



Immigration News

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GLOBAL IMMIGRATION HIGHLIGHTS – JULY 2026

★ UNITED KINGDOM INTRODUCES MAJOR CHANGES TO IMMIGRATION RULES

The UK Government unveiled a comprehensive Statement of Changes to the Immigration Rules (HC 259) on 9 July 2026, introducing amendments across more than 30 sections of the Immigration Rules. Key changes include updates to the Graduate Route, Family Migration, Visitor Rules, EU Settlement Scheme, and asylum procedures. Notably, children born in the UK to Graduate Visa holders will now be eligible to apply as Graduate dependants, while several procedural changes aim to simplify applications and improve consistency across visa categories. Most of these amendments came into force on 30 July and 3 August 2026, making it essential for applicants to understand the revised requirements before submitting an application.



★ EUROPE MOVES CLOSER TO SMARTER BORDER MANAGEMENT

European countries continued preparations for the rollout of the Entry/Exit System (EES), a digital border management system that will electronically record the entry and exit of non-EU travellers crossing the Schengen external borders. The system is expected to replace manual passport stamping, improve border security, and reduce identity fraud marking one of the most significant technological changes to European travel in recent years.

★ UNITED STATES ENDS "DURATION OF STATUS" FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

In one of the most significant U.S. immigration policy changes in recent years, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published a final rule on 17 July 2026 replacing the long-standing "Duration of Status (D/S)" system for F-1 academic students, J-1 exchange visitors, and I visa holders. Beginning 15 September 2026, most students and exchange visitors will be admitted for a fixed period of stay, generally up to four years, instead of remaining in the U.S. for the duration of their approved academic program. Those who need additional time to complete their studies or exchange program will generally be required to apply for an extension with USCIS before their authorized stay expires. The rule represents a significant shift in the administration of U.S. student and exchange visitor visas and is expected to affect universities, students, and educational institutions worldwide.



CANADA EXPRESS ENTRY SYSTEM

Authored by Adv. Saakshi Bhosale

Canada is one of the world's most popular destinations for skilled immigrants, offering excellent career opportunities, a high standard of living, quality healthcare, and a pathway to citizenship. To attract talented professionals from around the world, the Government of Canada introduced the Express Entry System, which is now the country's primary immigration pathway for skilled workers seeking permanent residence.



Unlike traditional immigration programs where applications were processed in the order they were received, Express Entry selects candidates based on their qualifications, skills, education, work experience, and language abilities. This allows Canada to invite applicants who are most likely to succeed in the Canadian labour market.

Canada's Express Entry system is an online, points-based immigration pathway designed to select skilled workers for permanent residence. Since its introduction in 2015, Express Entry has become Canada's principal immigration system for skilled workers because of its transparent, efficient, merit-based selection process and its ability to respond to the country's evolving economic and labour market needs. The Express Entry process begins by determining whether an applicant qualifies under one of Canada's federal economic immigration programs. Eligible applicants must complete an approved English or French language test and, where applicable, obtain an Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) for foreign educational qualifications. They then create an online Express Entry profile with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), providing details of their education, work experience, language proficiency, and other relevant qualifications. Based on this information, applicants are assigned a Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) score, and IRCC periodically invites the highest-ranking candidates to apply for permanent residence by issuing an Invitation to Apply (ITA).

After receiving an ITA, applicants must submit a complete permanent residence application with all required supporting documents, including police clearance certificates, medical examination results, and proof of settlement funds where applicable. IRCC reviews the application by verifying eligibility and conducting medical, criminality, and security assessments. If approved, the applicant is issued a Confirmation of Permanent Residence (COPR) and, upon completing the landing formalities in Canada, officially becomes a Canadian permanent resident with the right to live, work, and study anywhere in the country.

WHICH IMMIGRATION PROGRAMS USE EXPRESS ENTRY?



Express Entry manages applications for three major federal economic immigration programs:

1. Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP):

Designed for skilled professionals who have foreign work experience, education, and language proficiency.

2. Canadian Experience Class (CEC):

Designed for individuals who have already gained skilled work experience in Canada and wish to become permanent residents.

3. Federal Skilled Trades Program (FSTP):

Created for individuals working in eligible skilled trade occupations who meet the program's work experience and language requirements.

UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF U.S. VISA INTERVIEW AVAILABILITY

Authored by Adv. Rida F. Moledina

"Why is it taking so long to get a U.S. visa interview appointment?"



One of the most frequent concerns shared by applicants worldwide is the significant timeline required to secure a U.S. visa interview appointment. Whether travel is intended for corporate consultation, tourism, education, or family reunification, extended wait times have become a persistent global challenge.

