

# RUSSIAN LANGUAGE UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES LTD

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Patron: Sir Rodric Braithwaite G.C.M.G.

Web site: [www.rlus.co.uk](http://www.rlus.co.uk)

## GUIDELINES FOR GETTING A RUSSIAN VISA

The following instructions apply to all courses, except the three week course at the Benedict School (PBEN3). Students on this course will be sent separate instructions and should not use the information in this file.

### INTRODUCTION

You cannot apply for your visa until you receive your visa invitation. We expect to receive it 3-8 weeks before departure and will send it to you, as soon as we receive it, to the address you gave RLUS on your booking form, provided that you have paid the course balance and have produced proof of insurance. Please note that we cannot be more precise about when RLUS will receive the invitation, as this depends on Russian bureaucracy, which is notoriously unpredictable.

The invitation will allow you to obtain a single entry visa for three months. If your course lasts longer than three months, the visa will be extended on arrival in Russia. There has recently never been a problem in converting your visa to a multi-entry one, allowing you to leave Russia during the reading weeks or over the Christmas break. There will be a small charge for this.

If it is being sent to a UK address, it will be sent by Special Delivery. You will need to sign for it. If you have asked for the invitation to be sent outside the UK, it will be sent to you by UPS. You will be expected to pay the cost (currently £45). Sending visa invitations outside the UK by the ordinary postal system (even if a signature is required) has resulted in invitations being lost in the postal system and there is no way of tracking where they are, once they have left the UK. As a result, RLUS is not willing to risk the invitation being lost.

We expect to receive your invitation 3-8 weeks before departure. However, we cannot predict when we will receive it, as it depends on Russian bureaucracy, which is unpredictable at the best of times. You should also receive an e-mail informing you that your visa invitation has been sent. The original invitation is normally required. This is a valuable document and cannot be replaced. **Warning: if you lose it, you are unlikely to go to Russia, as our Russian partners normally cannot obtain a duplicate.** Don't forget to let Dr Bivon know in writing if you have moved, or want documents sent elsewhere.

Most students obtain their visa in the UK. It has to be done through an organisation called VFS Global (see below), and not through the Russian consulates either in London or Edinburgh. An alternative in London is to use an agent such as Scott's Tours (141 Whitfield St London W1T 5EW, phone 020 7383 5353), e-mail: [visas@scottstours.co.uk](mailto:visas@scottstours.co.uk) to obtain your visa for you. They are very helpful if you need an urgent visa and cannot travel to London to get it. Urgent visas cannot be applied for by post, except by using an agent

If you wish to apply for a visa outside the UK, this is normally possible in your home country, or in a country where you are studying. You were asked, when you applied for your RLUS course, where you planned to apply for your visa. If you have since changed your mind, this, from experience, should not be a problem. However, rules can change without warning. You are advised to check with the consulate that you can obtain a visa from them.

### APPLYING FOR A VISA

This section applies to applications in the UK only. If you are applying outside the UK, you should check with the Russian consulate the documents and fee that you need to send. The rules are different in different countries.

*Please note that the procedure can change without warning. If any of the information below is no longer accurate, please let Dr Bivon know immediately.*

If you have any questions that this document does not answer, please ring the VFS Global call centre on 0905 889 0149. Please note they charge 50p a minute.

Go to the VFS website <http://ru.vfsglobal.co.uk>. Select *All about your visas* and from the next menu *Student*. From this menu you can get information about the visa fees, the documents required, processing time, and photo specifications. Then select *Visa Application Form*. Select *Click Here* at the end of the second paragraph. Select *Registration* at the bottom of the page and sign up for a new account. Please keep a record of your ID number and password. Click on *New Application* at the bottom of the next screen.

There now follows a large number of pages to fill in. You can save the application at any time and go back to them if you can remember your ID and password! Most questions are straightforward. Below you will find help with less obvious questions/

- 1) The Purpose Section is *Study*. The Purpose is also *Study* and the visa category and type is *Common Educational*.
- 2) You are applying for a single entry visa. You will be given a visa only for the dates on the visa invitation, whatever dates you put here
- 3) Your passport type is *Tourist*
- 4) Leave the section *Directive number* blank
- 5) Name of Employer is your university
- 6) Insurance: click *Yes* and put the name of your insurer in the box, labelled document.
- 7) Your University is paying for your trip (even if you are!).
- 8) Where do plan to stay in Russia  
Click *other* and give the following address:  
*Moscow (MLL13, MLL16, MLL18, MLL36):*  
Language Link, Post Office Box 309, Moscow 125047 phone 4952589922129  
*St Petersburg Benedict School (PBEN13, PBEN16, PBEN18, PBEN36)*  
St-Petersburg 19000 PO box 178 Benedict School Phone 8123153596  
*Petrozavodsk (PET13A, PET16A)*  
Petrozavodsk State University Department of Philology Pr. Lenina 33  
Petrozavodsk Republic of Karelia 185910 Russia phone 8142719609  
*Tver State University (TV32)*  
RUSSIA 170000 Tver ul Zhelyabova d 33 International Department Tver State  
University, phone 4822321195  
*Volgograd (VOL13/18S)*  
Russia 400005 Volgograd ul Komsomolskaya 6 Language Link phone 9033717582  
*Yaroslavl (Y13, Y16, Y18, Y32)*  
Russia 150000 Yaroslavl ul Sovetskaya 14 Yaroslavl State University International  
Affairs phone 485297746
- 9) Appointment date: this is the approximate date when you plan to send or take your visa application to VFS Global  
You are then given instructions to print out the form. Send (or take) the printed form to VFS Global with the fee and the documents, as on the VFS Global website. Unless you are collecting the visa in person, add extra for return postage, as detailed on the VFS Global website.

