



Home Office

Workers and Temporary Workers: guidance for sponsors

Sponsor a Government Authorised Exchange worker

Version 04/24

This document forms part of the collection 'Workers and Temporary Workers: guidance for sponsors'. It provides information for employers on how to sponsor a worker on the Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) immigration route.

This version of the guidance is valid from 4 April 2024.

Contents

Contents.....	2
About this guidance.....	4
Other guidance you must read	4
Glossary	4
Contacts	5
Version number and publication	5
Changes to this guidance	5
GA1. Sponsoring a GAE worker: overview	7
What is the GAE route?	7
Who needs to be sponsored on the GAE route?	7
What are the sponsorship requirements for the GAE route?	8
GA2. How to get a GAE sponsor licence	9
General requirements	9
Specific requirements for a GAE licence	9
Scheme specifications	9
Step-by-step process for obtaining a GAE licence	10
How to keep your licence.....	12
GA3. Eligible employment on the GAE route	13
Overview.....	13
Skill-level for the GAE route.....	13
Meaning of ‘supernumerary’	13
Compliance with National Minimum Wage and the Working Time Regulations....	13
Eligible GAE schemes	14
Work Experience Programme	14
Research Programme	14
Overseas Government Language Programme	14
Training Programme	14
GA4. Immigration requirements for GAE workers	15
Overview.....	15
Financial requirement	15
ATAS requirement	16
Former officially-sponsored students	16
Parental consent requirement.....	16
Entry requirement	17
Extension of permission.....	17

'Switching' to the GAE route	17
How long GAE workers can stay	17
Further information	18
GA5. Certificate of Sponsorship for GAE workers.....	19
Overview.....	19
Fees.....	19
Use of the CoS	19
What the CoS must confirm.....	20
How long you can assign a CoS to a GAE worker.....	21
Reporting duties and record keeping	21

About this guidance

This document provides information for employers on how to sponsor a worker on the Temporary Work – Government Authorised Exchange route ('GAE route')

The GAE route is for people who want to come to the UK for a temporary period for work experience, job shadowing or training, to take part in an Overseas Government Language Programme, or undertake research or a fellowship through an approved exchange scheme. GAE workers can stay in the UK for up to two years – the maximum period depends on the scheme under which they are being sponsored.

Other guidance you must read

To make sure you meet all of the relevant requirements and fulfil your sponsorship duties, you must read the following parts of the sponsor guidance, in addition to this document:

- [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#) – this contains detailed information on how to apply for a sponsor licence and how we assess applications
- [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) – this contains detailed information on how to sponsor Workers and Temporary Workers, including how to request and assign Certificates of Sponsorship, immigration requirements, and conditions of stay
- [Part 3: Sponsor duties and compliance](#) – this contains detailed information about your duties as a licensed sponsor and the action we can take if you fail to meet these duties
- any relevant annexes or appendices referred to in the above documents

You can access all of these documents, and other information on sponsorship, on the [Sponsorship: guidance for employers and educators](#) page on GOV.UK.

This guidance is subject to change. If you have printed or downloaded a copy of this guidance, check the version number and date on GOV.UK to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version.

Glossary

There is a glossary of terms used throughout the sponsor guidance (including this document) at the beginning of [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#).

For a definition of 'occupation code', 'SOC 2020 occupation code' and 'SOC 2010 occupation code', see the glossary in [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#).

Terms used in this document:

Government Authorised Exchange route (or 'GAE route')

This means the route in [Appendix Temporary Work – Government Authorised Exchange](#) to the Immigration Rules. Where the context requires it, it can also refer to:

- the route in Appendix T5 (Temporary Worker) Government Authorised Exchange Worker in place between 1 December 2020 and 10 October 2021 inclusive
- the Government Authorised Exchange sub-category of Tier 5 (Temporary Worker) in Part 6A of the Rules in place before 1 December 2020

You can find previous versions of the Immigration Rules in the [Immigration Rules Archive](#) on GOV.UK.

Government Authorised Exchange worker (or ‘GAE worker’)

This means a person who is applying for, or has been granted, entry clearance or permission to stay on the GAE route; or who you are sponsoring, or intend to sponsor, on this route.

Contacts

If you think this guidance has factual errors or broken links, you can email the [Business Helpdesk](#).

If you have read this guidance, and the guidance referred to above, and you still have any queries, you can call us on 0300 123 4699 or email the [Business Helpdesk](#).