While many applicants naturally concern themselves with whether these delays reflect an issue with their specific

case, the reality is that appointment availability is governed entirely by macro-level operational factors and strict regulatory frameworks, from domestic capacity constraints to an evolving geopolitical landscape.

STRUCTURAL DRIVERS OF THE APPOINTMENT BACKLOG

Unprecedented Global Demand:

High-volume regions, particularly India, continue to see exponential growth in application volumes. The sheer scale of B-1/B-2 visitor visa applications consistently outpaces the capacity of local consular posts.



Finite Institutional Capacity:

Every visa interview must legally be conducted individually by a commissioned U.S. Consular Officer. Daily capacity is naturally capped by the number of physical interview windows and available personnel required to evaluate eligibility under the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act.

Strategic Priority Mapping:

The U.S. Department of State prioritises visa categories tied to fixed academic terms or critical employment start dates, such as Student (F-1/J-1) and Work (H-1B/L-1) visas. Consequently, standard business and tourism categories experience longer queues.

Mandatory Security Frameworks: Comprehensive identity verification and background screenings remain paramount. Cases requiring additional administrative processing necessarily extend beyond standard timelines, as these security protocols cannot be bypassed or accelerated.

Geopolitical Disruptions: The Middle East Conflict Factor

Beyond these structural and administrative constraints, the escalating conflict in the Middle East has introduced an additional and unpredictable variable into global visa scheduling. Since early 2026, military hostilities involving Iran, Israel, and the United States have forced the closure or suspension of consular operations at multiple U.S. posts across the region, including missions that had previously absorbed overflow demand from neighbouring countries. Posts still functioning in the region, such as those in Egypt and Turkey, have consequently seen a surge in redirected applicants, further straining already limited appointment capacity.

Compounding this, a 2025 State Department policy requiring applicants to interview only at posts in their country of nationality or residence has closed off the option of seeking appointments abroad as a workaround, meaning applicants tied to conflict-affected posts must simply wait for those posts to resume normal operations.

Heightened security screening protocols introduced in response to the conflict have also extended processing times more broadly, even for applicants outside the immediate conflict zone, as consular resources are reallocated toward administrative processing and background verification.

For applicants and corporate sponsors alike, this underscores that visa scheduling today is shaped not only by routine demand and staffing limits, but also by a geopolitical landscape that can shift consular capacity with little advance notice.

Navigating a Dynamic Scheduling Environment

A common misconception is that interview slots are released on a fixed, predictable schedule. In reality, the consular appointment infrastructure is fluid, updating in real time based on shifting operational and geopolitical parameters. Inventory fluctuates constantly as embassies adjust staffing levels, open temporary capacity blocks, or process cancellations. Because the system is dynamic, calendar availability changes without notice, meaning dates that appear fully booked can suddenly open up.

A Strategic Approach to the Application Timeline

Navigating this environment successfully requires a shift from a reactive to a highly proactive approach. Rather than relying on rigid travel timelines, corporate and individual applicants benefit most by initiating the application process six to twelve months in advance of any anticipated travel. Treating the visa procurement process as a long-lead project, ensuring absolute document accuracy from the outset and maintaining long-term scheduling flexibility, is the most effective way to mitigate the impact of global backlogs and regional disruptions alike.

The Bottom Line

Extended wait times reflect systemic global demand, institutional priorities, and an evolving geopolitical landscape, not a negative indicator of an individual's eligibility. Understanding these operational mechanics allows applicants to set realistic corporate or personal expectations, plan with greater predictability, and approach the process with confidence.

Before we wrap up, here's something fun for our readers!



CROSSWORD PUZZLE ✈️

Visa, Immigration, UK, USCIS, Passport, Canada, OCI, Entry, Ontario, Biometrics, India, Greencard, Consulate, Visitor, USA.

A	L	U	P	J	W	X	H	N	O	I	A
S	B	M	V	A	O	V	R	P	J	B	C
V	A	C	N	W	S	I	Q	K	A	S	U
I	B	P	D	O	X	S	Y	I	C	F	S
S	C	R	Q	E	P	I	P	C	A	H	C
A	V	O	I	R	A	T	N	O	B	Y	I
R	D	B	Z	K	F	O	Q	Z	R	J	S
F	E	I	R	L	T	R	D	R	C	T	D
B	F	O	M	X	E	G	I	Q	S	L	B
I	M	M	I	G	R	A	T	I	O	N	E
G	G	E	S	F	Z	I	H	L	D	T	N
U	N	T	G	L	S	D	J	E	I	K	T
D	H	R	T	T	Y	N	W	T	E	J	R
G	I	I	U	M	X	I	K	S	F	I	Y
H	N	C	O	N	S	U	L	A	T	E	K
K	O	S	V	U	K	P	M	S	G	G	A
K	G	R	E	E	N	C	A	R	D	E	U