



# IMMIGRATION & VISA GUIDELINE

for International Students

HSE University Saint Petersburg



**HSE UNIVERSITY  
SAINT PETERSBURG**

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# Introduction

## Dear student,

The guideline you are about to dive in right away is intended to serve as a handbook whenever you have a question on your immigration status, procedures you need to pass or compliance with Russian immigration laws. It has been carefully gathered by Visa and Immigration Support office to help you concentrate on your studies and extra-curriculum activities and avoid any problems with the immigration compliance.

## Let's get introduced!

Visa and Immigration Support office (VISO) of Centre for International Student Support (CISS) is here to help you with questions regarding immigration and visa procedures and policies.

**Address:** room 304, 123 Griboyedova Canal Embankment, St. Petersburg

**Visiting hours:** Monday-Friday 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Our office is closed on Saturdays-Sundays and public holidays.

**Email:** [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru)

**Website:** <https://spb.hse.ru/en/io/ivs/>

**ISSO Telegram channel:** [t.me/hse\\_spb\\_isso](https://t.me/hse_spb_isso)

# Laws

## Let's deal with the most tedious but crucial topic first!

Here is some Russian Federal Laws that stipulate foreign citizens legal status and immigration control procedures in the country. It is better to familiarise yourself with them so you could brag around with knowledge and use that knowledge when needed:

- [№ 115 dated 25.07.2002](#) "On the **Legal Status** of Foreign Nationals in Russian Federation"
- [№ 109 dated 18.07.2006](#) "On the **Migration Control** of Foreign Nationals and Stateless Persons in Russia"
- [№ 163 dated 27.06.2018](#) "On **Amendments to the Federal Law on Migration Registration** of Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in the Russian Federation"
- [№ 274 dated 01.07.2021](#) "On **Amendments to Federal Law on the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens in the Russian Federation and Federal Law on State Fingerprint Registration** in the Russian Federation"

All of the above laws describe whether you should or should not receive a visa to enter and stay in Russia, how you need to be registered while staying in Russia, what kind of mandatory procedures you need to pass and everyone's liability for legal compliance.

# Immigration & visa procedures lifecycle

1. Receiving a study visa
2. Entering Russia
3. Registration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs
4. Medical examination, fingerprinting and biometric photography
5. Prolongation of permitted period of stay
6. Updating MIA registration
7. Leaving and reentering Russia
8. Completing the studies and post-graduation leave

**Let's get at immigration & visa procedures lifecycle's step by step!**

# Receiving a study visa to enter Russia

## Who needs a study visa to enter Russia?

In accordance with the international rules, a visa for entry to Russia is not required for citizens of Abkhazia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, South Ossetia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine, as well as holders of diplomatic visas. Citizens of other countries must obtain a visa prior to their arrival in Russia.

## How to get a study visa?

First, before applying for a Russian Study Visa, please make sure that you are admitted to HSE University and carefully check your passport: its expiry date must be at least 18 months away from your planned date of entry into Russia. It must also contain at least 4 blank pages for the visa and border stamps. If your passport does not meet these requirements, you must obtain a new international passport. You need a visa invitation in order to get an initial single-entry study visa, which will allow you to enter Russia only once and will last up for 90 days. A multiple-entry study visa will be issued upon your arrival to Russia.

## How to get an invitation for a study visa?

If you are a first-year student, you will be able to access a visa invitation in your personal account within 4-5 weeks from the moment when the upload of your documents is confirmed.

If you are a senior year student, you should contact the manager of your program office for a visa invitation, by filling in an application along with forwarding a copy of your passport's first page.

## Where to apply for a study visa?

As soon as you receive a visa invitation, visit a website of the Russian Embassy or Consulate ([the full list here](#)) where you plan to get your visa, and check the list of required documents and the procedures. Be sure to check the visa you will get!

# Entering Russia

## What shall be done when crossing the border with Russia?

While crossing the border you will be required to provide your passport and present a university letter of acceptance or a confirmation – please have the documents at hand. In addition, it is important to state the purpose of visit (always "Education"), period of visit and the name of the university you are going to attend to (HSE University St. Petersburg).

