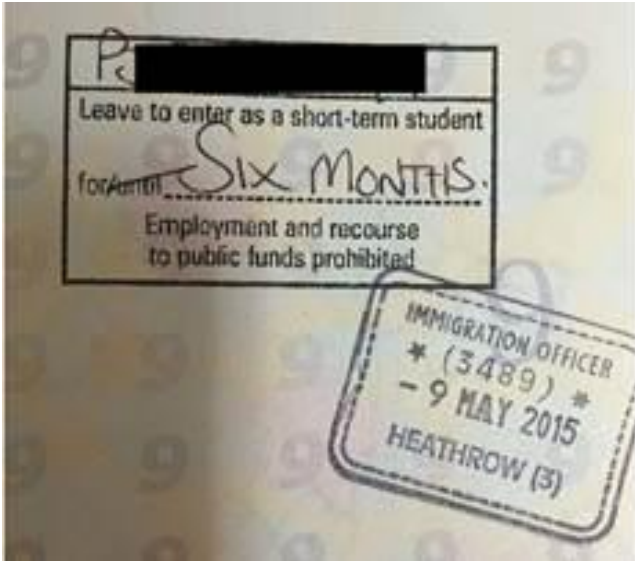
It is not possible to obtain entry clearance as a Short-term student (6 months) at an eGate so it is very important that you do not use these gates upon arrival, even if you are directed to do so at UK immigration. You should instead look for an immigration channel staffed by UK Border Force in order for your passport to be stamped to show that you have been granted entry clearance as a Short-term student (6 months). The Home Office have produced a [visual aid document](#) which you should print, carry in your hand luggage and have ready for when you pass through immigration control. This will alert border staff that you need a Short-term student immigration stamp.

Make sure that you get the correct UK entry clearance stamp

It is very important that on arrival in the UK you carry the letter you have been issued by the University to support your entry as a Short-term student for 6 months. Show this letter to the UK border official in the airport or incoming port of entry and state your main purpose of coming to the UK as ***study***. This should ensure that you are issued with the correct immigration stamp on arrival.

The correct stamp looks like the below and must be accompanied by a date stamp to be valid.

Correct Stamp: Leave to enter as a short-term student (6 months)



If you are issued with the stamp shown below, this is incorrect. This immigration stamp represents entry clearance as a *Standard Visitor* and will not allow you to register for a course of study at Essex, or resume study with us if you are a continuing student.

Incorrect stamp: Leave to enter as a standard visitor (6 months)



Check that you have been issued the correct immigration stamp before moving away from the border official in the airport/port of entry and if needs be, ask for the stamp to be corrected if you have been given the wrong one.

If you go through the eGates by mistake speak to one of the border official's that are located after the eGates and before you go to the baggage hall, show your short-term student letter and ask for the correct stamp. If you are issued entry clearance to the UK as a *Visitor* in error, you cannot study and will need to leave the [Common Travel Area](#) and re-enter the UK to obtain the correct immigration permission before you will be able to commence study at Essex.

Travelling to the UK via the Republic of Ireland (or elsewhere in the Common Travel Area)

Non-visa nationals who enter the UK via the Republic of Ireland (for instance Dublin) will not pass through UK immigration and will not be able to seek entry for up to 6 months as a Short-term student, in most cases you will automatically have permission to remain in the UK for up to 3 months only.

Therefore, if your course at Essex is for longer than 3 calendar months from the date you travel from the Republic of Ireland you should ensure that you either, book a flight that does not come via the Republic of Ireland or, that you apply for entry clearance overseas prior to travelling to the UK and obtain a short-term student visa (vignette) in your passport instead (example below).



Further advice

Further information is available from UKCISA on their [webpages](#)

You can also contact our International Services team for immigration advice in the event you are issued with an incorrect immigration stamp at the airport/port of entry, have utilised the ePassport gates, have booked a non-refundable flight via the Republic of Ireland or, have entered the UK via the Republic of Ireland. Enquiries should be sent by email to international@essex.ac.uk