



UK Trade  
& Investment



## A Guide to UK Business Visitor and Work Visas for Egyptian Businesses

## Foreword by the British Ambassador to Egypt



An essential part of the United Kingdom's support for Egypt's development consists of a strong and healthy trade and investment relationship. We have a firm basis to build on, British companies being the largest investors in Egypt over a number of years.

I often meet Egyptian entrepreneurs and business people who are interested in expanding their businesses to the United Kingdom. They often ask me about UK visas.

With Egyptian investors actively seeking overseas investment opportunities, we understand the need for quick and easy visa processes. The UK is a popular business destination in Europe for Egyptian companies. We want this to continue.

We are therefore committed to supporting you – through our UK Trade and Investment offices and through the UK visa operation. There have been several changes to the visa system recently and we want to ensure that businesses in Egypt and the UK have a good understanding of the UK's immigration system, so that they can approach it with confidence.

Corporate Egypt is important to Britain. The UK Border Agency's visa operation in Egypt supports our partnership. We provide special visa services for major investors, regular travellers, and high value customers.

These give applicants access to a business lounge, quicker turnaround times, and dedicated sources of advice and assistance. Last year we issued more than 6,000 business visitor visas. 84% of those who applied were successful. We are committed to ensuring we continue to improve the service we offer.

This brochure aims to give you an overview of the different visa routes available to enter the UK for business and work purposes. I hope that you find the information helpful.

**James Watt**  
**British Ambassador, Egypt**

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## A Guide to UK Business Visitor and Work Visas

This brochure includes information about the visa process in Egypt and the additional services available to highly valued regular visitors to the UK. It also includes information about the following visa categories: visas for a business visitor and a sole representative of an overseas Egyptian company and visas under the points based system for Tier 1: Investor, Entrepreneur and Prospective Entrepreneur and those with Exceptional Talent and Tier 2: General and Intra-Company Transfer.

### Processing Times for Visa Applications

Travellers must obtain a visa before they go to the UK. The UK Border Agency can post-date the visa for up to three months on request, which means that visa applications can be made early.

The UK Border Agency prioritises visa applications using the Priority Visa Service.

Outside of these arrangements, the UK Border Agency aims to process visa applications as quickly as possible. Its published processing time is 15 working days for 90 per cent of short term visas. In practice most of these applications are completed more quickly than this. Customers are advised to allow up to 15 working days during particularly busy periods.

### Visa Application Centres

You need to make your visa application online and attend a UK visa application centre in person, where you will also give your biometric data (finger scans and a digital photograph) as part of the application process. There are two visa application centres in Egypt, located in Cairo and Alexandria.

### Business Class Service

Business Class facilities in the Cairo visa application centre allow you to submit your application in a separate comfortable lounge, with dedicated staff and additional services.

### Priority Visa Service

The Priority Visa Service provides an expedited visa processing service if you pay an additional fee, are applying for a visitor visa or Tier 2 visa, have travelled in the last three years to one of the following destinations: UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the USA and have no adverse immigration history. The UK Border Agency will aim to process and return your documents ahead of other visa applicants.



Detailed guidance on each visa category is available on the UK Border Agency website: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk) and you should read this before you make a visa application.

## Business Visitor Visas



Business Visitor Visas are specifically for business people planning to visit the UK for a short period of time. Typically the types of activities permissible with a Business Visitor Visa are:

- attending meetings or conferences
- arranging deals, negotiating or signing trade agreements or contracts
- undertaking fact-finding missions or checking details of goods
- conducting on-site visits and promotional activities.

Business visitors may enter the UK a number of times during the period covered by their visa, provided they do not:

- work for a UK organisation, including providing short-term cover
- do any 'on-the-job' training or work experience.

A visitor should not normally spend more than 180 days out of any 12 months in the UK.

Applicants also need to prove that they:

- have enough money to support themselves while they are in the UK
- intend to leave the UK at the end of their visit
- can meet the costs of their return or onward journey.

### Long Term Business Visitor Visas

If you travel regularly to the UK on business, you may wish to consider applying for a longer term multiple entry business visitor visa. You may choose a two, five or ten year long term visa. The key benefit of a long term visa is that you only need to make one visa application and provide biometric data once for the entire duration of the visa. You can then make unlimited visits to the UK for the time that your visa is valid, though you should not stay for longer than 180 days in any 12 month period.

To apply for a Long Term Business Visitor Visa when you apply online, simply select a Long Term Visitor Visa and the duration of visa you are requesting in the 'Type of Application' box, and pay the relevant fee when you attend the visa application centre. In cases in which the visa officer decides to issue a visa of a shorter duration than you have requested or refuse the visa application, the fee will not be refunded. You are advised to provide all necessary information and supporting documentation with your visa application.

## Sole Representative of a British Company

To qualify as a sole representative you will be a senior employee (but not a majority shareholder) of an overseas parent company who intends to establish a commercial presence for the company in the UK. This may be a registered branch or a wholly owned subsidiary concerned with the same type of business activity as the parent company.

The company must have no branch, subsidiary or other representative in the UK. If the company has a legal entity in the UK but does not employ staff or transact business, you may still be able to enter the UK as its sole representative.

