

Skilled Work Visa Guidance and Information

August 2023

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Skilled Worker Visa

Overview

The Skilled Worker visa route is the main immigration route for overseas nationals who wish to work in the UK (including UK waters). It allows UK-based employers to recruit overseas workers to fill a wide range of skilled vacancies in the UK. This visa has replaced the Tier 2 (General) work visa.

Skilled workers can bring their family members (partner and children) to the UK and can apply to settle in the UK after 5 years' continuous lawful residence.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a Skilled Worker visa, you must:

- Work for or have a job offer from the University of Greenwich (The university is a Home Office approved UK employer)
- Have a "Certificate of Sponsorship" (CoS) from the university with information about the role you have been offered in the UK
- Do a job that is on the list of eligible occupations
- Be paid a minimum salary - how much depends on the type of work you do

Specific eligibility rest on your job.

Knowledge of English

You must be able to speak, read, write and understand English. You will be required to prove your knowledge of English when you apply for a Skilled Worker Visa.

How long you can stay

The Skilled Worker Visa can allow you to stay for the period the university proposes to employ you, up to a maximum of 5 years.

If you apply for a Skilled Worker Visa and as part of your visa application, if points are claimed for being a new entrant, the maximum period you can stay is 4 years (including time already spent in the UK as a new entrant on the Skilled Worker or Tier 2 (General) routes, or on the Graduate route). You will need to apply to extend or update your visa when it expires or if you change jobs or employer.

If you want to stay longer in the UK

You can apply to extend your visa as many times as you like as long as you still meet the eligibility requirements.

After 5 years, you may be able to apply to settle permanently in the UK (also known as indefinite leave to remain). This will give you the right to live, work and study in the UK for as long as you like and apply for benefits if you are eligible.

How to apply

How you apply depends on whether you are:

- Outside the UK and are coming to the UK

You will need to complete a Skilled Worker Application Form by following the instructions via the link below:

https://apply-to-visit-or-stay-in-the-uk.homeoffice.gov.uk/sort/start/skilled_worker_out_uk

The application form will walk you through the process and you should ensure that details in relation to your personal details and employment match those on your Certificate of Sponsorship.

Your dependants will have to complete their own application if they are eligible and apply separately through the link below:

Dependant partner/spouse:

https://apply-to-visit-or-stay-in-the-uk.homeoffice.gov.uk/sort/start/pbs_dependant_partner_out_uk

Dependant children:

[GOV.UK - The best place to find government services and information](https://gov.uk)
(apply-to-visit-or-stay-in-the-uk.homeoffice.gov.uk)

The Skilled Worker application will need to be made first as the application will generate your application reference number starting with “GWF”, which will then need to be added to your dependants’ online application form when your dependants’ online application forms are created. Please also ensure that you enter your Certificate of Sponsorship details at the same time.

If an application is made from outside the UK, they must obtain entry clearance (a visa) in the relevant route before they come to the UK. The only exception to this is where the worker is eligible to enter the UK under the [Creative Worker visa concession](#).

If a worker tries to enter the UK without the required entry clearance, they will be refused entry, even if they meet all of the other requirements of the Rules.

<https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa/knowledge-of-english>

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workers-and-temporary-workers-guidance-for-sponsors-part-2-sponsor-a-worker/workers-and-temporary-workers-guidance-for-sponsors-part-2-sponsor-a-worker-general-information-accessible#After_you_have

- Inside the UK and extending your current visa or switching from a different visa

You will need to complete a Skilled Worker Application Form by following the instructions via the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa/extend-your-visa>

The application form will walk you through the process and you should ensure that details in relation to your personal details and employment match those on your Certificate of Sponsorship.

You can add your dependants on the same visa application if they are eligible. Please ensure that your dependants have verified their information prior to you submitting the visa application.

If you want to change your job or employer, you must apply to update your visa.

How long it takes

You can apply for a Skilled Worker Visa up to 3 months before the day you are due to start work at the university in the UK. This date is listed on your certificate of sponsorship.

As part of your application, you will need to prove your identity and provide your documents.

You may need to allow extra time if you need an appointment to do this. You will find out if you need one when you start your application.

Getting a decision

Once you have applied online, proved your identity and provided your documents, you will usually get a decision on your visa within:

- 3 weeks, if you are outside the UK
- 8 weeks, if you are inside the UK

You may be able to pay to get a faster decision. How you do this depends on whether you are outside the UK or inside the UK.

