

The UK's points-based immigration system: Information for EU, EEA and Swiss visitors



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The UK left the European Union on 31 January 2020. Free movement between the UK and the European Union ended on 31 December 2020 and on the 1 January 2021, the UK implemented a points-based immigration system that prioritises skills and talent over where a person comes from.

The UK welcomes millions of visitors every year from all around the world. Under the new system, you, as an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen, can continue to visit the UK without applying for a visa and in most cases, can stay for up to six months. You may participate in a wide range of activities, including tourism, visiting family and friends, short-term study, and business-related activities, such as attend job interviews, meetings, events and conferences. You may enter the UK multiple times during that six-month visit, but you may not live in the UK by means of frequent or successive visits.

Irish citizens' status continues to be protected as part of **Common Travel Area arrangements**. Therefore, Irish citizens do not require permission to come to the UK (except in a very limited number of circumstances), and as a result, are not eligible to apply under the new points-based immigration system.





Visiting the UK

You can continue to visit the UK without applying for visa, to:

- come on holiday or visit family and friends for up to six months
- do a short course of study
- do business-related activities, such as attend meetings, conferences, seminars and interviews. If you are coming to the UK for interviews or meetings to discuss job offers, you must then leave the UK to apply for entry under the relevant work route if you are successful
- negotiate and sign business contracts
- take part in sporting or cultural events
- if you're a leading academic, you can present your latest research; or if you're a scientist, you can share your knowledge with colleagues on international projects
- if you're employed overseas, you can come and support companies who have bought goods from your company or collaborate with a UK business which is supplying your employer overseas
- take part in some permitted paid activities, such as performing at cultural events.

This list is not exhaustive. The full list of permitted activities is available at GOV.UK. You should always check if you need a visa to carry out your intended activities, before you travel to the UK.

You cannot come to the UK without a visa, to:

- work
- live in the UK for long periods of time through frequent visits
- get **public funds**.

You will need to apply for a **visa** if you want to work or study in the UK for longer than six months.

If you've been invited to the UK as an expert in your profession and will be paid in the UK, you may be able to come to the UK as a **Permitted Paid Engagement visitor**. You must **check if you need a visa** before you travel.

If you are coming via Ireland from 1 January 2021 as a Permitted Paid Engagement visitor, you can come for up to one month on your first visit, but only seven days on any further visits if you have not left the Common Travel Area in the meantime.

If you are visiting the UK to marry or form a civil partnership, or give notice of this, you will need to apply for a **Marriage/Civil Partnership Visa**.

A **guide for those looking to come to the UK for business activities** is available on GOV.UK.



Short-term study

As an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen, you may participate in short-term study on a course lasting no longer than six months. All nonrecreational study must be undertaken at an accredited institution. Recreational courses undertaken for leisure, that last no longer than 30 days and which do not lead to any formal qualifications, do not need to be undertaken at an accredited institution.

The six to eleven month **Short-term study visa** is distinct from the main Student visa and requires applicants of all nationalities to obtain a visa before travelling to the UK. This visa is specifically for people taking English language courses, and it does not require sponsorship and does not permit work.

If you're looking to study in the UK for over six months, find out more about the **Student visa** on GOV.UK



Travelling to the UK

From 1 October 2021, you will not be able to use an ID card to enter the UK. You will need to provide a valid passport.

You can continue to use your national ID card to enter the UK until at least 31 December 2025 if you:

- have settled or pre-settled status under the **EU Settlement Scheme**
- applied to the **EU Settlement Scheme** by 30 June 2021 but have not received a decision yet
- have an **EU Settlement Scheme family permit**
- have a **Frontier Worker** permit
- are an **S2 Healthcare Visitor**
- are a Swiss national **Swiss Service Provider**.

Find out more about travelling to the UK on GOV.UK

Travelling to the UK via Ireland

As an EU, EEA and Swiss citizen who is not Irish, if you enter the UK from Ireland there are different immigration restrictions for visiting the UK. You are only able to visit the UK for up to six months on your first visit. If you return to Ireland and from there wish to visit the UK again, you will only be able to stay in the UK for up to two months, unless you are coming as an **S2 Healthcare Visitor**, in which case you may stay for a further six months. However, if you leave the **Common Travel Area**, you will still be able to visit the UK for up to six months on your next visit including if it's via Ireland.

If you are coming for a Permitted Paid Engagement activity, you will only be allowed to stay for one month on your first visit, and for up to seven days on any subsequent visit until you leave the Common Travel Area again.



EU Settlement Scheme

The deadline for most people to apply to the **EU Settlement Scheme** was 30 June 2021. The EUSS has made provision for **late applications** to be made by EU, EEA and Swiss citizens and their family who can show they have reasonable grounds for missing the deadline. You may also be able to apply to the EUSS at any point in the future if you are **joining a close EU, EEA and Swiss family member** who has successfully applied to the EUSS.

For more information on the **points-based immigration system**
visit [GOV.UK](#)

