

## IMMIGRATION & VISA GUIDELINE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Dear Student,

The guideline you are about to dive in right away is intended to serve as a quick reference 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:** 123 Kanala Griboedova Embankment, room 304

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

Saturday-Sunday, public holidays – office is closed

**Contact phone:** + 7 (812) 644-59-11 ext. ext. 61238

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

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

### LET'S DEAL WITH THE MOST TEDIOUS BUT CRUCIAL TOPIC FIRST (THE LAWS)

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:

[№ 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 with the federal immigration laws.

### IMMIGRATION & VISA PROCEDURES LIFECYCLE

1. Receiving a study visa
2. Entering Russia
3. Registration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs
4. Pass a 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**

## 1. Receiving a study visa

*Study Visa – a type of Russian Visa issued by Consular Departments of the Russian MIA that allows foreign citizens enter Russia and study at a university. It is different from a tourist or other visas types - Study Visa can be prolonged under certain conditions.*

*A Study Visa for entry to Russia **is not** required for citizens of Azerbaijan, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Armenia, Uzbekistan and Russia, as well as holders of diplomatic visas. Citizens of other countries must obtain a student visa prior to their arrival in Russia.*

### How to get a 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 student 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!

## 2. 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. You also might be asked about purpose and period of visit and the name of the university you are going to attend - having a note with contacts of [HSE St. Petersburg International Office](#) at hand would be so smart of you!

However, most important that you will receive a **migration card** on the plane/train/bus, or at the actual port of entry. **Migration Card** is such a small piece of paper, which contains a huge meaning! It is issued always free of charge to all foreign citizens (except citizens of Belarus) arriving 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:**

- *If you find 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 (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.

### 3. Registration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs

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

It 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 this address
- identification of your host/landlord
- host's signature/stamp and MIA validation mark

What you need to do to get registration depends on your actual place of living in Russia.

#### **I live in HSE dormitory - 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)

Only if you have previously lived somewhere in Russia, visit the VISO in person and bring printed copies of documents + previous MIA registration in original.

VISO will notify you via email when the registration is ready — pick it up right away and keep safe with you.

#### **I live in a private address (flat/apartment/relatives place/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)

The owner of your flat will help you obtain the registration - please visit them on the next business day after 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](#) (МФЦ). 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)

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.*

#### 4. Pass a medical examination, fingerprinting and biometric photography

Each foreign student arriving to Russia for stay over 90 days must provide fingerprints and undergo an obligatory medical examination 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 MIA 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?

*It is only possible to undergo fingerprinting and photographing after passing medical examination and obtaining the required documents.*

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

- passport + copy
- notarized translation into Russian
- visa + copy (for countries with a visa regime)
- migration card + copy
- registration + copy

**Step 2:** 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. Alternatively, you may just visit the Universal document centre and undergo all the procedures at one place.

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

- passport + notarized translation into Russian
- visa + copy (for countries with a visa regime)
- 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 examination certificate 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.

##### **Please note:**

- *Fingerprinting and photographing must be done only once, but the medical certificate is valid for a year no matter how many times you cross the border with Russia;*
- *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.*

**IF YOU DO NOT ALREADY HAVE A BUDDY AND FEEL LIKE YOU COULD USE SOMEONE RUSSIAN-SPEAKING FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION AT THE CLINIC OR DOCUMENT CENTRE, YOU CAN [FILL IN THIS FORM.](#)**

## 5. Prolongation of permitted period of stay (a visa or migration card extension)

*Permitted Period of Stay – a period of time 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?

First and the most important – always keep an eye on the dates in your migration documents. You must submit the full package of documents to Visa and Immigration Support office as early as 3 months and **as late as 1 month** 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 your passport pages with marks** (1st page + all visas, stamps)
2. **original + printed copy of migration card** (except Belarus citizens)
3. **original + printed copy of last registration** under the actual address of stay
4. **HSE certificate of enrolment** with the faculty stamp (справка об обучении) – you may order and receive it in your study office
5. **extract from the HSE Enrolment Directive or copy of the HSE Enrolment Directive**
6. **printed copy of your commercial educational agreement with signatures and stamps** (all pages) – for those who study on a commercial basis.