Version number and publication

Below is information on the version number of this guidance and when it was cleared for publication:

- version 04/24
- published on 4 April 2024

You can view [previous versions of this guidance](#) on the National Archives website.

Changes to this guidance

This version replaces version 03/23 (published on 31 March 2023). The guidance has been updated to reflect changes to the Immigration Rules coming into effect on 4 April 2024 (as set out in [Statement of Changes HC 590](#), published on 14 March 2024) and to make some other minor amendments and clarifications.

Details of the changes are set out below. Paragraph numbers in brackets refer to the previous version of this guidance where the number was different:

- GA1.2, GA2.14, GA3.2 (GA3.3), GA5.15: updated to reflect the transition from SOC 2010 occupation codes to SOC 2020 occupation codes for Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS) assigned on or after 4 April 2024
- GA2.4: minor amendment to reflect that sponsors whose licence is due to expire on or after 6 April 2024 no longer need to apply to renew their licence

- GA2.7: minor amendment to second bullet point to reflect the introduction of UKRI's Future technology research and innovation scheme
- GA3.1: bullet point added to reference the requirement to comply with National Minimum Wage and the Working Time Regulations
- (GA3.2): content of this paragraph moved to GA3.6; subsequent paragraphs in this section renumbered accordingly
- GA3.3 (GA3.4): amended to reflect a minor change to the definition of 'supernumerary' in the Immigration Rules from 4 April 2024 and a new requirement for sponsors to explain on the CoS how the role is supernumerary
- GA3.4 to GA3.5 (GA3.5): paragraphs on National Minimum Wage and Working Time Regulations amended for consistency with other guides; subsequent paragraphs in this section renumbered accordingly
- GA3.6: content replaced by former GA3.2
- GA4.12: minor drafting amendment to align with the equivalent wording in Appendix Children to the Immigration Rules from 5 October 2023 (Statement of Changes HC 1780)
- GA4.19 and GA4.20: paragraphs redrafted for clarity and updated to reflect the new grant periods that came into effect on 12 April 2023 (Statement of Changes HC 1160) – this information was previously contained in paragraphs GA4.19A and GA4.20A, which have now been deleted
- GA5.16 to GA5.17: minor drafting amendments for clarity
- other minor housekeeping changes

[Contents](#)

GA1. Sponsoring a GAE worker: overview

This section provides an overview of the Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) route and the sponsorship requirements you must meet.

What is the GAE route?

- GA1.1. The GAE route is a temporary work route for people who wish to come to the UK through an approved scheme that aims to share knowledge, experience and best practice. Each scheme fits into one of the following four types of programme:
- [Work Experience Programme](#)
 - [Research Programme](#)
 - [Overseas Government Language Programme](#)
 - [Training Programme](#)
- GA1.2. The individual scheme must be listed as eligible in [Appendix Government Authorised Exchange schemes](#). The role must be in an occupation code listed in Table 1, 2 or 3 of [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#). Roles listed in other tables are not eligible to be sponsored on the GAE route.
- GA1.3. GAE workers can stay in the UK for a maximum of 12 months if coming for a scheme on the Work Experience Programme (unless a shorter maximum period is specified in [Appendix Government Authorised Exchange schemes](#)), or a maximum of 2 years in all other cases. It is not a route to settlement in the UK.
- GA1.4. GAE Workers can bring their family members (dependent partner and dependent children) to the UK, if they meet the relevant immigration requirements for dependants.

Who needs to be sponsored on the GAE route?

- GA1.5. You will need to sponsor any overseas national you wish to employ if they are not a 'settled worker' or do not otherwise have immigration permission to work for you in the UK. This includes most [EU, EEA](#) and Swiss nationals who arrived in the UK after 31 December 2020.
- GA1.6. You do not have to sponsor certain categories of worker, including:
- Irish citizens (with very limited exceptions)
 - people who have been granted status under the [EU Settlement Scheme](#)
 - people with indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK (also known as 'settlement')

GA1.7. This is not a complete list. For further information on who does, and does not, need sponsorship, see section S1 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#).

What are the sponsorship requirements for the GAE route?

