

Dear All,

One of the big problems after Covid has been the sudden surge in student education visas and travel surge. Because the world was closed and the visa process is a physical process, we are seeing huge delays. This will impact many admissions to universities in USA, Canada, UK, and Europe. The delays in US visas in India is about 500 plus days depending on the city. So, this means the student loses nearly two years. This is something no one imagined would happen. The backlog for Canada globally is 2.4 million.

Here's my learnings on this topic:

1. Visas as a travel document were introduced after World War 1. Before that, you could go anywhere in the world and the entry port immigration officer had the right to allow you into the country or turn you back.
2. Visas are common today; a visa is an official country document that allows the bearer to legally enter a foreign country.
3. Visa in Latin means 'paper that has been seen'
4. There are block visas where one visa allows you to enter a range of countries – like Schengen, like central American visa, and in a future world, people expect an ASEAN visa, a GCC visa, An east Africa visa.
5. There are countries that require you to have a transit visa, even if you are just connecting to another flight in the airport. UK is an example.
6. There are countries where visa is given for a city and not for the country, Pakistan and India give each other visa by city, and if you go out of the city then you are violating the rules.
7. Getting a visa is no guarantee that you will be allowed into the country. The immigration officer has the final say and can turn you back for any good reason.
8. In 2006 they Henley Passport Index (HPI) started which measured the travel freedom of country passports. This was rejigged in 2018.
9. The 2022 Henley passport index makes interesting reading. Here's the table of visa free travel by country passport for 199 countries:

RANK	COUNTRY passport	Number of countries where visa is not needed
1	Japan	193
2	Singapore	192
2	South Korea	192
3	Germany	190
	UK	187
	USA	186
	Turkey	110
	China	80
	Thailand	79
	Indonesia	72
	India	60
109	Syria	29
110	Iraq	28
111	Afghanistan	26

10. Countries have different reasons to exempt a visa from a country. These rules change from time to time and event to event.

For the sake of the global students, I hope that the visa process for USA, Canada, UK etc. gets resolved, else they will lose a year or two or the University must think of an innovation of accepting credits from a previous university/or a collaborative university.

Enjoy

Shiv