

HOW TO APPLY FOR STUDENT VISAS FOR THE CZECH REPUBLIC

rutland jezek, Czech immigration lawyers on student visa in the Czech Republic

Every year more and more students from different countries decide to study in the Czech Republic. A third country national who is not a Czech or EU national or a family member of a Czech or EU national, needs to obtain either a long-term visa or a long-term residence permit for the purpose of studies provided that he or she intends to stay temporarily in the Czech Republic for a period longer than 3 months. According to the Czech law, in order to demonstrate the purpose of stay, the definition of the term “studies” must be met. This definition includes secondary education, higher vocational schools, other higher educational establishments and universities as well as professional training facilities as specified by law.

When filing an application a third country national can choose between applying for Czech long-term visa and a long-term residence permit. The application for Czech visas or residence permits for the purpose of studies needs to be filed at the Czech embassy in the state of which the applicant is a citizen or in some cases, in the state in which the third country national has a long-term or permanent residence permit.

The embassy charges CZK 500 for accepting the application for a residence permit for the purpose of studies. The third country national will then pay additionally CZK 2,500 for the residence card in the Czech Republic (biometric residence card). Acceptance of an application for a long-term visa for the purpose of studies is exempt from a consular fee.

When applying for Czech long-term visa or a long-term resident permit for the purpose of studies the applicant will need two photographs, a travel document, such as a passport, and a document confirming the purpose of the stay in the Czech Republic, particularly confirmation of enrolment into studies. Furthermore, a proof of accommodation, such as lease agreement, and a proof of funds to cover the stay in the Czech Republic by account statement or otherwise are also required. Providing that the Czech visa is granted the applicant will also have to submit a document on travel medical insurance for the period of stay in the Czech Republic. Travel medical insurance is not required from applicants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Japan, Yemen, Cuba, Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.

After the application is filed, the embassy is authorized to interview the applicant. The applicant needs to be prepared for any question regarding his intended stay, his studies or his person. These questions could relate to private life as well as to the details of everyday life in the Czech Republic. Therefore, efficient documentation and effective presentation is the key for success for any Czech visa interview. In case the applicant is accepted to a non-state school, it is advisable also to prepare introduction of the school. Afterwards, the applicant and the interviewer will sign the protocol regarding the interview which includes information about the applicant and the interview.

The processing of an application for Czech visa has a time-limit of 90 days from filing the application, while the processing of an application for a resident permit has a time-limit of 60 days from filing the application. However, in particularly complicated cases the time-limit may be extended to 120 days from filing the application.

Providing that the applicant intends to study in the Czech Republic for a longer period than 6 months it is advisable to apply for a long-term residence permit straight away at the Czech

embassy. This option is available only for applicants-students, while other applicants with a different purpose of stay are required to file an application for Czech long-term 6 months visa first.

Since the applicants-students have this option we strongly recommend filing the application for the long-term residence permit when their purpose of stay is to study in the Czech Republic. There are two basic advantages of application for Czech long-term residence permit. Firstly, in case the residence permit is not issued, the applicant is granted judicial protection, since he or she can file an action to the court questioning the negative administrative decision. Secondly, the applicant avoids further administrative procedures when applying for a long-term residence permit with respect to the expiration of Czech long-term visa.

A long-term visa is issued with a validity period of only 6 months or a stay period corresponding to the documents provided. A period of stay in the Czech Republic that is shorter than the validity of the long-term visa can be repeatedly extended under the condition that the purpose for granting the visa is still the same, at most, however, until the visa expires.

If a third country national with Czech long-term visa intends to study in the Czech Republic for a longer period than six months, he/she must then apply for Czech long-term residence permit, providing that the purpose of the stay is still the same. This application for a long-term residence permit following up on a long term visa for the same purpose or also an application to extend current long-term residence permit could be filed at the Ministry of Interior offices in the Czech Republic according to the applicant's place of residence (not at the Czech embassy).

Application for a long-term residence permit following up on a long-term visa has to be filed not earlier than 90 days and not later than 14 days prior to expiration of a long-term visa. This application must be filed personally and it cannot be sent by post.

Czech long-term residence permit (in general) can be repeatedly extended providing that the purpose of stay is the same. This application for extension of long-term residence permit is filed at the Ministry of Interior offices in the Czech Republic according to the applicant's place of residence. In case a holder of a long-term residence permit for the purpose of studies wants to change the purpose for e.g. employment, he/she must apply for a new long-term residence permit (not for an extension), which must be also filed personally.

Within 3 working days of entering the Czech Republic, all non-EU students arriving to receive a long-term residence permit are obliged to report to the Ministry of Interior office in person for the purpose of carrying out activities associated with issuing a biometric residence card and to report their arrival.

Non-EU students arriving on a long-term visa for the purpose of studies will not receive a biometric card; therefore, their only responsibility after arrival is to report within 3 days from arrival to the Foreign Police, unless their accommodation provider does it for them.