Moreover, you will receive a **migration card** on the plane/train/bus, or at the actual port of entry. **Migration Card** is a small paper blank, which contains a huge meaning! It is issued always free of charge to all foreign citizens (except citizens of Belarus) upon every arrival to Russia and validated by Port of Entry Border Control, which indicates:

- your personal data;
- purpose of visit (must be "Education/Учеба" for students);
- permitted period of stay in Russia (usually up to 90 days);
- date of entry and port of entry to Russia.





**Please note:**

- Double-check the data in the migration card. If you notice an error in your migration card while crossing the border, contact the checkpoint officer;
- If you find an error in your migration card after you left the checkpoint, most likely, you will have to leave Russia;
- If you are crossing the Russian border from Belarus, make sure to check [the special procedure](#).

**What shall be done after crossing the border with Russia?**

All foreign citizens must pass obligatory procedures upon arrival to Russia:

**Firstly**, you need to be registered by the MIA migration office (the Main Directorate for Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a state agency, responsible for supervision of foreign nationals stay in Russia) under the actual address of stay in Russia.

**Secondly**, if you plan to stay in Russia over 90 days and get visa or migration card extension, you have to undergo a medical examination, obligatory fingerprinting and biometric photographing.



# Registration with the migration office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

*MIA Registration Certificate or just Registration – a legal document issued and validated by MIA.*

It is issued free of charge by MIA migration office and appears as a paper-based slip that contains:

- your name spelled in Russian (be sure to check the spelling every time – the name is supposed to be like in your study visa or migration card);
- actual address of your stay in Russia;
- period of stay at the address; identification of your host/landlord;
- host’s signature/stamp;
- MIA validation mark.

Настоящим подтверждается, что

Фамилия

Имя

Отчество (при их наличии)

Гражданство, подданство  Р  Е  С  П  У  Б  Л  И  К  А  Б  Е  Л  А  Р  У  С  Ъ

Дата рождения: число  0  0  месяц  0  0  год  2  0  0  Пол: мужской  женский

Место рождения: государство  Р  Е  С  П  У  Б  Л  И  К  А  Б  Е  Л  А  Р  У  С  Ъ  М  И  П  С

город или другой населенный пункт  К

Документ, удостоверяющий личность:

вид  П  А  С  П  О  Р  Т  серия  №  М  0  0  0  0  0  1

Дата выдачи: число  0  0  месяц  0  0  год  2  0  1  9  Срок действия до: число  0  0  месяц  0  0  год  2  0  2  9

(заполняется в случае ограничения срока действия документа)

в установленном порядке уведомил о прибытии в место пребывания по адресу:

Область, край, республика, автономный округ (область)

Район

Город или другой населенный пункт  С  А  Н  К  Т  -  П  Е  Т  Е  Р  Б  У  Р  Г  Г

Улица  Ш  Е  В  Ч  Е  Н  К  О  У  Л

Дом  2  1  Корпус  Строение

Дом, участок, владение и иное (заполнить согласно документу, подтверждающему право собственности)

Квартира

Квартира, комната, офис и иное (заполнить согласно документу, подтверждающему право собственности)

Заявленный срок пребывания до: число  0  0  месяц  0  0  год  2  0  2  3

**ОТРЫВНАЯ ЧАСТЬ БЛАНКА УВЕДОМЛЕНИЯ О ПРИБЫТИИ ИНОСТРАННОГО ГРАЖДАНИНА ИЛИ ЛИЦА БЕЗ ГРАЖДАНСТВА В МЕСТО ПРЕБЫВАНИЯ**

*front side of registration*



files to [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru), indicating the full name, Russian phone number and actual address of stay in Saint Petersburg.