GA1.8. If you wish to sponsor a GAE worker, you must:

- hold a valid [sponsor licence](#) for the GAE route
- understand [what the GAE route is](#) and [who you can sponsor](#) on this route
- understand the general requirements for sponsoring workers – see [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#)
- satisfy yourself any worker you sponsor on this route can meet the [immigration requirements](#) for this route
- assign a valid [Certificate of Sponsorship](#) to the worker and pay the [CoS fee](#)
- have eligible ‘Key Personnel’ in place to manage your licence and assign CoS – see section L4 of [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#) for guidance on Key Personnel
- keep records for each worker you sponsor, as set in in [Appendix D](#) to the sponsor guidance
- understand and comply with all of your sponsor duties – see [Part 3: Sponsor duties and compliance](#)

[Contents](#)

GA2. How to get a GAE sponsor licence

This section tells you about the requirements you must meet to be eligible for Government Authorised Exchange Worker (GAE) sponsor licence.

General requirements

- GA2.1. If you wish to sponsor a GAE worker, you must hold a valid sponsor licence for the GAE route. If you do not already hold such a licence, you must apply for one by completing the [online application form](#), paying the relevant [application fee](#), and submitting the supporting evidence specified in [Appendix A](#) to the sponsor guidance.
- GA2.2. Before applying for your licence, you should read:
- [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#) for detailed information on the general requirements and the application process
 - this section for guidance specific to the GAE route
- GA2.3. If you already hold a valid licence to sponsor workers, but it does not include the GAE route, you can apply to add this route to your existing licence. For further information on adding routes to your licence, see section L10 of [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#).
- GA2.4. If you already hold a sponsor licence and it's due to expire before 6 April 2024, you should apply now to renew it. You do not need to apply to renew your licence if it expires on or after 6 April 2024. See section C5 of [Part 3: Sponsor duties and compliance](#) for further information.

Specific requirements for a GAE licence

- GA2.5. In addition to the requirements set out in [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#), you must also meet the requirements set out in this section.

Scheme specifications

- GA2.6. The GAE route is for individuals coming to the UK through approved schemes that aim to share knowledge, experience and best practice. The approved schemes are listed in [Appendix Government Authorised Exchange schemes](#) to the Immigration Rules. The underlying principles of these schemes are that they:
- must be endorsed by a government department; and
 - will be administered by an overarching sponsor and not an individual employer
- GA2.7. To stop potential abuse of this route and the creation of small, isolated

schemes, individual employers and organisations are not allowed to sponsor workers on this route, even if they are licensed as a sponsor on other routes. The only exceptions to this are if you are one of the following:

- a higher education institution and you wish to sponsor an individual under the Sponsored Researchers scheme
- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), or an organisation endorsed by UKRI, and you wish to sponsor individuals under UKRI's Science, Research and Academia scheme or UKRI's Future Technology Research and Innovation scheme
- a [UK government department](#) or one of its executive agencies
- a diplomatic mission or consular post that has a Memorandum of Understanding currently in place with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to sponsor interns under the Diplomatic Missions Interns Scheme

GA2.8. In all other cases, the sponsor for a GAE scheme must be an overarching body which administers the exchange scheme and acts as the licensed sponsor for any workers.

GA2.9. We wish to avoid unnecessary proliferation of GAE schemes. While it remains possible to add new schemes, we will consider doing so only where there is a compelling case. We reserve the right not to agree proposals for new schemes, even where these have secured the support of another government department. In addition to meeting the requirements set out further below, we will only agree proposals for a new GAE scheme, or to the renewal or expansion of existing schemes, where:

- for new schemes or expansion of existing schemes, the proposal meets a need that is not catered for by an existing scheme or any other provisions of the [Immigration Rules](#)
- the purpose of the scheme does not conflict with wider considerations of immigration policy
- the purpose and foreseeable benefits of the scheme are clearly and directly linked to a specific wider Government policy objective
- the scheme provides a unique opportunity for the sharing of knowledge or the delivery of workplace experience or training that cannot reasonably be accessed in the individual's home country or usual country of residence, and the delivery of these objectives are best served by admitting overseas nationals to the UK
- we are satisfied that the government department endorsing the scheme will monitor the operation of the scheme and assess delivery against the scheme's objectives – this includes reporting to us annually on the benefits that the scheme is bringing, how it is meeting its objectives, and the measures in place to guard against abuse

Step-by-step process for obtaining a GAE licence

GA2.10. If you wish to seek agreement to the introduction of a new GAE scheme,

you must follow the steps set out below.