### NOTE:

<sup>1</sup> The list of approved English language test providers are at: <http://www.ukta.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applications/forms/new-approved-english-tests.pdf>

The following requirements also apply:

- You must have been recruited and employed outside the UK by a company whose headquarters and principal place of business is outside the UK
- You must not intend to take employment in the UK other than as a sole representative
- You must be able to maintain yourself and any dependents adequately without needing public funds
- You must have full authority to take operational decisions on the company's behalf. To show why you have been appointed, you must be able to demonstrate a very good track record in the same or a closely related field of work
- Unless you are exempt, you must have a minimum English language ability of A1 on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and provide an English language certificate from a UK Border Agency accredited test provider to evidence this<sup>1</sup>. Alternatively, you must show evidence of an academic qualification (not a professional or vocational qualification) which is deemed by UK NARIC to meet the recognised standard of a Bachelor's degree in the UK, and was taught or researched in English to level C1 CEFR
- If your company has previously employed a sole representative in the UK, who has left the UK at an early stage before the UK branch or subsidiary has found premises or started to trade, you may be allowed to enter the UK as a replacement sole representative





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## Skilled Workers

(Points Based System – Tier 2 General and Intra-Company Transfer)

Tier 2 General is subject to an annual limit of 20,700 until 2014, which is broken down into monthly allocations.

- The Tier 2 General route is for workers coming to the UK to fill a vacancy that cannot be filled by a UK resident worker
- The Tier 2 Intra-Company Transfer (ICT) route is for existing company employees transferring to the UK.

To be eligible for a Tier 2 visa, skilled workers must pass a points-based assessment and meet other requirements set out in the published Tier 2 General guidance.

### Tier 2 General

Tier 2 General is subject to an annual limit, which is broken down into monthly allocations. UK employers must apply for a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) from the UK Border Agency for a specific post if they wish to bring someone to the UK<sup>2</sup>. The employer must assign the CoS to a prospective employee within three months.

If you are applying as a Tier 2 General applicant you require a minimum of 70 points across different criteria to qualify for a visa. These are awarded as follows:

Attributes	Points
Certificate of Sponsorship	30
Salary Level of £20,000 or more	20

Controls	Points
Maintenance (£900 held for 90 days or an A rated sponsor vouching for maintenance on CoS)	10
English Language Skills (Minimum B1 level on CEFR equivalent to IELTS 4)	10

*The minimum skill level for an eligible job is NQF level 6. A list of suitable occupations can be found on the UK Border Agency website<sup>3</sup>.*







### Tier 2 Intra-Company Transfer (ICT)

A company wishing to transfer employees under the Tier 2 Intra-Company Transfer (ICT) route must have a UK presence and a UK Border Agency sponsor licence which allows them to issue Certificates of Sponsorship to employees. CoSs for Intra-Company Transfer (ICT) do not fall under the Tier 2 annual limit and are also 'unrestricted' so sponsors can issue them without first applying to the UK Border Agency for permission.

If you are applying as a Tier 2 Intra-Company Transfer (ICT) applicant you require a minimum of 60 points to qualify for a visa. These are awarded as follows:

Attributes	Points
Certificate of Sponsorship	30
Appropriate Salary Level (£24,300 or more)	20

Controls	Points
Maintenance (£900 held for 90 days or an A rated sponsor vouching for maintenance on CoS)	10

The following conditions also apply to ICT applications:

- The job needs to be on the graduate occupation list<sup>3</sup>
- Applicants who are paid £40,600 or more will be granted a long term ICT visa of up to three years, with the possibility of extending for a further two years
- Applicants who are paid between £24,300 and £40,600 are permitted to come to the UK for up to 12 months (short term ICT visa), at which point they must leave the UK and cannot reapply for 12 months, unless they apply for a long term ICT visa
- There is no English language requirement, except for those applying for an extension beyond three years.

#### NOTES:

<sup>2</sup> Exceptions are Certificates of Sponsorship for the following 'unrestricted' categories which sponsors can issue without first applying to the UK Border Agency: Tier 2 General applicants already in the UK; Tier 2 General applicants filling a vacancy with a salary of more than £152,100; Tier 2 Intra-Company Transfer; Tier 2 Sportspeople and Ministers of Religion.

<sup>3</sup> The graduate occupation list can be found at: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/business-sponsors/points/sponsoringmigrants/employingmigrants/codesofpractice>



### **Tier 2 Intra-Company Transfer – Graduate Trainee**

The Graduate Trainee sub-category allows multinational organisations to transfer recent graduate recruits to a UK branch of their organisation for the purpose of training (this route must not be used to fill long-term posts). Migrants in this sub-category must be coming to the UK as part of a structured graduate training programme, with clearly defined progression towards a managerial or specialist role within the organisation.

This sub-category is open only to those who work in graduate occupations and who have been employed outside the UK by the sponsoring organisation for at least three months directly before they come to the UK. Time spent in the UK in the Skills Transfer sub-category does not count towards the three-month qualifying period.

