

The UK's points-based immigration system: **An introduction for EU, EEA and Swiss citizens**



The UK's points-based immigration system: an introduction for EU, EEA and Swiss citizens

Before you apply to work or study in the UK under the points-based immigration system, you should check if you're eligible for the **EU Settlement Scheme**.

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 1 January 2021, the UK implemented a points-based immigration system that prioritises skills and talent over where a person comes from.

If you are not eligible under the EU Settlement Scheme, you need to meet specific requirements in order to work or study in the UK. You also need to pass relevant checks, including UK criminality checks. You can continue to visit the UK for up to six months without applying for a visa and may participate in a wide range of activities, including tourism, visiting family and friends, short-term study, attend job interviews and other business-related activities, such as events and conferences. The full list of permitted activities for **visitors** is available on GOV.UK.

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.



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.

Applying through the points-based immigration system

If eligible, you should begin your application on GOV.UK. You will need to demonstrate that you meet the relevant criteria and score the number of points required for the visa or route you're applying for. Detailed guidance for each route is available at GOV.UK.

For the majority of applicants, the application process will be entirely digital. As part of your application, you will need to verify your identity. Most people will be able to do this using a smartphone, through the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app, as part of the online application. During the application process you will create a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account which you will use when accessing your application, or once you receive a decision, to access your immigration status information.

Those who cannot use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app will need to attend a **Visa Application Centre**. More information about the **application process** is available at GOV.UK.

You will need to pay an application fee and, if you are coming to the UK for more than six months, you may have to pay the **Immigration Health Surcharge**, which will enable you to access the UK's National Health Service (NHS).

The **processing times for applications** vary depending on the visa you are applying for and the service available. You must apply and receive confirmation that you have been successful before you travel to the UK.

Dependants can make their own application. EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who do not qualify as a **dependant** under a points-based system visa or route, or under the EU Settlement Scheme, will need to apply and qualify for entry or stay on the same basis as non-EEA citizens, through the family immigration rules.

Receiving your decision and accessing your eVisa

If you apply through the UK Immigration: ID Check app, you will receive written notification, normally via email, if your application is successful. You will use your UKVI account credentials to sign in to the **View and Prove service** on GOV.UK, where you can access your online immigration status information (this is called an eVisa) and prove your rights in the UK.

If you successfully apply through a Visa Application Centre to stay in the UK for longer than 6 months, you will receive a **vignette** in your passport to travel to the UK, and then a **biometric residence permit (BRP)** once you arrive in the UK. You will still be able to use some online services to evidence your **right to work** and **right to rent** rather than having to rely on your physical documents.

A guide about **viewing and proving your immigration status (eVisa)** is available 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**.

When crossing the UK border, information will be checked digitally on arrival, and those with a UKVI account will not routinely need to prove their status. To prevent unnecessary delays at the border, it is important to ensure the document you travel on is registered to your account, which you can do by updating your details if you intend to travel on a different document (for example a new passport). Further information on **viewing and proving your immigration status** is available on GOV.UK

Working in the UK

Skilled Worker visa

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

- you have a job offer from a Home Office-licensed sponsor at the required skill level
- you will be paid the relevant minimum salary threshold by your sponsor (normally £25,600 or the going rate for their particular job, whichever is higher)
- you can speak English at the intermediate level at B1 (on the Common European Framework of Reference for languages).

If you will earn less than £25,600 – but no less than £20,480 – you may still be able to apply by ‘trading’ points for specific characteristics against your salary. For example, you may be able to trade points if:

- you have a job offer in a shortage occupation
- you have a PhD in a subject relevant to the job
- you have a PhD in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) subject relevant to the job
- you are a new entrant (the salary requirement for new entrants will be 30% lower than the rate for experienced workers in any occupation, to a lower limit of £20,480).

Apply for a **Skilled Worker visa** on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)



Skilled Work: Health and Care visa

The UK Government welcomes the vital contribution which doctors, nurses and other health professionals from overseas make to the NHS and wider health and care sector.

If you work in an eligible health occupation and have a job offer from the NHS, social care sector or employers and organisations which provide services to the NHS, are able to speak English and meet the requirements of the Skilled Worker route, you can apply for the Health and Care visa to come to the UK with your family.

There is fast-track entry, with reduced application fees and dedicated support through the application process. If you're eligible to apply for the Health and Care visa, you are also exempt from having to pay the **Immigration Health Surcharge**. Frontline workers in the health and social care sector who are not eligible to apply for the Health and Care visa will have to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge and could benefit from a **reimbursement** scheme where they will be repaid.

Apply for a Health and Care visa on GOV.UK

Global Talent

The Global Talent visa allows the most highly skilled to come to the UK without a job offer. This visa caters for recognised leaders, and the leaders of tomorrow in science, humanities, engineering, the arts (including film, fashion design and architecture) and digital technology, with individuals' unique skills enriching the UK's knowledge, economy and society. Fast track pathways are available for winners of prestigious prizes such as specific Academy Awards, the Fields Medal and the Turing Award, and top scientists and researchers also benefit from a quicker endorsement process as part of a fast track STEM scheme.

Apply for a Global Talent visa on GOV.UK

Alternative work visa routes and specialist occupations

There are a range of other visa routes available for working in the UK, such as the Start-up and Innovator visas. There are also visa routes for further specialist occupations, including ministers of religion, sports people and creatives.

Studying in the UK

Student visa

The UK has a world-leading education sector and continues to welcome talented and high potential students to universities and other higher education providers, further education and English language colleges, and independent schools.

To be eligible for a Student visa, you need to demonstrate:

- you have been offered a place on a course by a Home Office-licensed Student sponsor
- you can speak, read, write and understand English
- you have enough money to support yourself and pay for your course
- you genuinely intend to study in the UK.

Read our [student guide](#) for more information on the Student visa. You can apply for a [Student visa](#) on GOV.UK.

There is a separate [Child Student](#) visa for child students aged between 4-17 years old who wish to study at an independent school.

Apply for a [Student visa](#) on GOV.UK



Graduate route

If you successfully complete a degree at undergraduate level or above in the UK, you may be able to apply for a Graduate route to stay and work, or look for work, for a maximum period of two years (three years for doctoral students) after completing your studies.

From the Graduate route, you will be able to move into different visa routes if you have a suitable job offer from a sponsor and can meet the requirements of the visa.

Apply to the **Graduate route** on **GOV.UK**



Find out more about the **points-based immigration system** on **GOV.UK**