1. Determine who the overarching body will be

GA2.11. If you want to set up a scheme under the GAE route but cannot act as the overarching body (for example, if you want a sector-wide scheme but you represent only a small part of your sector), you may need to identify an organisation that is suitable to act as the overarching body. This organisation will need to be able to comply with the sponsorship obligations set out in this document and the wider sponsor guidance.

2. Secure the endorsement of a government department for the proposed scheme

GA2.12. Once you have identified a suitable overarching body, that body will need to approach the relevant government department to seek its endorsement. The overarching body may wish to consult the Home Office before it does so. It will need to provide the endorsing government department or agency with full details of the scheme. The overarching body should explain, for example:

- why the scheme is necessary
- what benefits the scheme will offer to your sector and to the UK
- what participants will do under the scheme, including:
 - details of the roles that will be filled
 - salaries or payments that will be made to participants
 - the skill level of the work they will do
 - how long participants will spend in the UK under the scheme and why that period is appropriate

GA2.13. If the overarching sponsoring body is an executive agency, it must secure endorsement from a government department before submitting a new scheme proposal. Executive agencies are not permitted to endorse a scheme that they are sponsoring.

3. Government department or agency seeks approval from the Home Office

GA2.14. It will be for the endorsing government department or executive agency to make the case to us for the introduction of a new scheme. If the government department, or one of its executive agencies, endorses the scheme, their relevant Accounting Officer must send a letter of endorsement to the Head of the Migration and Citizenship Directorate at the Home Office. In addition to the criteria above, we will need to be satisfied that:

- it's not the purpose of the scheme to facilitate the supply of labour – participants must not fill vacancies and [must be supernumerary](#)
- the roles available under the scheme are listed in Table 1, 2 or 3 of [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#)

- the roles available under the scheme conform to all relevant employment legislation, such as the [National Minimum Wage](#) and [Working Time Regulations](#)
- the overarching body is able to meet its sponsorship duties as set out in [Part 3: Sponsor duties and compliance](#), and will put in place measures that will protect the scheme from abuse

4. Scheme approved

GA2.15. If the scheme is approved, it will be added to [Appendix Government Authorised Exchange schemes](#) in the next available update to the Immigration Rules. The Rules are routinely updated twice a year, normally in the Spring and Autumn. You cannot sponsor a worker under the scheme until it is added to Appendix Government Authorised Exchange schemes.

How to keep your licence

GA2.16. If you are granted a licence, you must comply with all of your sponsor duties to keep it. If you do not, we may take action against you, including:

- downgrading your licence rating
- suspending your licence
- revoking your licence
- reporting you to the police or other relevant authorities

GA2.17. For details, see [Part 3: Sponsor duties and compliance](#).

[Contents](#)

GA3. Eligible employment on the GAE route

This section provides information on the types of role that are eligible for sponsorship on the GAE route. It also describes the 4 main GAE programmes.

Overview

GA3.1. You can only sponsor a worker on the GAE route if the role they will do:

- meets the skill level requirement
- is supernumerary
- complies with National Minimum Wage and the Working Time Regulations
- is in an eligible GAE scheme and you are authorised to sponsor workers on that scheme

Skill-level for the GAE route

GA3.2. You cannot use the GAE route to bring unskilled labour to the UK. The role must be in an occupation listed in Table 1, 2 or 3 of [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#). These are roles which are generally considered to be skilled to level 3 or above on the Regulated Qualifications Framework for England or Northern Ireland (or the equivalent levels in Wales or Scotland).

Meaning of ‘supernumerary’

GA3.3. You cannot use the GAE route to fill job vacancies. When you assign a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) to a GAE worker, you must confirm the role is supernumerary, with a full explanation of why it's supernumerary. Supernumerary means that the role is in addition to your regular, required, or standard number of staff and does not fill a permanent position or ongoing vacancy in your workforce, even on a temporary basis.

Compliance with National Minimum Wage and the Working Time Regulations

GA3.4. In all cases, the role you are sponsoring the worker for must comply with the National Minimum Wage Regulations 2015 and the Working Time Regulations 1998. We will refuse any application for entry clearance or permission where we have reasonable grounds to believe it does not. We will also consider revoking your sponsor licence if we find you are breaching these Regulations.

GA3.5. For further information, see ‘Compliance with National Minimum Wage and Working Time Regulations’ in section S4 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#).