How much it costs

You, your partner or children will each need to:

- Pay the application fee
- Pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) in order to be granted access to the UK National Health Service (NHS).
The cost of IHS is £624.00 per person per year who is aged 18 or over at the date of the application and £470 per year for any dependant who is under the age of 18 at the date of the application. You can find an overview of the IHS here: <https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application>
- Prove you have enough personal savings - This will be on your Certificate of Sponsorship. If your maintenance has been certified by the university on your Certificate of Sponsorship, you will not require any additional documentation for this purpose. If your maintenance has not been certified, you will need to evidence funds of at least £1,270 for yourself (£285 for your partner, £315 for first child, £200 for each additional child) held for 28 days and dated within 31 days before application date.

What you can and cannot do

With a Skilled Worker Visa, you can:

- Work in an eligible job
- Study
- Bring your partner and children with you as your dependant if they are eligible
- Take on additional work in certain circumstances
- Do voluntary work
- Travel abroad and return to the UK
- Apply to settle permanently in the UK (also known as indefinite leave to remain) if you have lived in the UK for 5 years and meet the other eligibility requirements

You cannot:

- Apply for most benefits (public funds), or the State Pension
- Change jobs or employer unless you apply to update your visa

If your application is successful, you will get a full list of what you can and cannot do with a Skilled Worker visa.

Certificate of Sponsorship

The University of Greenwich will issue a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) to applicants when satisfied that the staff member or candidate has score 70 “point” to be eligible and has provided all the required documents. The CoS is an electronic record, not a physical document. Each certificate has its own number which a worker can use to apply for a visa.

When the Staff Visa Compliance Team assign the CoS, the CoS must be used within 3 months to apply for the Skilled Worker Visa. Please note, you cannot apply for the Skilled Worker Visa more than 3 months before the start date of the job listed on the certificate.

Assigning a Certificate of Sponsorship

Once the Staff Visa Compliance Team has confirmed that the applicant has met the points required, they will send a draft Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) form to the applicant. The applicant must confirm the information on the draft CoS form is correct as incorrect information could lead to a rejection of their visa application.

The documents listed below will be required before the Staff Visa Compliance Team assign a CoS to any candidate, where applicable.

- a) Current Passport
- b) Qualification Certificate or unique Ecctis reference number (formerly unique UK NARIC reference number) if your qualification is from outside the UK
- c) ATAS Certificate (if applicable)
- d) English Language (Qualification certificate or test results reference or GCSE or A Level)
- e) Overseas Criminal Record Certificate (if applicable)
- f) Tuberculosis Test Results (if applicable)

The Staff Visa Compliance Team will only assign a CoS with the relevant CoS number needed to make the visa application once they have received all the relevant documentation including that which is mandatory or essential in the advert and job description.

The CoS assigned will be ‘Defined’ or ‘Undefined’:

- a) ‘Defined’ – for applicants applying from outside of the UK, the Staff Visa Compliance Team apply for a defined COS via the Sponsor Management System (SMS) and once approved by the Home Office a CoS is assigned.
- b) ‘Undefined’ – for applicants applying from within the UK. This can be assigned by the Staff Visa Compliance Team at any time.

The Staff Visa Compliance Team will provide the applicant with confirmation of the CoS, which they should use to apply for their visa. The Staff Visa Compliance Team will maintain contact with the applicant until their visa application has been successful and their right to work approved. It is important that applicants let the Staff Visa Compliance Team know when their visa has been granted and if outside the UK their expected date of travel. The Staff Visa Compliance Team must inform UKVI if the applicant will be starting work more than 28 days later than the date set out on the CoS.

Points requirement

All applicants on the Skilled Worker route must score 70 ‘points’ to be eligible. This includes 50 points for mandatory or ‘non-tradeable’ criteria, and 20 points for ‘tradeable’ criteria.

The mandatory criteria are set out in the table below. All applicants on the Skilled Worker route must score 50 points from this table:

Points type	Description	Points available
Sponsorship	The applicant must have a valid Certificate of Sponsorship for the job they are planning to do. The job must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be a genuine role • meet the rules on working for a third party (if relevant) • comply with the National Minimum Wage and Working Time Regulations 	20
Job at an appropriate skill level	The job must be in an eligible occupation and (where relevant) meet the ATAS requirement – see Skill level for further information.	20
English language	The applicant must have English language skills at level B1 or higher on the Common European Framework of Reference for language in all 4 components (speaking, listening, reading, writing), as specified in Appendix English Language. For more information on English language, please visit https://www.gov.uk/english-language	10

In addition to scoring 50 points for the above criteria, you must also score 20 ‘tradeable’ points based on:

- salary; and
- other criteria, such as relevant academic qualifications held, work is in the shortage occupation or an eligible health or education occupation, or because you are a 'new entrant' to the UK's labour market

Tradeable Points

On the Skilled Worker Visa, you can score tradeable points for your salary and other attributes, such as having a relevant PhD or working in a shortage occupation.

