

## **Business travel to India on a short notice? Get your urgent business visa**

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If you are an individual or a company who is engaged in a business relationship with India and need to travel to India, you will need a visa to travel if you are not an Indian resident. Normally a visa could take a few days but if due to some urgent business, you need to travel to India on a short notice, it is now possible since last year to get a business visa from the Indian embassy in a day's time.

### **Who needs a visa for India?**

All foreign nationals, or non-Indians, except nationals of Nepal and Bhutan, need a visa to travel to India.

### **When can you get a business visa for India?**

As the name suggests, a business visa is granted to those who wish to conduct any business in India. The activities or purpose of visit maybe to carry out a sales or marketing trip, establish business affiliations or contacts in India, or to attend any business meetings. Seminars or conferences on behalf of their business entity or company as the case may be.

### **What is the validity of a business visa?**

Generally business visas are valid for no more than six months but sometimes visas are also issued for a year, depending on the circumstances and requirements of the visit. The visa may be for single entry or with multiple entry rights. However, regardless of the duration of the visa, a person is entitled to stay only for a maximum period of 180 days during a visit. This period begins from the issue date and not the date of entry of the person in India.

### **Does a business visa grant employment rights in India?**

Please note that a business visa does not entitle a person to work for any Indian company or earn any income through work in India. If you wish to work or earn a living in India, you would need to apply for an Employment visa. Business visa is specifically granted to facilitate business activities or connections and meetings as stated above.

### **What is Urgent Business Visa?**

The Indian Embassy has since last year started the Fast Track Business Visa to enable urgent business travel for UK based companies to send their employees/ directors to India at a short notice for business reasons. However, the person must be eligible for a normal business visa under the Indian visa rules to be able to get an urgent business visa. It is issued by the Indian authorities on the same working day after 5 pm.

### **Documentation requirements**

The applicant must submit the following documents along with visa application form before the visa application centre:

- A valid passport with a period of a minimum of 190 days left
- Visa fee. (Currently it is about 67 pounds for a 6-months visa and about 92 pounds for a 12-months visa)
- Two recent photographs of the applicant as per the specifications issued.
- A letter from the company on the official company letter head setting out the nature and purpose of the visit along with the duration of stay and the nature of business to be covered during the trip. This letter must be signed by the Director or a designated official of the company authorised to do so.
- A letter of invitation from an Indian company also on official company letter head specifying the purpose of the person's visit to India and also the duration of the visa requested. (Both the above letters must be addressed to the High Commission of India and its Consulate.)

Apart from the above documents which are required for a normal business visa, the following documents must be submitted for urgent business visa:

- A letter from sponsoring company or entity in UK on the official letter head explaining in detail the exact nature of the applicant's business, the reasons for urgent travel to India and the duration of stay.
- The letter must also specify the validity of the visa requested, the places for visit in the country, the itinerary and names and addresses of organisations to be visited during the stay.
- The company must also provide a guarantee and undertake to meet the applicant's maintenance expenses during the period of stay in India.
- A letter from the sponsoring organisation in India on its official business letterhead setting out the things specified above.
- In case of applicants who are non-UK citizens and non-Indians, they must submit their proof of residence in the UK for the last two years. This may include a utility bill-water, gas, electricity or council tax bill.
- The proof of residence will also include the visa or stamp of indefinite stay as also any tenancy agreement if staying as tenant in the case of those applicants applying on their country passport, which is not Indian or British.

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