Eligible GAE schemes

- GA3.6. Eligible GAE schemes and programmes are listed in [Appendix Government Authorised Exchange schemes](#) to the Immigration Rules. There is further information about the 4 main programmes below.

Work Experience Programme

- GA3.7. These schemes offer work experience, including volunteering, job-shadowing and internships. Work exchange programmes between the UK and other countries are also included in this scheme. The aim is for participants to gain experience of work in the UK.
- GA3.8. Approved schemes allow participants to take part for a maximum of 12 months (unless a shorter maximum period is specified in [Appendix Government Authorised Exchange schemes](#)).

Research Programme

- GA3.9. These schemes allow participants to undertake research programmes and fellowships on a scientific, academic, medical, or government research project at a UK Higher Education Provider or another research institution operating under the approval of a relevant government department. The relevant government department may also offer financial sponsorship for the institution.
- GA3.10. Approved schemes allow participants to take part for a maximum of 2 years.

Overseas Government Language Programme

- GA3.11. These schemes are professional language training programmes that are wholly or partly funded by an overseas government, or by an organisation affiliated to an overseas government.
- GA3.12. Approved schemes allow participants to take part for a maximum of 2 years.

Training Programme

- GA3.13. These are approved schemes that offer participants either formal, practical training in the fields of science and/or medicine, or training delivered by HM Armed Forces or UK emergency services.
- GA3.14. Approved schemes allow participants to take part for a maximum of 2 years.

[Contents](#)

GA4. Immigration requirements for GAE workers

This section tells you about the requirements applicants must meet to come to the UK on the Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) route and where you can find further information.

Overview

- GA4.1. People who wish to come to the UK on the GAE route must meet the requirements in [Appendix Temporary Work - Government Authorised Exchange](#) to the Immigration Rules.
- GA4.2. These requirements include that the applicant:
- has a valid [Certificate of Sponsorship \(CoS\)](#) issued by an [approved sponsor](#) for [eligible employment](#)
 - meets the financial requirement
 - genuinely intends, and is able, to undertake the role for which they are being sponsored
 - does not intend to undertake employment other than the role work for which they are being sponsored, or as otherwise permitted by their conditions of stay – see [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) for information on conditions of stay
 - where relevant, meets the ATAS requirement
 - if they were previously an officially sponsored student, has the consent of that sponsor to making the application
 - if they are aged under 18, meets the parental consent requirement
 - meets the relevant requirements for entry to the UK, extensions or ‘switching’
- GA4.3. This is not a full list of requirements – you must refer to the relevant [Immigration Rules](#) for these.

Financial requirement

- GA4.4. If the applicant is applying for entry clearance from outside the UK, or has been in the UK for less than one year at the date of application, they must show they have enough funds to support themselves and any family members in the UK.
- GA4.5. If you are an A-rated sponsor, you can certify this requirement is met when you assign a CoS to them (also known as ‘certifying maintenance’). Otherwise, the applicant must provide evidence of funds as specified in [Appendix Finance](#) to the Immigration Rules.
- GA4.6. For further information, see ‘Financial requirement’ in section S7 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#).

ATAS requirement

- GA4.7. When you assign a CoS on the GAE route, you must check and confirm whether the worker needs to apply for an [Academic Approval Technology Scheme \(ATAS\) certificate](#) from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office before they can start (or continue) working for you.
- GA4.8. A GAE worker will need an ATAS certificate if all of the following are true:
- you are also licensed as a Student sponsor
 - the worker is not an [exempt national](#)
 - you are sponsoring the worker in a [relevant occupation code](#)
 - the work involves research at PhD level or above in [relevant subject area](#)
- See Annex S1 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) for a definition of the terms 'exempt national', 'relevant occupation code' and 'relevant subject area'.
- GA4.9. If the worker needs an ATAS certificate, you should encourage them to apply for one as soon as possible, as they will need to include a copy of the certificate with their application for entry clearance or permission to stay. If they fail to do so, we will refuse their application and you may lose your sponsor licence (or licences).
- GA4.10. For further information on the ATAS requirement, and your responsibilities in relation to it, see 'ATAS requirement' in section S7 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#).

Former officially-sponsored students

- GA4.11. If the applicant has, in the 12 months before the date of application, received an award from a Government or international scholarship agency covering both fees and maintenance, they must provide written consent to their application from that Government or agency. If they do not, we will reject their application as invalid.