The owner of your flat will help you obtain the registration - please visit them on the day of the arrival with your passport and migration card. Only the property owner can apply for registration for a foreign citizen, a registration can be issued directly in the MIA or official agent - the [MPSC](#) (МФЛ). Since there is a strict deadline, the registration is better to be performed within 3 business days since your arrival to Russia.

As soon as you receive the registration original, send its scan (both sides) to [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru).

### **I live in a hotel/hostel/etc. - how do I get the registration?**

On the day of arrival to Russia, send scanned copies of all passport pages and a scanned copy of migration card in pdf-files to [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru), indicating the full name, Russian phone number and actual address of stay in Saint Petersburg.

Your hotel administrator will help you obtain the registration. Most likely, the registration will be done within a day and as soon as you get it send its scan (both sides) to [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru).

### **Please note:**

- MIA Registration is renewable - each time you leave Russia, move to another place of stay, get a new registration slip in a hotel/hostel/hospital, your previous MIA registration is terminated and you must renew it within 3 business days;
- If you do not renew your registration in time when it is necessary - you may be subject to a fine of up to few thousands rubles, deportation from Russia and ban on entry for up to 3 years;
- If the owner refuses to register you in time, you should find a new apartment with a reliable property owner;
- The address displayed in your registration slip must match the actual address of your living in Russia;
- The issuance of registration slip is always free - if you are offered to pay for registration or decide to buy registration somewhere, this is a serious law violation.



## Medical examination, fingerprinting and biometric photography

Each foreign student arriving to Russia for stay over 90 days must undergo an obligatory medical examination, fingerprinting and biometric photographing.

These procedures are better to be completed right after you receive a temporary registration after arrival in Russia.

If you want to read the official order please follow the [link](#) (in Russian only).

### Who is exempt from undergoing the new procedures?

- Citizens of the Republic of Belarus;
- Family members of international officials and employees of diplomatic and consular institutions in Russia;
- Foreign nationals with dual citizenship, one of which is Russian;
- Foreign nationals – holders of temporary or permanent Russian residence permits.

### What shall I do in order to undergo the new procedures?

**STEP 1:** Prepare the documents you might need for **Medical examination:**

- passport + copy;
- passport`s notarized translation into Russian;
- Russian study visa + copy;
- migration card + copy;
- registration + copy.

**STEP 2:** Visit the [Universal document centre](#) and undergo all the procedures at one place. Alternatively, using the full list of authorised medical organisations [here](#) chose the clinic and visit it with the prepared documents in order to pass all the medical procedures

**STEP 3:** Prepare the required documents you might need for **Fingerprint registration and photographing:**

- passport + notarized translation into Russian;
- Russian study visa + copy;

- migration card + copy;
- registration + copy;
- medical examination results (medical certificate, HIV certificate, psychiatrist's and narcologist's assessment).

Fingerprints and photos are taken in the [Universal document centre](#) and have to be done only once. After the fact, you will receive a plastic ID that confirms that you have passed all the procedures.

**STEP 4:** Send the scanned copies of your medical certificates and plastic ID to [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru) and always keep it with you just like your passport, migration card, and registration



*dactyloscopy ID card example*



*medical certificate example*

**Please note:**



- Don't procrastinate! Do these procedures the sooner, the better, while your passport hasn't been taken for visa/migration card prolongation;
- Bring a buddy. Ask your Russian-speaking friend to help you with communication with the staff. It is allowed to bring them along if you and they are comfortable with it. Learn about buddies and request one [here](#);

- Fingerprinting and photographing must be done only once, but the medical certificates are valid for a year. Check your certificates and undergo the procedure again within 30 days after the medical certificate's expiration date;
- For those who have not completed the established procedures or failed to complete them on time the following penalties might be applied to: visa / migration card cancellation, deportation and a ban on further entry to Russia.

