

Visa Service Process

Receiving a visa is a two-step process that normally takes up to two weeks to complete:

1. Apply for and acquire a Letter of Invitation (LOI) from AEI Saudi in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).
2. Submit the LOI along with other visa paperwork to the Royal Saudi Embassy/Consulate in the applicant's country of application.

Letter of Invitation (LOI)

The first step (getting an LOI) is done in KSA by AEI. This process usually takes about three working days, but this cannot be guaranteed. The following information must be provided to AEI for the LOI process, and can be submitted through our [online visa form](#):

- **Passport Scan:** The applicant must have a valid passport with at least six months remaining validity and it must have at least two adjacent empty pages. AEI will need a copy of the photo page of this passport.
- **Employment Details:** The applicant's employment details will be needed, including the name of the company, description of the company activity, job title and the purpose of visit. In most countries it is a requirement of the Royal Saudi Embassy that the employer company is a locally registered entity in the country of application.
- **Visa Type:** There are two types of visits: Commercial (aka Business) and Work. Commercial/Business visit visas are intended for business meetings and market exploration carried out by company executives, business development managers and other similar roles. Work visit visas are for engineers, technicians, specialists, consultants, lawyers and other such positions and are intended for short term work visits on projects.
- **Duration of visa:** The duration of visa requested must be stated on the LOI request form. **N.B.** Regardless of what AEI requests, ultimately what is issued is the decision of the Royal Saudi Embassy or Consulate in the country of application. The Embassy has the authority to change the visa duration during the application process.
- **Residency Permit:** If the applicant is not applying in their home country then they must possess a residency permit for the country of application and we will require a copy of this. This applies especially to those applying for a visa through Saudi Embassies/Consulates in GCC countries such as the UAE.
- **For female applicants:** AEI will have to acquire formal approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in order to proceed with the LOI application. The process differs from the process for male applicant visas and it can take up to 10 working days to receive an update or the approval from the MoFA.

Important Note: The LOI provided by AEI for male applicants is not the additional 'pre-approval' from the Saudi MoFA. This 'pre-approval' is sometimes required *at the discretion of the Saudi Embassy/Consulate* and cannot be provided by AEI.

Letter of Introduction (LOIntro)

The Letter of Introduction is a cover letter from the applicant's company for the visa application. It introduces the applicant and their company to the Royal Saudi Embassy/Consulate and requests a visa be granted. A template of this document can be provided by AEI. The LOIntro must be completed with all the required details and then printed on the applicant's company letterhead, signed by an authorised person and then submitted with the visa application. The details written on the LOIntro must be consistent with those written on the LOI.

Applying for the visa

This part of the process is not the responsibility of AEI, however we will provide as much assistance as we can. In most countries, the Royal Saudi Embassy/Consulate accepts visa applications only through an authorised agent. In such cases the applicant will need to contact an authorised visa agent in their country, and send the LOI, LOIntro, visa application form (provided by the visa agent), original passport and two standard passport-size personal photographs to the agent. The agent will then submit the visa application to the local Saudi Embassy/Consulate. It takes anywhere from three to 10 working days for a visa to be processed at the Embassy/Consulate. The Embassy/Consulate can reject the visa application altogether with or without providing any reason, and they can also ask for additional paperwork such as the pre-approval for a male applicant, as mentioned above.

Duration & Stay

Visa validity starts from the date the visa is issued. It is important to note that there is a difference between the *visa* validity and the *stay* duration. For further details on the difference between the two, please see the document *Visit to KSA - Important Info*, linked [here](#).

The validity of a single-entry visa is 90 days with a single stay duration from 14 days up to 90 days. For multiple entry visas, depending on nationality, the total visa duration ranges from 180 days up to 1825 days. A visa holder cannot enter the Kingdom outside of this validity. The stay duration on a multiple entry visit visa depends on visa type, duration and nationality, and it ranges from 30 days up to 180 days. It is important to note that a visa holder is not permitted to stay in KSA beyond the allotted stay duration; they must exit the country before the stay duration is over and then re-enter to restart the stay duration.

The visa holder is solely responsible for charges incurred for overstaying the allowed stay duration. AEI must be kept apprised of the result of any visa application, as well as the visa holder's planned entry and exit from the Kingdom and any security issues faced during their stay.

N.B. in any case, what is requested on visa application paperwork (LOI, LOIntro, visa form) does not guarantee the outcome of the application from the Embassy/Consulate.