

The British Accreditation Council (BAC) and Student Visitors

Introduction

An increasing number of training providers are seeking to bring international students to the United Kingdom (UK) for short-term training (i.e. courses less than six months long). This document provides you with some guidance on the information you need to bring in people to study on such courses through the Student Visitor Visa route and how it links to BAC accreditation. Please be aware that student migration is managed by the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA). You should always check their website: (<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>) for definitive information.

We have also outlined below how accreditation by the British Accreditation Council enables your institution to bring in students using this migration route, and also how to avoid one of the main pitfalls that training providers can fall into.

What is the British Accreditation Council?

The British Accreditation Council has been providing quality assurance to providers of private education and training for over a quarter of a century, through a process of rigorous inspection and independent accreditation. We are proud to be the longest established and most highly regarded accreditation body in the private and independent education and training sector, and we are pleased to count a number of BINDT centres among our list of accredited providers.

What is the Student Visitor Visa route?

The Student Visitor Visa route is designed by the UKBA for the migration of students from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) who want to undertake a short course of study in the United Kingdom (such as a beginner's English language course, CPD or a work-related training course). Student visitors are allowed to come to the UK for six months (or 11 months if they will be studying an English language course). Full details of the Student Visitor Visa route can be found on the UKBA's website, here: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/visiting/student/>.

The page on the UKBA's website which describes the requirements for an institution to sponsor non-EEA students via the Student Visitor Visa route can be found here: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/visiting/student/requirements/>.

How does BAC accreditation help me with Student Visitor Visas?

The web page mentioned above shows that the British Accreditation Council is one of the approved accreditation bodies for Student Visitor Visa purposes. This means that BAC accreditation will enable your institution to sponsor non-EEA students via this route.

Once your institution gains accreditation with us, we will provide you with the relevant certificate of accreditation. Your institution will be listed on our website in our directory of accredited colleges, which can be found here:

<http://www.the-bac.org/accredited-institutions/directory/results>.

You will be asked to check that this listing is accurate when accreditation is advised. BAC advises all our newly accredited institutions to inform the UKBA as soon as they receive their certificate of accreditation (while it is a good idea to send a copy of the certificate, you should always keep the original). On receipt of this notification the UKBA will then check BAC's directory of accredited colleges on our website to verify that your institution is listed. The UKBA will probably not contact you on receipt of a copy of your accreditation certificate, but if you have received a certificate of accreditation from us and notified the UKBA, then your students can proceed with using the Student Visitor Visa route.

What about the Business Visitor Visa route?

Details of the Business Visitor Visa route can be found on the UKBA's website, here: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/visiting/business/>. The Business Visitor Visa route makes some provision for non-EEA students undertaking training in the UK, but the training must be provided by the person's employer (or one of its UK branches) and delivered in techniques and work practices used in the UK, provided this is not on-the-job training. The Business Visitor Visa route is used mainly to bring people from outside the EEA to the UK for business meetings.

If your training institution is not the student's employer, then the student is not eligible for a Business Visitor Visa. You will need to use the Student Visitor Visa route.

Conclusion

There is a wealth of information about BAC accreditation on our website (www.the-bac.org). If all your institution's courses are all under six months in length, you may be eligible for accreditation under our short course provider scheme. If your courses run for six months or more, our college accreditation scheme may be more appropriate. If you have any questions about accreditation or regarding the Student Visitor Visa route, please ring us on 0300 330 1400 or email us at info@the-bac.org. Our staff are always pleased to answer your queries and talk over your specific concerns.

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