Parental consent requirement

- GA4.12. There is no minimum age requirement for this route but if the worker you wish to sponsor is aged under 18 on the date of application, they must have written consent from:
- both of their parents
 - one of their parents, if that parent has sole responsibility for the applicant; or
 - their legal guardian
- GA4.13. The written consent must confirm support for all of the following:

- the application for entry clearance or permission to enter or stay
- the applicant's living and care arrangements in the UK
- if the application is for entry clearance, the applicant's travel to, and reception arrangements in, the UK

GA4.14. As the sponsor, you must have regard to your duty to safeguarding children if you are sponsoring any workers aged under 18 – see 'Safeguarding children' in section L2 of [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#) for further information.

Entry requirement

GA4.15. Applicants must apply for entry clearance (a visa) to be able to come to the UK on this route. If they arrive in the UK without the relevant visa, they will be refused entry, even if they otherwise meet the requirements.

Extension of permission

GA4.16. People already in the UK with permission on the GAE route can apply to extend their stay, up to the [maximum period permitted by their scheme](#), if they meet the relevant requirements – this could be to continue in the same employment or to change employer or employment. See section S9 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) for further information.

'Switching' to the GAE route

GA4.17. People in the UK on another immigration route are not generally permitted to 'switch' (change route) to the GAE route from within the UK. If you wish to sponsor a worker on the GAE route but they are in the UK on another immigration route, they must normally leave the UK and apply for entry clearance.

GA4.18. The only exception to this is where the person was last granted permission as a Student (formerly Tier 4), they have completed a recognised bachelor's or postgraduate degree and are being sponsored to undertake either:

- a period of postgraduate professional training or work experience necessary to obtain a professional qualification or professional registration in the same professional field as that qualification
- an internship for up to 12 months which directly relates to the qualification

provided, in both cases, they will not be filling a permanent vacancy and their employer does not intend to employ the worker in the UK once the training or work experience has ended.

How long GAE workers can stay

GA4.19. If the application is for entry clearance, entry clearance will be granted for the [period of the role on the CoS](#) plus up to 14 days before and 14 days

after that period.

GA4.20. If the application is for permission to stay, permission will be granted for whichever is the shortest of the following periods:

- the [period of the role on the CoS](#) plus 14 days after that period
- if the applicant is applying to continue to participate in the same GAE scheme as in their last grant of permission, a period of 14 days plus the difference between the maximum period a person is permitted to spend in the UK on that specific scheme and the period that they have already been granted permission to participate in that scheme
- the difference between 25 months and the total period the applicant has already held continuous permission on the GAE route (including any period where any of the exceptions in [paragraph 39E of the Immigration Rules](#) applied)

Further information

GA4.21. You can find more information in the [Government Authorised Exchange visa](#) section of the GOV.UK website.

GA4.22. You should also refer to sections S7 to S9 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) for further information on immigration requirements, conditions of stay, extension applications and change of employment applications.

[Contents](#)

GA5. Certificate of Sponsorship for GAE workers

This section tells you how to assign a valid Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) on the Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) route.

Overview

- GA5.1. If you have followed all the rules in this guidance and you wish to sponsor a worker on the GAE route, you must assign them a valid CoS, using your [sponsorship management system \(SMS\)](#) account.
- GA5.2. Before assigning a CoS, you should satisfy yourself that the worker can meet the relevant [immigration requirements](#).
- GA5.3. You must only assign a CoS to a worker if you are authorised to sponsor individuals in the role specified on the CoS and on the particular scheme the worker is applying to take part in, as set out in [Appendix Government Authorised Exchange schemes](#). We will refuse any application for entry clearance or permission if you assign a CoS for scheme for which you are not authorised. We will also normally revoke your licence.
- GA5.4. You cannot assign a CoS if you're a B-rated sponsor, unless the worker is applying for permission to stay from within the UK and you sponsored the application which led to their last grant of permission on the GAE route. In all other cases, you must have an A-rating. For information on sponsor ratings, see section L8 of [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#).
- GA5.5. For detailed information on what a CoS is, and how many you can assign, see section S2 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#).
- GA5.6. You can find detailed technical guidance on how to assign a CoS on GOV.UK: [User manuals: sponsorship management system \(SMS\)](#) – see in particular manual 8.