You must score 20 points for salary and other attributes from the table below. You can score points against only one option in this table.

Option	Requirements
A: salary only	The applicant's salary equals or exceeds all of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £26,200 per year • the going rate for the occupation code; and • £10.75 per hour
B: relevant PhD	PhD in a subject relevant to the job and the applicant's salary equals or exceeds all of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £23,580 per year • 90% of the going rate for the occupation code; and • £10.75 per hour
C: relevant STEM PhD	PhD in a Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) subject relevant to the job and the applicant's salary equals or exceeds all of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £20,960 per year • 80% of the going rate for the occupation code; and • £10.75 per hour
D: shortage occupation	Job in a listed shortage occupation and the applicant's salary equals or exceeds all of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £20,960 per year • 80% of the going rate for the occupation code, for occupations where a going rate is specified; and • £10.75 per hour
E: new entrant	Applicant is a new entrant to the labour market and their salary equals or exceeds all of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £20,960 per year • 70% of the going rate for the occupation code; and • £10.75 per hour
F: listed health or education occupation	Job in a listed health or education occupation and the applicant's salary equals or exceeds both:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £20,960 per year; and • the going rate for the occupation code
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For more information on going rate and occupation code, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-skilled-occupations>

For the list of shortage occupation, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-shortage-occupation-list>

ATAS Requirement

Before assigning the CoS the Staff Visa Compliance Team will check whether the applicant needs an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) Certificate. The applicant may be required to apply for an ATAS Certificate if they are an academic researcher, conducting research under one of the relevant course codes at PhD level and are applying for a Skilled Worker visa.

If an individual is already conducting research in the UK or they were a visitor conducting research in the UK before the requirement for ATAS certificates was introduced on 21 May 2021 and are continuing this research, they do not need to apply for an ATAS certificate. They will need to apply if this is the case and are extending their sponsorship.

The Staff Visa Compliance Team will do the following: a) Check that the worker needs an ATAS Certificate b) Confirm if this is the case on the CoS. c) If an ATAS Certificate is required, tell the applicant that they need to apply for one and include it in their visa application. The Staff Visa Compliance Team will not assign a COS without an ATAS certificate. d) Keep a copy of the ATAS Certificate, once it has been issued.

The applicant must do the following: a) Apply for an ATAS Certificate if they are advised to by the Staff Visa Compliance Team. b) Note that ATAS Applications can take 2-3 weeks to be processed but on occasion take up to 8 weeks. c) Include this in their visa application. d) If the worker does not include the ATAS certificate, their visa application will be refused.

Before the University issue a CoS to a Skilled Worker, the Staff Visa Compliance team will check and confirm whether the worker or candidate needs to apply for an Academic Approval Technology Scheme (ATAS) certificate from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office before the Skilled Worker can start (or continue) working for the University.

An ATAS certificate is required if all of the following are true:

- the University licensed as a Student sponsor

- the worker is not an exempt national
- the worker is sponsored on a relevant occupation code
- the work involves research at PhD level or above in relevant subject area

If an ATAS certificate is required, the Staff Visa Compliance Team will encourage the Skilled Worker to apply for one as soon as possible, as a copy of the certificate will be required with the application for entry clearance or permission to stay. If failed to do so, the Home Office will refuse the application and the university may lose its sponsor licence (or licences).

Please see the below link for more information:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme>

To check whether you need an ATAS Certificate, please see the below link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-out-if-you-require-an-atas-certificate>

New Entrant

An applicant can score 20 points under this option if they meet all of the following:

- They are being sponsored for a job in an appropriate eligible occupation code listed in Table 1 of Appendix Skilled Occupations
- They meet one of the ‘new entrant’ criteria set out below; and
- Their salary is equal to or exceeds all of:
 - £20,960 per year
 - 70% of the going rate for the relevant occupation code; and
 - £10.75 per hour.

