



ETA & VISA GUIDE



ETA & VISA APPLICATION GUIDANCE

SUMMARY

For information on entry to the UK please visit the UK Border Control website: <https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control>.

With the introduction of ETAs in April 2025, nations that previously did not require a visa to enter the UK will now have to apply for additional permissions. You must apply for an ETA at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta> or download the UK ETA app.

A UK 'Visitor Visa' will be required for athletes, officials and support personnel from 'visa national' countries. Visa nationals are those who need a visa for every entry to the United Kingdom (UK).

Individuals can check if they require a UK visa by visiting: <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa>.

Individuals should apply as early as possible. Applications can be made up to three months in advance of the proposed date of travel. To find out how long getting a visa might take in the country you are applying from visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-processing-times-applications-outside-the-uk>.

(Please note if a nation does not apply for their visas in due time, it cannot be guaranteed that their application will be processed in time and that additional charges may be applied by the UK Government for an express service).

You must apply online for a visit visa at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-to-come-to-the-uk>. After you have applied online, you will need to make an appointment to attend a visa application centre (VAC). Find your nearest centre at <https://www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre>.

The Para Fencing European Championships Cardiff 2026 LOC will issue an official invitation to athletes, officials and support personnel from Member Associations. Please contact Fencing@mls.gb.co to obtain a visa invitation. **Note: Visa Support Letters will only be available to those registered in the Para Fencing European Championships 2026 Online Entry System.**

The deadline to request a Visa Support Letter is the **23rd August 2026**.

For those travelling from the EU, any Brexit information and a tracker are available on the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/brexit>.

WHO NEEDS TO APPLY FOR AN ETA/ VISA?

Whether someone needs to apply for a visa or ETA to visit the UK depends on their nationality. If someone's nationality is on the list of visa nationals, they will need to apply for a visa before they travel to the UK. The visa national list can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-visa-national-list>.

If someone's nationality is not on the visa national list, they may still require an ETA to participate in UK hosted events.

The list of nationalities requiring an ETA can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-when-you-can-get-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta>.

You can also check if you require a visa or ETA to enter the UK on the UK Government website at: www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa.

ETAs typically take 3 working days to process and lasts for 2 years, or until the passport expires, whichever is sooner.

ADVICE ON ETA APPLICATIONS

Applications can be made at any time, and will be valid for around 2 years, or until the passport you used to apply expires.

You can travel to the UK as many times as you want while you have an ETA but can only stay for up to 6 months each time.

As of April 2026, the cost to apply for an ETA is £20, and the standard processing time is around 3 working days.

ETA Application Deadline –

processing time 3 working days **04/10/2026** – 3 Working Days =
27/09/2026

You can apply online, or through the UK ETA app. To apply for an ETA, follow the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/eta/apply>

Note that an ETA does not guarantee entry to the UK. If you have a criminal record, or have been denied entry to the UK in the past, you may want to apply for a standard visitor visa instead.

When you apply for your ETA, you will need:

- The valid passport you will be travelling with
- An email address
- A credit card, debit card, apple pay, or google pay
- A photo of your face, similar to the style of a passport photo

You are able to make applications on other's behalf, to do this you can apply online using a photo of their passport, and a photo of their face.

Once a decision has been made, you should receive an email from UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) containing our 16-digit ETA reference number.

Note that you may receive decisions at different times to other people you applied for.

Your ETA will be linked to the passport you applied with, meaning that you only need to show your passport when you travel to the UK.

Download the UK ETA app using the QR code below:



TYPES OF VISAS

Sportspeople can come to the UK to undertake short-term engagements/work using 2 main routes:

1. Standard visitor
2. T5 (Temporary Worker) Creative or Sporting Worker

For the purposes of participating in the Para Fencing European Championships 2026, a Standard visitor visa is permitted.

Standard Visitor visas are usually issued as multiple entry for a duration of 6 months. For those participants who need to visit the UK several times from now until April next year, they have the option of applying for a long-term Standard Visitor visa that lasts 2, 5 or 10 years. They will be able to stay a maximum of 6 months on each visit: [Visit the UK as a Standard Visitor: Apply for a Standard Visitor Visa - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visit-the-uk-as-a-standard-visitor-apply-for-a-standard-visitor-visa)

STANDARD VISITOR VISA

Under the Visitor Rules, Standard Visitors are permitted to undertake the following sporting activities:

1. A sports person may:

- e) Take part in a sports tournament or sports event as an individual or part of a team
- e) Make personal appearances and take part in promotional activities
- e) Take part in trials provided they are not in front of a paying audience
- e) Take part in short periods of training provided they are not being paid by a UK sporting body
- e) Join an amateur team or club to gain experience in a particular sport if they are an amateur in that sport.

