



US visa: Average wait time up to 500 days, appointment date in 2024; check waiting time in your cities here

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Are you planning a trip to the US? But what if the visa appointment date comes next year. Yes, Indians will have to wait until 2024 to successfully book a visitor visa appointment. With the easing of COVID restrictions and resumption of regular international flights, many Indians are gearing up to travel abroad.

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As per the US Department of State travel [Travel.State.Gov](https://travel.state.gov) website, the appointment for visitor visa in the US consulate at New Delhi is 582 calendar days and 471 days for student visas. In Mumbai, the average wait time for a US visa appointment is 517 Calendar days for a visitor visa and 10 days for a student visa. In Hyderabad, the average wait time for a US visa appointment is 518 Calendar days for a visitor visa and 479 days for a student visa. In Kolkata, the average wait time for a US visa appointment is 587 Calendar days for a visitor visa and 2 days for a student visa. In Chennai, the average wait time for a US visa appointment is 513 Calendar days for a visitor visa and 8 days for a student visa.

David Bier, associate director of immigration policy at the libertarian Cato Institute told VOA news that the two-year, pandemic-induced lockdown of US consulates around the world has halted visa services.

“They just stopped doing work during COVID. And that produced what we're seeing now, which is year-plus waits, massive backlogs and all the problems associated with that,” he told VOA. Though wait times vary significantly from consulate to consulate, Bier said, “it is the worst it's ever been since 9/11.”

Apart from the US, visa application and processing are taking a long time for other countries like UK, Schengen states, Canada etc.

As per the Government of Canada website, Canada currently has a waiting time of 158 days for visitor visa. The website also says, “This processing time does not include the time it takes to send

an application between a visa application centre and our office and the time you need to give your biometrics."

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For example, visa processing time in the UK has risen to four to ten weeks. Germany has stopped taking permanent stay visas.

Earlier on 30 May, 2022, Danish Embassy in India announced the temporary suspension of applications for short-stay visas and residence permits, which was opened again on 6 July.

Meanwhile, UK will soon resume start the Priority Visa (PV) and Super Priority Visa (SPV) services for new applications under the sponsored work routes and student visas.

The announcement was released via the official Twitter account of the British High Commission in India on 12 August. According to the statement, the High Commission expects a high volume of applicants in the coming weeks and advised students to begin submitting their applications as soon as possible, since gathering the necessary documents can take some time.

On the same day, the UK High Commissioner to India, Alex Ellis apologised for the massive delays faced by those applying for a UK visa from India. In the video message on Twitter, he said, "Most of you are getting visas to go to the UK within 15 working days, but there is a long tail of complex cases which are taking much longer. "

He further apologised the ones who were affected by the delays. He also why the delays are happening, he said, "First, because of the unprecedented surge in demand for UK visas post-Covid. Secondly, because of global events, particularly the Russian invasion of Ukraine." He further added the plan of action by bringing more resources and they are training more people and are keeping open the priority visa service.

He further advised saying, "Don't commit to your air tickets until you have got your visa to be on the safe side. We want to see an unprecedented number of Indian students coming to the UK this year and we will do everything we can to make sure that you get your visa on time. But again, follow the guidance to the letter."

Recently, Visa facilitating agency VFS Global spokesperson told Live Mint that, "With the opening up of the international border and the resumption of flights to these countries, there has been an unprecedented uptick in outbound travel demand. Moreover, due to the COVID outbreak, many students and working professionals had returned to India; and as countries are opening up again, they are planning on getting back to those countries. "As a result, we are experiencing high volumes of visa applications coupled with limited appointment availability and stretched visa processing timelines from India."

Apart from this, following the COVID outbreak, some countries have tightened the rule for granting visas. The processing now involves a few more checks, for example, verification of the vaccination certificates.

Hinting there is no immediate solution, VFS Global said, "We have been urging visa customers to apply early to avoid last-minute rush." The agency also said they are unable to provide further details regarding the visa processing timeline as "Information regarding the same is provided by respective client governments on their websites.

In June 2022, The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had discussion with Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, New Zealand, Poland, UK and USA about streamlining student visas to Indian nationals.