To meet the ‘new entrant’ criteria, the applicant must meet one of the following requirements:

- The applicant is under the age of 26 on the date they will apply for entry clearance or permission to stay
- The job offer is a postdoctoral position in any of the following occupation codes:
 - 2111 Chemical scientists
 - 2112 Biological scientists and biochemists
 - 2113 Physical scientists
 - 2114 Social and humanities scientists
 - 2119 Natural and social science professionals not elsewhere classified
 - 2311 Higher education teaching professionals
- The job offer is in a UK Regulated Profession and the applicant is working towards a recognised professional qualification for that profession

- The applicant is working towards full registration or chartered status with the relevant professional body for the job they are being sponsored for
- The application is being made in the UK and the applicant's most recent permission was as a Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) Migrant
- The applicant's most recent permission, other than as a Visitor, was on the Graduate route and that permission is either current or expired less than 2 years before the date of application; or
- The applicant's most recent permission, other than as a Visitor, was as a Student (including as a Tier 4 (General) Student) and they meet the additional requirements below

Additional requirements for those last granted as a Student

Where the applicant's last grant of permission (other than as a Visitor) was as a Student (or on the Tier 4 (General) route in place before 5 October 2020), they must meet all of the following conditions to qualify under the new entrant option:

- that permission must either be current or have expired less than 2 years before the date of application
- in that permission (or any previous permission as a Student or a Tier 4 (General) Student), the applicant was sponsored to study any of the following:
 - a UK bachelor's degree or a UK master's degree
 - a UK PhD or other doctoral qualification
 - a Postgraduate Certificate in Education
 - a Professional Graduate Diploma of Education
- the applicant:
 - Has completed the relevant course mentioned above
 - Is applying no more than 3 months before they are expected to complete the relevant course above; or
 - Is studying a PhD and has completed at least 12 months' study in the UK towards that PhD
 - The applicant must be studying, or have studied, one of the courses listed above – equivalent-level qualifications are not acceptable.

Prospective employees holding Tier 2/Skilled Worker visa with another employer

Where an individual who already holds a Tier 2 or Skilled Worker visa with a different employer is made a job offer from University of Greenwich, the individual **must** be issued a new Certificate of Sponsorship by the University and apply for a new Skilled Worker Visa.

Level of English

You must prove you can read, write, speak and understand English to at least level B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale.

You can prove your knowledge of English by:

- Passing a Secure English Language Test (SELT) from an approved provider
- Having a GCSE, A level, Scottish National Qualification level 4 or 5, Scottish Higher or Advanced Higher in English, gained through study at a UK school that you began when you were under 18
- Having a degree-level academic qualification that was taught in English - if you studied abroad, you will need to apply through ECCTIS (formerly UK NARIC) for confirmation that your qualification is equivalent to a UK bachelor's degree, master's degree or PhD

Please use the following link to check whether you do **NOT** need to prove your knowledge of English Language:

<https://www.gov.uk/english-language/exemptions>

Tuberculosis tests

You will need to have a tuberculosis (TB) test if you are coming to the UK for more than 6 months and either:

- You live in any of [these listed countries](#)
- You have lived in any of these listed countries in the past 6 months

You will be given a chest x-ray to test for TB. If the result of the x-ray is not clear you may also be asked to give a sputum sample (phlegm coughed up from your lungs).

If your test shows that you do not have TB, you will be given a certificate which is valid for 6 months from the date of your x-ray. Include this certificate with your UK visa application.

You will not need a TB test if any of the following apply:

- You are a diplomat accredited to the UK
- You are a returning UK resident and have not been away for more than 2 years
- You lived for at least 6 months in a country where TB screening is not required by the UK, and you have been away from that country for no more than 6 months

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes that require overseas police checks

An overseas criminal record certificate is used alongside the [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#) certificates issued in the UK. As the DBS only check against UK records; a DBS check may not provide a complete picture of an individual's criminal record if they have committed crimes overseas.

An overseas criminal record certificate is required if an applicant we are sponsoring has lived overseas for 12 months or more (whether continuous or in total), in the 10 years before their application, while aged 18 or over. This will also apply to any adult partners, whether they apply with you or make a separate application to join you if you are already in the UK.

The certificates are sometimes called different things. Some of the more common names for these certificates are:

- Certificates of Good Conduct
- Certificate of Good Standing
- Police Clearance Certificate
- Letter of Good Conduct
- Certificate of No Criminal Record

Visa applicants who want to work in specified health, education or social care sectors must provide a criminal record certificate.

If an applicant is applying for entry clearance under any of the following visa routes, they must provide a criminal record certificate for any country (excluding the UK) where they have lived for 12 months or more (whether continuous or in total), in the 10 years before their application, while aged 18 or over:

- Tier 1 (Entrepreneur)
- Tier 1 (Investor)
- Skilled Worker in education, health or social care sectors (see below)
- Dependent partner (over 18 years old) of the main applicant in any of the above routes, either together with the main applicant or separately.