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

First and the most important – always keep an eye on the dates in your migration documents. You must submit the full package of documents to Visa and Immigration Support office as early as 3 months and **as late as 45 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**
2. **printed copies of your passport pages with marks** (1st page + all visas, stamps)
3. **one color portrait photo 3x4 size**
4. **printed copy of migration card**
5. **original + copy of last registration** under the actual address of stay
6. **HSE certificate of enrolment** with the faculty stamp (справка об обучении) – you may order and receive it in your study office
7. **extract from the HSE Enrolment Directive or copy of the HSE Enrolment Directive**
8. **printed copy of your commercial educational agreement with signatures and stamps** (all pages) – for those who study on a commercial basis
9. **visa extension fee payment receipt in original** (1600 Rub) – email [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru) to receive the updated MIA bank details

### 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.*
- *Do not plan/take any international trips unless you receive a multi entry visa – you will not be able to return to Russia using the same single entry visa;*
- *Do not plan any trips around Russia for the period of visa prolongation, as your passport might be retained for several days during this time;*
- *Missing the extension deadline = returning home upon current visa / migration card expiration.*

## 6. Updating MIA registration

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

Within approximately 1,5 – 2 weeks from applying you will be notified by VISO that migration card/visa was prolonged and new registration under the HSE dormitory address issued by the MIA — pick them up right away and keep safe with you.

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

Within approximately 1 – 1,5 weeks from applying you will be notified by VISO that migration card/visa was prolonged — pick the document up right away and contact the property owner for new registration issuing. Please keep in mind the deadline: new registration must be issued **within 3 business days** since the extension is done. 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 and have applied for migration card/visa extension – what's next?

Within approximately 1 – 1,5 weeks from applying you will be notified by VISO that migration card/visa was prolonged — pick the document up right away and contact the hotel administrator for new registration issuing. As soon as you receive the registration original, send its scan (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 in-patient 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 apply for re-registration to HSE 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 fine you.*

## **7. Leaving and reentering Russia**

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

Before you leave Russia and go to other country for a vacation or any other purpose, 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 an email to [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru) with the dates of your departure and arrival.

### **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 any time 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.

### **What should I do if my visa expired while I was outside Russia?**

You will need a visa invitation to apply for a new visa. Please contact your programme manager to find out the procedure on receiving a visa invitation.

### **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 an email to [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru) with the arrival date.

While crossing the border make sure to receive a new migration card with «education» purpose of visit and obtain a new registration after that.



## 8. Completing the studies and post-graduation leave.

Upon successful completion of your studies at HSE University, you must leave Russia by the expiry date of your student visa/migration card. 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.*

## DOCUMENTS LOST/THEFT

### I have lost passport with Russian study visa

- Immediately report to a local Police department and inform the VISO via email [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru)
- Receive a Police reference confirming the loss or theft of particular documents
- Go to the consular section of the embassy of your citizenship country in order to get new passport issued.
- As your new passport is being issued, you will probably be provided with a temporary ID by the embassy.
- On a day of receiving your 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
- To obtain a new visa, you need to prepare and submit documents to VISO.
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**Please note:** The new visa should be drawn up before the expiration of the term of the visa in your lost passport and no later than 30 days from the date your new passport is issued.

- The new registration is needed to be obtained within 3 business days in accordance with [the instruction](#)

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

- Immediately report to a local Police department and inform the VISO via email [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru)
- Receive a Police reference confirming the loss or theft of particular documents
- Go to the consular section of the embassy of your citizenship country in order to get new passport issued.
- As your new passport is being issued, you will probably be provided with a temporary ID by the embassy.
- On a day of receiving your new passport, please inform the VISO via email [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru) and the manager of your program office by providing the scanned copy of your new passport first page.
- The new registration is needed to be obtained within 3 business days so if you live in the HSE dorm - visit VISO with originals and printed copies of your main migration documents, if you live in a private flat/hotel - contact the property owner/hotel administration.

### I have lost migration card

- Immediately report to a local Police department and inform the VISO via email [migrationspb@hse.ru](mailto:migrationspb@hse.ru)
- Receive a Police reference confirming the loss or theft of particular documents
- 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 replacement.
- On a day of receiving migration card replacement prepare and submit originals and printed copies of your main migration documents for the issue of a new registration with the VISO/property owner/hotel administration.

### I have lost registration

- Immediately report to a local Police department.
- Receive a Police reference confirming the loss or theft of particular documents.
- Prepare and submit originals and printed copies of your main migration documents as well as the police reference for the issue of a new registration with the VISO/property owner/hotel administration.

## LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY AND LIABILITY

- 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 HSE VISO before deadlines leads to the requirement to leave Russia and apply for a new visa at students' costs

## DOS AND DON'TS

1. Keep safe your critical documents: passport, visa, migration card, MIA registration slip and MIA ID card; always bear its copy with you.
2. Each time you enter Russia and receive a new migration card, immediately apply for new MIA registration to HSE VISO (dormitory residents)/your property owner/hotel administrator.
3. Demand and keep MIA registration from property owner / hotel each time you check in to a new place of residence in Russia.
4. Keep an eye on the expiration dates of your visa, migration card and MIA registration and respect prolongation deadlines.
5. Keep your contacts up to date and check your HSE email account daily - all important notifications will be there.
6. Make sure to read the Guide :)