As this scheme is specifically targeted at the very best graduate recruits, sponsors can transfer no more than five migrants per financial year in this sub-category. The visa is issued for up to six months.

### **Tier 2 Intra-Company Transfer – Skills Transfer**

The Skills Transfer sub-category allows overseas employees to transfer to a UK branch of a multinational organisation in order to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to perform in their role overseas, or to impart their specialist skills to the UK workforce. Migrants are not required to have been employed for a minimum period to qualify for this sub-category, which is open only to migrants who work in graduate occupations<sup>4</sup>. The visa can be issued for up to six months.

NOTE:

<sup>4</sup> The list of approved English language test providers is at: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/new-approved-english-tests.pdf>

## Entrepreneurs, Investors and Individuals of Exceptional Talent

(Points Based System – Tier 1)

Tier 1 of the Points Based System is for high value migrants who wish to come to the UK. It includes more flexible visa categories for Entrepreneurs, Investors and Individuals of Exceptional Talent.

### Tier 1 Entrepreneur

If you wish to apply for a Tier 1 Entrepreneur visa you require a minimum of 95 points. 75 points are required for 'attributes' and an additional 20 points for 'controls' as outlined in the chart below.

Attributes	Points
Access to at least £200,000 or access to £50,000 which has been funded from an accredited source (Venture Capitalist, UK Government Department or seed competition); or	25
The money held in one or more regulated financial institutions	25
The money is disposable in the United Kingdom	25

Controls	Points
English Language Skills (minimum CEFR C1 (i.e. IELTS 6.5))	10
Maintenance £3,100 held for 90 days	10

*Pairs of Entrepreneurs may come to the UK if they have equal access to the funds set out above.*

- Entrepreneurs must invest in a business and become actively engaged in that business after entering the UK
- Entrepreneurs may qualify for accelerated settlement in the UK if they have created 10 jobs or turned over £5 million in a three year period
- Entrepreneurs may spend up to 180 days a year out of the UK in a 12 month period
- Visas are issued for three years, with the possibility of extension for a further two years

### Prospective Entrepreneur

A six-month visitor visa is also available for Prospective Entrepreneurs. You may apply for this visa if you wish to come to the UK in order to secure funding to join, set up and be actively involved in the running of a business in the UK. Uniquely this visitor visa allows Prospective Entrepreneurs to switch into the Entrepreneur category without having to return home, if they are granted funding.



### Tier 1 Investors

If you wish to apply for a Tier 1 Investor visa you require a minimum of 75 points earned by the following attributes:

Attributes	Points
Money of your own held in a regulated financial institution which is disposable in the UK amounting to no less than £1 million; or	75
Personal assets which, taking into account any liabilities to which they are subject, have a value exceeding £2 million; and	
At least £1 million which has been loaned to you by a UK regulated financial institution and is available to you in the UK.	

*There is no English language or maintenance requirement.*

Investors may qualify for accelerated settlement in the UK – for example after three years for a £5 million investment and after two years for a £10 million investment. Tier 1 investors already in the UK with large sums invested may also qualify for accelerated settlement.

- Investors may spend up to 180 days out of the UK in a 12 month period.

### Tier 1 Exceptional Talent

This visa category is for use by the most exceptional talented people in the fields of science, mathematics, engineering and the arts who wish to work in the UK.

Applicants must be internationally recognised as world leaders in their field; or as those who show exceptional promise and are likely to become internationally recognised world leaders in their field. There is a limit on the number of applications that can be made under this route and this is reviewed annually.

Every application must be endorsed by one of the following designated competent bodies: The Royal Society, Arts Council England, British Academy or Royal Academy of Engineering.

If you wish to apply under the Tier 1 Exceptional Talent category you require a minimum of 75 points earned by the following attributes:

Attributes	Points
Endorsed by the designated competent body according to that body's criteria as published on the UK Border Agency Website.	75

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## Information

More detail on business and employment visas is available on the UK Border Agency's website:

[www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/working/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/working/)

It is important to check the most up to date guidance before making a visa application.

Advice about how to make a visa application in Egypt, how to make use of the UK Border Agency's business class and priority services, and how to schedule an appointment, is available on the site of the UK Border Agency's commercial partner, WorldBridge, at:

[www.visainfoservices.com](http://www.visainfoservices.com)

The current visa application fees are at:

[www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/countries/egypt](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/countries/egypt)

All fees are paid online and prices quoted in GBP.

### Please note:

All visa application forms must be completed online. Further information and the online application facility can be found at:

[www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk](http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk)

Please contact us for further information about how UK Trade & Investment in Egypt can help you set up a business or invest in the UK. For contact details, please go to:

[www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/uk-trade-investment-egypt](http://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/uk-trade-investment-egypt)



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UK Trade & Investment is the Government Department that helps UK-based companies succeed in the global economy. We also help overseas companies bring their high-quality investment to the UK's dynamic economy acknowledged as Europe's best place from which to succeed in global business.

UK Trade & Investment offers expertise and contacts through its extensive network of specialists in the UK, and in British embassies and other diplomatic offices around the world. We provide companies with the tools they require to be competitive on the world stage.

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