



17 April 2026

Dear Sponsors,

UKVI has recently seen an increase in Student visa applications relying on scholarships or funding provided by non-national government bodies to demonstrate the required level of funds. Where this funding does not meet the definition of an official financial sponsor in the Immigration Rules, this has resulted in visa refusals. We are therefore taking this opportunity to clarify the requirements for official financial sponsorship, to support sponsors and applicants to avoid issues at the point of application.

Immigration Rules position

Appendix Finance of the Immigration Rules sets out how applicants can demonstrate they have sufficient funds to cover their course fees and living costs. This requirement may be met through:

- personal funds held by the applicant; or
- funding provided by an official financial sponsor, as defined in the Rules.

Only funding that meets these requirements can be relied upon for a successful Student visa application.

Who qualifies as an official financial sponsor

The Immigration Rules define the following as acceptable official financial sponsors:

- His Majesty's Government
- the applicant's national government
- certain international organisations
- approved universities
- reputable international companies

Sponsors should ensure that any funding relied upon by an applicant clearly falls within one of the categories above and is evidenced in line with the Rules.

Funding that cannot be used

Funding provided by bodies that do not meet the definition of an official financial sponsor cannot be relied upon for the purposes of a Student visa application. This includes funding provided by, for example:

- local authorities
- regional or state governments
- devolved administrations
- state-owned or government-linked entities

Applicants seeking to rely on funding from these sources risk refusal if they do not otherwise meet the financial requirements of the route

Policy intent and practical examples

The policy intent behind excluding local authorities, regional or state governments, devolved administrations and state-owned entities is to ensure that only national-level governments can act as official financial sponsors, because national governments provide a consistently verifiable, centrally accountable and internationally recognisable source of funding; sub-national bodies are significantly harder to verify, vary widely in authority and reliability across countries, and expanding sponsorship to them would undermine the Government's objective to maintain a fair and consistent system across all nationalities.

Click [here](#) to see examples of unacceptable financial evidence.