2. Personal or technical staff of the sports person, or sports officials, may support the above activities and those set out under the Permitted Paid Engagement visitor route, if they are attending the same event as the sports person. Personal or technical staff of the sports person must be employed to work for the sportsperson outside the UK.

A full list of the permitted activities is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-permitted-activities>. Standard visitors must not receive payment for these activities beyond expenses and prize money.

For current fees please visit <https://www.gov.uk/visa-fees>

ADVICE ON VISA APPLICATIONS

Applications can be made up to three months in advance of the proposed date of travel.



As of November 2025, the current processing time is around 3 weeks from when biometric information is received to when a decision is sent to the applicant. Please allow as much time as possible in case of delays or if additional information is required. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure the information on their form is accurate.

In many locations, for an additional fee, delegates may be able to use our Priority and Super Priority visa service. The service standards for these products are 5 working days and the end of the next working day respectively.

Full instructions on what you need to do before, during and after applying for a visa, and what to do once they enter the UK can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/what-you-need-to-do>

The below dates are based on a travel date into the UK by 04/10/2026

Service	last biometric date	Additional cost per application	Processing time	Availability
Standard	11/09/2026	£135	15 working days	All application centres
Priority Service (PV)	25/09/2026	£135 + £500	5 working days	Limited application centres
Super Priority Service (SPV)	29/09/2026	£135 + £1000	next working day	Limited application centres

We would encourage participants to submit their applications as early as possible, noting that applications can be submitted up to three months prior to travel.

Delegates must **apply and pay online** for the visa using the link at: www.gov.uk/apply-ukvisa.

Delegates will be asked to book a biometric appointment with one of the visa application centres at the end of the online application and pay the visa application fee.

Supporting documents can be self-uploaded before a delegate’s appointment at no additional cost. On the day of your appointment delegates must go in person to the chosen Visa Application Centre with their passport, printed application form and any other supporting documents. Assisted scanning at the VAC is available for an additional fee. Delegates will also be required to give their biometrics: digital photograph and fingerprints.

To find details of the nearest visa application centre use this link: www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre. Read the guidance carefully and apply for visas as early as possible. Applications can be made up to three months in advance of the planned date of travel.

DOCUMENTS FOR VISITORS

(Including Visa Support Letter)

Apart from a valid travel document, the Standard Visitor Visa route does not require any mandatory documents.

Applicants are best placed to determine the documents they think best demonstrate that they meet the Immigration Rules.

It is, however, recommended that applicants request an invitation letter from The Para Fencing European Championships to support their application. If you require a visa invitation letter, please email Fencing@mlsgb.co and provide the following information:

- Full name - as it appears in the passport
- Date of birth
- Nationality
- Passport number
- Dates of arrival and departure to and from the UK

Prepare the application and supporting documents carefully. Submitting only an invitation letter in support of an application may not give the decision maker all the necessary information to be satisfied that the individual meets the requirements of the Immigration Rules. To support their application, it should gather evidence of your circumstances, e.g. ability to meet the costs of the trip, and details of where you will be staying and why you are visiting the UK.

The supporting documents guidance provides some examples of the types of documents a visitor might choose to submit with their visa application or show to a Border Force Officer on arrival - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visitor-visa-guide-to-supporting-documents>.

The deadline to request a Visa Support Letter is the **23rd August 2026**.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In February 2026, the UK Government rolled out eVisa's for all visit visa applications. If delegates make a successful application for a visit visa, they may not get a vignette (the visa sticker in their passport). This is because eVisas (a digital record of your identity and immigration status) are replacing vignettes. Instead, a delegate will need to create a UKVI account and access their eVisa to see the permission they have been granted before they travel to the UK.

The evisa means that the applicant only has to go to the VAC once – they do not leave their passport there and 'keep my passport whilst applying' is not applicable.

How do delegates apply for a visa?

Applications for visit visas are made online <https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/uk-visit-visa>.