## DOCUMENTS TO SEND WITH YOUR APPLICATION

If you do not hold a UK passport, please check the VFS Global website to find out the documents that you have to send. If you hold a UK passport, these, according to the website, are the documents that you should send:

1. Current passport which should be valid for a minimum of six months after visa's expiration date and has at least 2 blank pages which do not need to be consecutive.
2. Visa application form filled in and printed out from this website only. Kindly ensure that the dates of your entry and exit, as entered in the application form, match with or fall within the period specified in the supporting documents.
3. One recent passport size photo glued to the indicated space on the application form.
4. A letter of invitation issued by a Russian Federal Migration Service agency or a telex from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
5. Introductory letter from your College/University giving full details of the traveller, destinations, dates and purpose of the visit as well as stating the name of inviting organization, contact details of the responsible person in Russia and explaining who will take financial responsibility of the trip.
6. When applying for student visa you must additionally submit HIV Test (AIDS) Certificate taken in last three months. HIV Test (AIDS) Certificate should still be valid for 15- 30 days on the day of your application.
7. The visa fee -- the details are on the VFS Global website.

**Item 4** RLUS will send you a letter of invitation issued by a Russian Federal Migration Service agency 3 to 8 weeks before departure.

**Item 5** Your University Liaison Officer will provide the letter. This should state that you are a full time student and indicate where you are studying in Russia and the course dates, as well as the name and contact details of the relevant student representative in Russia.

You should send your application by post to:

Russia Visa Application Center  
PO Box 64391  
London,  
EC1P 1NJ

If you are applying by post, your passport will be returned to you by DX, and the cost of postage will be added to the course fee.

If you prefer to apply in person, rather than by post, you can currently do so in London or Edinburgh. The addresses are:

15 - 27 Gee Street, London EC1V 3RD  
16 Forth Street, Edinburgh EH1 3LH

Your visa will be stuck in your passport. Your visa invitation and any documents you have sent will be retained and not returned to you. When you receive your visa, you must check that there are no mistakes and, if necessary, return it for corrections. Check that the start date for the visa is the date of your flight or earlier.

Please note that you will not get a visa for longer than 90 days, whatever the length of your course. If the return date on your visa is earlier than the end of your course, do not worry; travel to Russia using the visa. It will be extended in Russia. Your visa will be a single entry one (однократная виза). When you arrive in Russia and register your visa, you can usually opt to have it converted to a multi-entry one, allowing you to leave the country when you want

and to return as many times as you need. There will be a small fee for doing this and you may be without your passport for a long time. However, rules change unexpectedly and no guarantees can be given.

You are responsible for applying for your visa in time. Do not leave it until the last moment as sudden unpredictable changes in regulations can cause delays. If you fail to get a visa and are not able to leave with the group, there may be considerable extra expenditure involved (air ticket, additional meeting in Russia, travel in Russia, etc). RLUS will not be liable to cover these costs. Your insurance is very unlikely to cover any costs you may incur if you fail to get your visa on time.

**Once you arrive in Russia there are additional costs for the registration of your visa and, if necessary, exit or multi-entry visas. None of the above have been included in the cost of your placement or paid by you in advance. Only the cost of the visa invitation has been included in your invoice.**

### **HIV CERTIFICATE**

For a student visa you will need to send an HIV certificate. All you require is a letter from your GP or a clinic stating that you are HIV negative. As long as it is on official headed notepaper, it will be acceptable.

Your local health centre may do the HIV test for you. Alternatively you may need to attend a GUM clinic. You can find your nearest NHS GUM clinic that will do a test for you by going to <http://bashh.org>. You will find information on private clinics by doing a Google search on the web.

You may be required to take another HIV test soon after arriving in Russia. Please note that the Russian authorities will not normally accept a UK test certificate. As practice varies from one town to another and the rules change unpredictably, it is not possible to say whether or where this will be necessary. You can, if you wish, bring a sterile needle pack. However, some clinics will insist on using their own. They do not reuse needles and you will be able to check that they are using a sealed pack.