

## Immigration Health Surcharge guidance

If you are applying for a Student visa you will need to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge in most cases. This payment will entitle you to receive health care from the [National Health Service \(NHS\)](#) while studying in the UK.

If you're making an application for a Student visa from outside the UK, you will be charged if your course is over 6 months in length. If you are applying for a Student visa to extend your stay in the UK you will be charged for a course of any length. The charge is mandatory, even for those who have private health insurance.

### How much is the surcharge?

When applying for a Student visa, you will be charged £470 per year of your visa. If your visa includes part of a year that is less than 6 months you will be charged £235 for this period. These charges apply to each applicant including your dependents..

**Please be aware that you will be charged for the full length of your visa (immigration permission), not the length of your programme at SOAS.**

For example, if you are applying for a Student visa to study a 3-year undergraduate degree programme, you should be granted up to 1 month of permission before the start of your programme and 4 months of permission following the programme end date. The total length of permission granted would be 3 years and 2 months. The surcharge for this programme would be  $3 \times £470 + £235 = £1,645$ .

If you are applying for a Student visa to study a 1-year master's degree programme, you should be granted up to 1 month of permission before the start of your programme and 4 months of permission following the programme end date. The total length of permission granted would be 1 year and 5 months. The surcharge for this programme would be  $1 \times £470 + £235 = £705$ .

### Paying the surcharge

You pay the surcharge as part of the online Student visa application process. The amount of surcharge will be calculated using the start and end dates of your programme entered onto the application form. You will then be asked to pay the surcharge using a credit or debit card. You will be given a unique reference number. This number starts with the letters IHS followed by nine digits e.g IHS123456789 and this will be automatically entered into your online form. You'll receive an email confirming receipt of payment.

### Exemptions

If you are applying outside the UK for Student visa which will last for 6 months or less then you will be exempt from paying the charge.

If you are coming to the UK on a Standard Visitor visa for 6 months or less you are exempt from the charge. If you are applying to come to the UK as an Academic Visitor you are also exempt from the charge even if you come for more than 6 months. However, you do not qualify for free NHS treatment and will need private health insurance.

Even if you are exempt you must still complete the IHS section of the application and you will be given a reference number confirming exemption.

UK government sponsored students including Chevening, Marshall and Commonwealth sponsored students are exempt from the charge. You will still complete the IHS section of the application form but will not be charged.

For further information on who does not need to pay or get an IHS reference number visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

## Refunds

If you are submitting a visa application from inside the UK and there is an overlapping period of IHS payment of more than 6 months, you should automatically receive an IHS refund. Applications made from outside the UK where there is an overlapping period of IHS payment do not get an IHS refund. If your visa is refused you will receive an IHS refund. However, if your visa is issued and you decide not to travel you will not receive a refund. You will also not receive a refund if you do not use NHS services, if you leave the UK before your visa expires or your visa is curtailed. For further information on qualifying for an IHS refund visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

## If your healthcare is paid for by an EU country

If you are an EU or Swiss student with a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) issued in an EU country or Switzerland, you may be entitled to a full or partial refund of your immigration health surcharge (IHS) payment after if your visa started on or after 1 January 2021. Your refund will be backdated to include any IHS payments since 1 January 2021.

Please note that if you intend to apply for a refund of your IHS payment, you should use your EU EHIC for medically necessary treatment during your studies and you **will not be able to work in the UK while studying**. If you arrived in the UK between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2021, you must apply for a repayment reimbursement by 31 December 2022. If you arrive in the UK from 1 January 2022, you will have a year to apply from the start date of your visa. Please see [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) for further details.

## More information and advice

For more information about the Immigration Health Surcharge, please see the [UKCISA website](https://www.ukcisa.org.uk).

Immigration Health Surcharge [calculator](#)

If you need advice about the surcharge, please contact Student Advice Service - [adviceservice@soas.ac.uk](mailto:adviceservice@soas.ac.uk)