

Renewing Study Visas

It's that time of the year again when, depending on your visa and the conditions therein, you need to start getting your documents together in preparation for the renewal/ extension of your study visa.

This applies to:

- Students whose study visa is only valid for one year and their degree is three or four years.
- Students whose visas were valid for the duration of their undergraduate studies and now they have been accepted for their postgraduate studies and need to renew their study visas (this does NOT include paid post graduate researchers).

ON LINE APPLICATION PROCESS

You should completely submit your application, ie. Both the online application and appointment in person at the VFS centre, to renew your visa not fewer than 60 days before it expires. (if your visa expires on 31 December, then you should submit your complete application via VFS no later than 31 October).

The Department of Home Affairs no longer accepts applications for the renewal of study visas. **All visa renewals within South Africa need to be made through VFS online:** <http://www.vfsglobal.com/dha/southafrica/>

An online application must be made on the VFS website and an application fee paid before you may schedule an appointment to hand in your documentation and have your biometric data captured. Please note that once your appointment has been scheduled, you only have the option of changing your appointment date twice.

We would suggest that when making applications, try and coordinate appointments in Port Elizabeth with other international students, to save costs.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Please submit all documents required (as listed on the VFS website), as incomplete applications will not be accepted.

<http://www.vfsglobal.com/dha/southafrica/study-visa-content.html>

The following list include some, not all, of the supporting documents required for visa renewal applications. This is to assist you with information on how to obtain these specific documents.

- **South African Police Clearance Certificate**: Please visit the SA Police Station in Beaufort Street, to initiate your application, which will need to be sent to the Criminal Records Centre in Pretoria for processing. You may request to send the documents to Pretoria yourself (strongly recommended), and may use the Post Office or a courier such as Postnet. Students who choose to use the Post Office are advised that this may cause delays.
Please apply for your police clearance certificate as soon as possible as processing time can take approximately two months. Once obtained, the certificate is valid for 6 months. Receipts for police clearance certificates are no longer acceptable for visa applications.
- **Medical clearance certificate**- this certificate can be obtained by following this link, and needs to be completed by a doctor:
<http://www.ru.ac.za/international/resources/immigration/>
- **Radiological report**- The form which must be completed by the radiologist can be obtained by following the link below: Please note that the radiological report takes up to a week to be generated.
<http://www.ru.ac.za/international/resources/immigration/>
- **Medical aid for 2017**- Medical aid can be extended/renewed either online or by obtaining forms from the International Office. Please note that membership fees will need to be at the 2017 rate which is obtainable directly from the relevant scheme.

The nearest VFS centre is in Port Elizabeth, in Walmer Park.

Once I have submitted my application, can I leave South Africa and go home?

Once you have submitted your application, if your current visa will still be valid by the time you return to South Africa, you can travel out of South Africa. If your current visa is still valid but will expire while you are home, you will only be permitted to enter South Africa on a visitor's visa which is valid for a period of 3 months of the year.

Furthermore, please note that if you re-enter South Africa on a visitor's visa, you will not be allowed to register, nor will you be allowed to change your condition from a visitor's visa to a study visa from within South Africa.

Applicants for a first time study visa and those wanting to change the conditions of their study visas are required to leave SA and submit a study visa/change of conditions application in their home countries.

ALL THE BEST!

The International Office.