## Prolongation of permitted period of stay

*Permitted Period of Stay* – a period that you as a foreign citizen are allowed to legally stay in Russia. For international students entering Russia for the first time, the period usually does not exceed 90 days from the day of entry. For visa-free students, this period is displayed in the Migration Card, for visa students – in the study visa. The period is a subject to prolongation according to the procedures in this Guideline

### I am a visa-free student – what do I undertake to extend my permitted period of stay (migration card)?

The most important – always keep an eye on the dates in your migration documents. You must submit the full package of documents to the VISO as early as 3 months and **as late as 30 calendar days** prior to your current migration card or registration expiration date. The extension appears as a MIA stamp on the back of migration card with a new validity date

### What documents do I need to submit to the VISO for migration card extension?

1. printed copies of all your passport pages (even the blank ones);
2. original + printed copy of migration card (except Belarus citizens);
3. original + printed copy of current valid registration under the actual address of stay;
4. [original of the HSE certificate of enrollment](#) in Russian with the faculty stamp (you may order and receive it in your study office);
5. printed copy of the HSE Enrollment Directive with your name included in the list of admitted students or extract from the HSE Enrollment Directive (you may order it via your study office);
6. printed copy of all pages of your commercial educational agreement with signatures and stamps (for those who study on a commercial basis);
7. printed copy of plastic dactyloscopy ID card.

### I am a visa student – what do I undertake to extend my visa?

The most important – always keep an eye on the dates in your migration documents. You must submit the full package of

documents to the VISO as early as 3 months and **as late as 45 calendar days** prior to your current visa expiration date. The extension appears as new multi-entry study visa valid up to 1 year.

### **What documents do I need to submit to the VISO for visa extension?**

1. your passport in original (visa extension requires the passport validity for at least 6 months after the end of the new visa; it must also contain minimum 2 consecutive blank designated pages for your Russian visa stamp and entry/exit stamps),
2. printed copies of all your passport pages (even the blank ones),
3. one color portrait photo 3×4 size,
4. printed copy of migration card (except Belarus citizens),
5. original + printed copy of current valid registration under the actual address of stay,
6. [original of the HSE certificate of enrollment](#) in Russian with the faculty stamp (you may order and receive it in your study office),
7. printed copy of the HSE Enrollment Directive with your name included in the list of admitted students or extract from the HSE Enrollment Directive (you may order it via your study office),
8. printed copy of all pages of your commercial educational agreement with signatures and stamps (for those who study on a commercial basis),
9. visa extension fee payment receipt in original, 1600 Rub (Current payment details be requested at [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru). Be sure to check the receipt that bank operator will print out to you: all your personal data displayed in a receipt should be like in your Russian study visa and passport. Please note that the University will not be held responsible in case of any mistakes related to the payment of the visa fee, as well as in case of any changes in the place of submission and payment details on behalf of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, or if the Ministry of Internal Affairs refuses to issue a visa
10. printed copy of plastic dactyloscopy ID card.





**Please note:**

- Do not forget to print copies before visiting the VISO – the office does not provide printing services and will not accept documents without the copies. You can use the printers in the university building,
- It is necessary to prepare a full set of documents — a set with missing documents will not be accepted,
- Do not take any trips around Russia or abroad until you receive prolonged documents;
- Missing the deadline on submitting documents means that you will have to leave Russia within the validity terms in your migration documents.

## Updating registration

### **I live in HSE dormitory and have applied for migration card/visa extension – what's next?**

**Visa-free student:** Approximately 1,5 – 2 weeks after submitting the full set of documents to the VISO, you will receive an email that the document are ready to pick up. Immediately pick up the documents, check the correctness of the data and always carry them with you.

**Visa student:** Approximately 5–6 weeks after submitting the full set of documents to the VISO, you will receive an email that the document a ready to pick up. Immediately pick up the documents, check the correctness of the data and always carry them with you. If you need a passport before a new visa is ready, write to [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru) and get a passport. Do not forget to return it to the VISO in a timely manner to obtain a visa.

