

STUDENTS REQUIRING VISAS

I need a Visa – What Do I do first?

To avoid any unnecessary expense, do not make a formal application for a Visa until we have told you that your DTS Application has been accepted. But do feel free to make any preliminary enquiries you think are necessary to obtain one as quickly as possible after we tell you.

What information will I need?

Unfortunately we cannot give you any detailed advice about what information Visa Departments will need because requirements vary depending on the location (country) of the British Embassy or High Commission (particularly in some African and East European countries).

Past experience suggests that you may need to be able to convince the Visa Department in your country that:-

- your request for a Visa is genuine (you may need a reference from your Bishop, Parish Priest or other local dignitary);
- you have a reliable sponsor (they may need to produce bank statements to support your Visa application);
- you are able to support yourself while in the UK and can pay your own travel expenses (you may need to produce evidence of this, e.g. bank statements);
- you intend to return after the DTS (and that there is no risk that you will abscond while resident in the UK).

What information will the Sion Community provide?

We cannot give you detailed advice about what information Visa Departments may want because their requirements will vary from country to country. This means that you will need to find out what information they may require and how we are to provide it.

Again past experience suggests that this may take the form of a signed letter of introduction or invitation from the Sion Community specifying:-

- why and when you are traveling to the UK;
- that we are satisfied as to your 'bona fides' and have obtained reliable references for you;
- that you will not be a burden on the UK taxpayer while you are here;
- that you have adequate insurance cover in the event of accident or illness

What other practical steps can I take?

Remember that in some countries, the procedures for obtaining a Visa may be lengthy and time consuming. Some countries will handle Visa applications in more than one location

and while one of these may be conveniently close to your home, it is possible that another office may be able to deal with your application more quickly and efficiently.

Remember also however, that you are the only person in a position to find out this information but be aware that you may not be able to choose where you apply and the Visa Department may well insist that you make your application at a specific location.

Keeping the Sion Community informed

Make the necessary arrangements as quickly as you can at all stages and keep the Sion Community informed of your progress at regular intervals.

The importance of establishing good contact points

When contacting officials in Visa Departments, find out their names, email addresses and fax numbers and also ascertain if they will accept letters of invitation etc from the Sion Community by fax or email or if these must be sent by Airmail.

Disclaimer

Because the procedures for obtaining Visas differ so widely from country to country it is perhaps not surprising that the Sion Community cannot accept responsibility for a refusal to issue a Visa or for any difficulties you may experience in this connection but we will do all we can to help you within the rules and regulations.