Fees

- GA5.7. You must pay a fee for each CoS you assign – see the [UK visa fees](#) page on GOV.UK for information on current fee levels.

Use of the CoS

- GA5.8. Once you have assigned a CoS, the worker must use it within 3 months to apply for:
- entry clearance (a visa) if they are outside the UK
 - permission to stay if they are in the UK and eligible to extend their permission on, or switch to, the GAE route

- GA5.9. If the CoS was assigned more than 3 months before the date of application, we may reject the worker's application and not consider it.
- GA5.10. The worker must not apply for entry clearance or permission to stay more than 3 months before the start date recorded on their CoS. If they do, we will refuse their application.
- GA5.11. We will also refuse the application if the CoS:
- has been withdrawn by you or cancelled by the Home Office – see section S6 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) for information on when a CoS can be withdrawn or cancelled
 - was used in a previous application that was refused

What the CoS must confirm

- GA5.12. For a CoS to be valid, it must meet the requirements of paragraphs GAE 5.1 and GAE 5.4 of [Appendix Temporary Work - Government Authorised Exchange](#) to the Immigration Rules.
- GA5.13. By assigning a CoS on the GAE route, you guarantee that the worker will:
- be doing work, job-shadowing or training that's [eligible for the GAE route](#)
 - not undertake work, job-shadowing or training that has not been endorsed by your sponsoring government department or approved by the Home Office
 - not take part in work, job-shadowing or training for a period longer than permitted under the [relevant scheme](#)
- GA5.14. You also guarantee, to the best of your knowledge, that the worker will:
- not establish a business in the UK
 - comply with the conditions of their entry clearance or permission to stay – see section S8 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) for further information
 - leave the UK when their entry clearance or permission to stay expires, unless they qualify for an extension of stay or permission on another route
- GA5.15. The CoS must confirm all of the following:
- that you are sponsoring the worker on the GAE route
 - the worker's personal information (such as name, date of birth, nationality) passport details and contact details
 - the start and end date of their employment – see '[How long you can assign a CoS to a GAE worker](#)' below
 - total weekly hours of work

- where the worker will carry out their employment – this should include their main work address and any other regular work addresses, if relevant
- whether you used an agent (such as a recruitment agency, employment business or other intermediary) to find the worker and, if so, details of that agent
- the job title
- the relevant SOC 2020 occupation code for the role (select from the drop-down list under 'Job type') – see section S3 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) for further information on occupation codes
- the main duties of the role for which the worker is being sponsored
- a full explanation of [how the role is supernumerary](#)
- details of the worker's salary, including any guaranteed allowances and bonuses
- that the role is in an eligible occupation code listed in Table 1, 2 or 3 of [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#)
- whether you wish to [certify maintenance](#) for the worker (and, if relevant, their dependants) – you can only do this if you're an A-rated sponsor
- whether the worker [needs an ATAS certificate](#)

How long you can assign a CoS to a GAE worker

- GA5.16. You can only assign a CoS up to the maximum period that a person is permitted to spend in the UK under the terms of the specific scheme on which the worker has applied to participate in, as set out in [Appendix Government Authorised Exchange schemes](#). If you are sponsoring a worker in an application for permission to stay, you should check carefully how long they have been in the UK on the GAE route or on a particular GAE scheme.
- GA5.17. If you assign a CoS for a period longer than the maximum period for the specific scheme, and this is used in a successful application for entry clearance or permission to stay, we will normally revoke your sponsor licence. We will also speak to your endorsing government department and ask them if they wish to continue endorsing your scheme.
- GA5.18. For further information on entering start and end dates, see section S3 in [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#).

Reporting duties and record keeping

- GA5.19. Once you have assigned a CoS to a worker, you must tell us if they fail to start their employment, are absent without permission, or there are any significant changes to the nature of their work or salary, or to your organisation. For full details of your reporting and other duties, see [Part 3: Sponsor duties and compliance](#).
- GA5.20. You must also keep records for each worker you sponsor as specified in [Appendix D](#) to the sponsor guidance.

- GA5.21. If you fail to meet these duties, we may revoke your sponsor licence.
- GA5.22. You are responsible for all of the workers you sponsor under the scheme. It is important that you work closely with other bodies or organisations where your sponsored worker are placed. If you do not have enough control over your scheme – for example, if workers are not doing the work you said they would – we will take action against you. This may include revoking your sponsor licence.

[Contents](#)