

# The UK's points-based immigration system: **An introduction for EU citizens**



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Please note that 'EU citizens' referred to in this guidance should be read to include EU, EEA and Swiss citizens. Those resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 should apply to the EU Settlement Scheme and have until 30 June 2021 to make an application.

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 were not resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 and do not have rights under the Withdrawal agreement, you will need to meet specific requirements in order to work or study in the UK from 1 January 2021. You will 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 and 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

If you were resident in the UK by 31 December 2020, you should not apply for a visa under the points-based immigration system. You and your family should instead **apply to the EU Settlement Scheme**. Applications are free and the deadline for applying is 30 June 2021.

### Applying through the points-based immigration system

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

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

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## Working in the UK

### Skilled Worker visa

To be eligible for the Skilled Worker route, 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](#)



## 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 be 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. Top scientists and researchers 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 route

The UK has a world-leading education sector 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 the student route, 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 route. You can apply for a **Student visa** on [GOV.UK](#)

There is a separate **Child Student route** 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](#)

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## Graduate visa

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

The Graduate visa will open in summer 2021 to international students who were sponsored by a Home Office-licensed Student sponsor which has a track record of compliance with the UK Government's immigration requirements.

From the Graduate visa, 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.

**Find out more about the [points-based immigration system](#) on [GOV.UK](#)**