### **I live in a private address and have applied for migration card/visa extension – what's next?**

**Visa-free student:** Примерно через 1 – 1,5 недели после подачи полного комплекта документов в ОБМС ты получишь email о готовности продленной МК – сразу забери документ. По вопросу продления временной регистрации нужно обратиться к собственнику квартиры/администратору отеля. Новую регистрацию необходимо оформить в течение 3-х рабочих дней с момента готовности продленной МК. Когда регистрация готова, вышли ее сканированную копию (с двух сторон) на [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru).

**Visa student:** Approximately 4–5 weeks after submitting the full set of documents to the VISO, you will receive an email that the visa is ready. Immediately pick up the document, check the correctness of the data and always carry with you. If you need a passport before a new visa is ready, write to [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru) and get a passport. Do not forget to return it to the VISO in a timely manner to obtain a visa.

To extend the temporary registration, contact the owner of the apartment / administrator of the hotel where you live. Registration in accordance with a new visa must be completed **within 3 working days** from the moment the visa is ready. When new registration is done, send a scanned copy

(both sides) to [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru).



**Please note:**

**New MIA registration must be issued each time you:**

- leave and reenter Russia (receive new migration card),
- move to another apartment,
- check in to a hotel or hostel (even for one day!),
- happen to get into hospital (even for one day!),
- change your documents or get new ones (temporary residence permit, resident card, passport, visa, migration card).

In any of those cases, you must immediately notify [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru) and apply for re-registration to the VISO (if you live in HSE dormitory) / your current property owner / hotel administrator. Please keep in mind that for the procedure of re-registration the last registration in original is required as well as the copies of your main migration documents.

It is very important to renew your registration in time, because this document is needed for visa/migration card prolongation and if it turns out to be invalid – the MIA may initiate a fine or deportation.

# Leaving and reentering Russia

## **I am going to leave Russia – whom do I need to inform?**

Before you leave Russia, please make sure to notify the study office manager and dormitory administration / owner of your flat / hotel administration and let them know when exactly you are planning to leave and return. Make sure to send information to [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru) as well.

## **What should I do when crossing the border to leave Russia?**

At the border crossing point, you will be asked to provide your passport and migration card. The migration card will be kept by the border control officer and a passport page stamped to confirm that you have crossed the Russian border.

## **I have study visa – when should I return?**

You can come back to Russia while your multiple-entry visa is valid, but no later than 45 days before its expiration so that you could apply for a visa extension in time.

If you have a single-entry Russian visa, you will need a new visa invitation to return to Russia. You can obtain it from your program manager.

## **I have planned my return to Russia – what do I need to do and whom to inform?**

Before arrival to Russia please make sure to notify the study office manager and dormitory administration / owner of your flat / hotel administration and let them know when exactly you are planning to leave and return. Make sure to send information to [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru) as well.

Upon arrival, it is necessary to receive a new migration card at the border (with "Education" purpose of visit) and renew registration within 3 days.

## Expulsion or graduation and post-graduation leave

Upon successful completion of your studies at HSE University which usually happens in June, you must leave Russia. However, if you want to stay in Russia for some time after the graduation you may be granted a [post-graduation leave](#) which duration is determined as per the [HSE Academic Calendar](#) for an Ongoing Academic Year.

### How to apply for the post-graduation leave?

Prior to the start of the Final Certification, submit an application for a post-graduation in personal HSE Account.

If you have requested post-graduation leave, you shall retain the student status until August and if the visa/migration card extension is needed in accordance with the new student status terms please keep in mind the deadlines on submitting documents to the VISO.

If you have not applied for leave, you shall be subject to dismissal from HSE University in June due to the studies completion.

### Please note:

- If you were expelled from HSE University (regardless of whether it was completion or dismissal), you must leave Russia within 3 business days from the date of your dismissal directive to avoid any problems – the MIA might shorten your permitted period of stay in Russia.