Standard Occupation Codes: Criminal record certificates for UK visas

As per government advice all those applying under the Skilled Worker visa route to take employment under one of the [Standard Occupational Classification \(SOC\) codes](#) may be required to obtain an overseas police check depending on the SOC code. Please use the below link to check whether this is applicable for you:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants/guidance-on-the-application-process-for-criminal-records-checks-overseas>

The following roles are the most commonly sponsored occupations at the University:

- Researchers (SOC 2119) – Academics undertaking independent research. Includes positions like 'Postdoctoral Researchers', 'Senior Research Associates' and 'Research Assistant'.
- Higher Education Teaching (SOC 2311) – Teaching staff at undergraduate level or above, who may also undertake research activities.

When a certificate of sponsorship is issued, an applicant applying for entry clearance in the Skilled Worker route will be informed by their sponsor whether they will be required to provide a criminal record certificate.

Visa applicants in all other routes are not currently required to provide criminal record certificates. Also, those already in the UK seeking to extend their stay in one of the above categories are not presently included.

Obtaining an overseas criminal record certificate (or equivalent)

These certificates can most easily be obtained by the applicant from their embassy or Local Law Enforcement Body. For further information of how to obtain an overseas police check please click here: [How to Obtain an Overseas police check](#).

If a criminal record certificate cannot be obtained from the relevant country

It is not always possible to obtain a certificate from countries that do not have functioning criminal record regimes or refuse to provide these to anyone other than their own citizens.

For visa purposes, if an applicant is unable to obtain a certificate, they must provide an explanation with their visa application, which details their attempts to obtain a certificate and confirms why this has not been possible. UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) will consider the explanation against the situation in those countries and decide whether to waive the requirement. If UKVI decides that it is possible for the applicant to obtain a certificate, but they have failed to do so, their application may be refused.

If the applicant's previous country of Residence/Origin is not shown on the .GOV website, then the applicant should contact the relevant [Embassy/consulate in London](#) for advice on how to obtain a certificate.

Extensions

Where a current member of staff holding a Tier 2/Skilled Worker Visa requires an extension due to expiry of their current visa and/or an extension to their contract, they can apply inside the UK for an extension provided they are continuing in the same role for which their original CoS was assigned.

The People Directorate will contact line managers and employees before the expiry date of the employee's visa to establish if an extension to the Certificate of Sponsorship to enable the employee to apply to further extend their Leave to Remain will be required. This usually coincides with the expiry of the individual's fixed term contract. An extension to a Certificate of Sponsorship will only be sought, if the individual's contract is being renewed.

Employees must bear in mind that they cannot apply for a new visa more than three months before their current visa expires.

Change of job role

Where an individual who currently holds a Tier 2/Skilled Worker visa changes jobs from the job stated on their CoS, they may be required to apply for a new Skilled Worker Visa before they can commence that new employment. In all cases, please contact the Staff Visa Compliance Team to discuss such cases before taking any action.

What duties does the University have as sponsor under the UKVI Immigration System?

As a sponsor, the University of Greenwich has a number of duties. These include:

1. Keeping copies of your passport, Biometric Residence Permit or UK immigration status documents, and contact details (address, telephone number, mobile telephone number). Your contact details must also be kept up to date.
2. Reporting duties, which include reporting to UKVI if:
 - You do not turn up for your first day of work; or
 - You are absent from work for more than 10 consecutive working days, without the University's reasonably granted permission; or
 - Your employment (including if you resign or are dismissed) or any registration you need to work in the UK (such as with a governing body) ends; or
 - The University stops sponsoring you for any other reason (for example, if you switch into an immigration route that does not require a sponsor); or
 - There are any significant changes in your employment circumstances, for example, a change of job, a reduction in your hours of work or salary or a change in the location where you are working; or
 - The University has information which suggests you are breaching the conditions of your leave.
3. Providing the police with any information held, which suggests that you may be engaging in terrorism or other criminal activity.

Please note: You must give the University all the information required to allow it to fulfil its duties as a sponsor under the UKVI system.

Supplementary work

If an applicant already has the right to work in the UK and they are sponsored via the Skilled Worker visa route with another organisation, they can carry out 'supplementary work' of up to 20 hours per week with the university. The applicant can work up to a maximum of 20 hours per week at the university in a job that is either:

- In the same occupation code and at the same level as their main job
- In a [Shortage Occupation](#)

If a hiring manager wishes to engage an applicant in employment at the university, they must seek advice from the Staff Visa Compliance Team in the first instance and before engaging with the individual, to ensure the individual can work for the university on their current visa. The Staff Visa Compliance Team will check the occupation code is the same.