How do delegates apply for an ETA?

Applications for ETAs are made online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta> or download the UK ETA app.

How do I make enquiries about a visa application?

You should be able to find the information you need about visit visas on our website (www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa) but if you need to contact the Visa & Immigration Service contact details are [here](#) on GOV.UK.

Can delegates apply in their own language?

The application form has been translated into a range of languages, however all answers must be in English.

Supporting documents must also be in English or accompanied by a translation. Translation requirements are outlined in the guide to supporting documents:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visitor-visa-guide-to-supporting-documents/guide-to-supporting-documents-visiting-the-uk>.

Where should a delegate apply?

An application can be made from any country where there is a Visa Application Centre (VAC). The online form will ask which country an applicant is applying in, this then gives a list of available Visa Application Centres. An application can also be made online from a country where there is no VAC presence, but the applicant would need to travel to a VAC to complete the application process.

Further details about visa application centres are available [here](#).

When should delegates apply?

For visas, applications can be made up to three months in advance of the intended date of travel to the UK.



ETAs are valid for 2 years, or until the passport expires, and can be applied for at any time, whichever is sooner.

How long will applications take?

The Visa & Immigration Service aims to process visit applications within 15 days (for standard applications) from submitting biometrics, but it is recommended that applications are made as early as possible. In many locations, for an additional fee, delegates may be able to use our Priority and Super Priority visa service.

What is “biometric information”?

Biometric information consists of fingerprint scanning and a full-face digital photograph. Visa applicants must provide their biometric information each time they apply for a UK visa.

Can delegates do anything in advance to make the application process quicker?

Yes. When an application is started a delegate will be asked to supply an email address and create a password, they will then be emailed a link to return to the application at a later point. This means the form can be started more than three months before the planned date of travel.

What is Priority and Super Priority Service?

Priority service means that the Visa & Immigration Service will aim to make a decision on their application in 5 working days, this service is available in over 200 locations.

Super Priority service reduces this to the end of the next working day, this service is available in around 20 locations.

Both services are charged at an additional fee. Some applications may take longer if they are complex, please check the [visa application centres](#) website for any further information.

Important note: Priority service does not imply or guarantee in any way that a delegate will be successful in their visa application. All visa applicants must meet the requirements of the UK immigration rules.

A delegate travels a lot and cannot be without their passport, are there any services that could help?

Please note* EVisa Applications do not require a passport to be left at any time.

The Visa & Immigration Service offers a Keep My Passport service in over 40 locations, this allows the applicant to keep their passport while the application is being considered.

If the visa application is successful, they will need to provide their passport to the VAC for the vignette to be printed. This service comes at an additional cost and details of which services are available at each VAC are set out on the Commercial Partner website.

Are there any other services available for the convenience of delegates?

Yes, a wide range of services are available for customer convenience, popular services include peak time and weekend VAC appointments, SMS updates, photocopying, premium lounges and even the ability to submit biometrics in the comfort of your own home or office.

Additional services such as travel insurance and UK sim cards can also be purchased via Commercial Partner websites, and in VACs.

These are known as 'user pay' or 'added value' services, please see the website of the VAC if a delegate wishes to attend to find out which services are available in their location.

What travel date should be stated on the application form?

On the application delegates should be specific in stating planned dates of travel to and from the UK.

Delegates cannot arrive in the UK earlier than the start date on their visa. If a delegate tries to travel before this date, the airline may not let them board their flight, or they may be refused entry on arrival in the UK.

It is not usually possible to make changes to the validity dates of a visa, after it has been printed. If plans change, delegates may need to make a new visa application.

Are there any other ways to make my journey easier?

Nationals of some countries may be able to clear immigration control faster through our Registered Traveller Service. To be eligible delegates must have a visa or have visited the UK 4 times or more in the last 24 months.

For further information about the Registered Traveller Service, please visit our website: www.gov.uk/registered-traveller.

What can I do if a delegate's visa is refused?

A decision to refuse a visa is made only after careful consideration of all the facts by an Entry Clearance Officer, including the fact that the delegate is to attend or contribute to a specific event.

If the application is refused, the refusal notice will provide details about the reasons for refusal.

Delegates are welcome to make a new application, but it is strongly recommended that they read their refusal letter carefully and fully address all the reasons for the initial refusal.