## Temporary residence permit for the purpose of education (RVPO)

*From January 1, 2023, full-time international students in bachelor, master, and PhD programmes can obtain a temporary residence permit for the purpose of education (RVPO). The detailed procedure for issuing RVPO is determined by the Order of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, which can be found [here](#) (in Russian only).*

Foreign citizens obtain RVPO as well as Residence Permit on their own. That is, the university cannot contribute to obtain such a status. HSE can only provide you with the documents on your student status (certificate of enrollment, enrollment directive) – you can get them in your study office. If you decide to receive RVPO, you need to contact the authorized institution in person and clarify all the details of the status and list of required documents.

### How to apply for RVPO?

**STEP 1:** Visit Head Migration office. Application for RVPO are accepted in Head Migration Office of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs in Saint Petersburg at the address: 10-12, lit. D Krasnogo Tekstilshchika st. (2nd floor). The list of required documents, the timing, and the cost of the procedure must be specified there.

**STEP 2:** Update registration. On a day of getting the RVPO stamp send its scanned copy to [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru) and visit the VISO/property owner/hotel administration with the full package of documents to update temporary registration:

- printed copies of your passport pages with marks (1st page + all visas, stamps, RVPO),
- printed copy of migration card,
- original+ printed copy of your current valid registration,
- printed copy of a confirmation document of RVPO receipt.

# Documents lost/theft

## **I have lost passport with Russian study visa!**

Report to a local Police department and inform the VISO via email [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru).

Contact the Embassy to issue a new passport. As your new passport is being issued, you will probably be provided with a temporary ID.

On a day of receiving the new passport, please inform the VISO via email [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru) and the manager of your programme office by providing the scanned copy of your new passport first page.

### **Please note:**



- Within 3 days after receiving the new passport, it is necessary to update the registration by providing the VISO/property owner/hotel administration with originals and printed copies of your main migration documents.
- Within 15 days after receiving the new passport, it is necessary to apply for the visa transfer – the procedure means that the study visa in your new passport will be up to the same date as the previous visa.

## **I have lost passport (visa-free entry)!**

Report to a local Police department and inform the VISO via email [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru).

Contact the Embassy to issue a new passport. As your new passport is being issued, you will probably be provided with a temporary ID.

On a day of receiving the new passport, please inform the VISO via email [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru) and the manager of your programme office by providing the scanned copy of your new passport first page.

### **Please note:**



- Within 3 days after receiving the new passport, it is necessary to update the registration by providing the VISO/property owner/hotel administration with originals and printed copies of your main migration documents.

### **I have lost migration card!**

Report to a local Police department and inform the VISO via email [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru).

Visit the local migration office of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) for the area where you live with prepared in advance police reference, your passport and copies of its pages, registration slip and its copy. The migration officers of the MIA will take your fingerprints and inform you about the date when you can pick up migration card duplicate.

On a day of receiving migration card duplicate, prepare and submit to the VISO/property owner/hotel administration originals and printed copies of your main migration documents.

### **I have lost registration!**

Report to a local Police department to receive a police reference confirming the loss or theft of particular documents.

On a day of receiving the reference, prepare and submit to the VISO/property owner originals and printed copies of your main migration documents as well as the police reference for the registration duplicate issuing.



# Liability



## Please note:

- Иностранные граждане несут юридическую ответственность за соблюдением своего статуса и федерального миграционного законодательства;
- Foreign nationals are legally responsible for maintaining their status and compliance with Federal Immigration Laws.
- Violation of Federal Immigration Laws is considered as violation of HSE University Code of Conduct and may lead to expulsion.
- Violation of Federal Immigration Laws inflicts a liability ranging from a fine to deportation from Russia and reentry ban.
- Failure to submit documents for visa / migration card prolongation to the VISO before deadlines leads to the requirement to leave Russia and apply for a new visa at students' costs.

## Useful links

[HSE St. Petersburg International Office](#)

[Visa & Immigration Support Office](#)

[International Student Support](#)

[Telegram channel of Centre for International Students support](#)

[The Accommodation Department](#)

[Student Welfare Unit](#)

[Unit for Extracurricular Activities](#)

[HSE Student Handbook](#)

[HSE Academic Handbook](#)

**Hotline for emergency situations +7 (981) 830-15-40**