Home Office

High Potential Individual case - worker guidance

Version 7.0

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About this guidance

This guidance tells case - workers how to consider applications to enter or remain in the UK under the High Potential Individual route. ‘You’ in this guidance means a case - worker.

This guidance is designed to be used alongside Appendix High Potential Individual of the Immigration Rules. The rules explain the requirements an applicant must meet and this guidance provides additional information on how to consider their application. Paragraph references refer to Appendix High Potential Individual unless otherwise stated.

You may also need to refer to the following section of the rules, where relevant:

- Part Suitability
- Appendix ATAS
- Appendix English Language
- Appendix Finance
- Appendix Tuberculosis (TB)

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior case - worker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors, then email the PBS and Economic Migration policy team.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Review, Atlas and Forms team.

Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- version **7.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **4 November 2025**

Changes from last version of this guidance

Updated after expansion of the route and Part Suitability transition.

Related content
Contents

Overview of the High Potential Individual Route

This section provides an introduction to the High Potential Individual route.

The High Potential Individual route is a work route which was introduced on 30 May 2022 and provides a route for international graduates who have been awarded an overseas degree-level academic qualification that is equivalent to a UK bachelor's or postgraduate degree. The qualification must have been awarded no more than 5 years before their application and be from a university that appears on the Global Universities List (GUL) which covers the date of award. The GUL is published annually on the GOV.UK website.

On 4 November 2025, the High Potential Individual route was expanded, increasing the number of universities which appear on the GUL and placing a cap on the route of 8,000 applications per year. The cap runs between 1 November and 31 October.

An applicant does not require a prior job offer to qualify and will be permitted to work in the UK without the need for a sponsor.

Dependent partners and children can apply on this route, as set out in the Dependants guidance.

High Potential Individual is not a route to settlement in the UK.

Requirements

The requirements applicants must meet are split into 3 parts:

1. **Validity requirements** - these outline the requirements which must be met for the application to be valid. They ensure, for example: the applicant has used the correct form and supplied any required identity documents. Applications which do not meet these requirements are invalid and may be rejected and not considered: see guidance on validity.
2. **Suitability requirements** - these requirements relate to the suitability of the applicant to be granted any form of permission, not specifically whether they qualify as a High Potential Individual. Applicants must not fall for refusal on general grounds under Part Suitability of the rules, must not be in breach of immigration laws (except for periods of overstaying where exceptions for overstayers applies) and must not be on immigration bail. Applications which do not meet the suitability requirements must be refused: see guidance on suitability.
3. **Eligibility requirements** - these are the main requirements specific to the High Potential Individual route. Applications which do not meet these requirements must be refused.

The table below sets out the paragraphs in Appendix High Potential Individual (HPI) for each of these requirements:

Application	Validity	Suitability	Eligibility
Main applicants – entry clearance and permission to stay	HPI 1.1 to HPI 1.7	HPI 2.1 to HPI 2.2	HPI 3.1 to HPI 7.4
Dependants – entry clearance and permission to stay	HPI 10.1 to HPI 10.5	HPI 11.1 to HPI 11.2	HPI 12.1 to HPI 17.5

Representatives

If an applicant has a UK based representative, you must check the representative is approved to provide immigration advice with either:

- the Immigration Advice Authority (IAA)
- one of the following authorities:
  - the Law Society
  - the Law Society of Scotland
  - the Law Society of Northern Ireland
  - the General Council of the Bar
  - the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives
  - the Faculty of Advocates
  - the General Council of the Bar of Northern Ireland

If the representative does not have the necessary permission to provide immigration advice, you must direct all communications to the applicant instead.

Burden and standard of proof

The burden of proof is on the applicant to show they meet the requirements of the route. The standard of proof is the balance of probabilities (which means it is more likely than not). When considering the application, you should have regard to all the relevant information and you should request more information, or clarification, if you need to do so.

Requesting more information

If you are in need of more information, or the clarification of certain details, to be able to consider the application, then you should refer to the Evidential Flexibility guidance.

Verifying documents

Verification checks

You must be satisfied that the documents an applicant has submitted with their application are genuine. You may need to verify documentation if:

- you have reasonable doubts about the authenticity of any document
- there is an instruction based on risk-profiles

The process for verifying documents will vary in each case, but may involve checking the authenticity of documents with:

- UK Ecctis
- banks
- employers
- universities
- professional bodies
- the relevant embassy or high commission
- other government departments (in the UK and overseas)

The purpose of these checks is to make sure that the document provided is genuine and accurately reflects statements made in the application. There is guidance available on how to refer documents to the V&C Sheffield Enrichment & Document Verification Team, which is responsible for conducting verification checks for Marriage and Family (M&F), Work and Study (W&S) routes.

Verification checks will be returned with one of the following results:

- documents have been confirmed to be genuine
- documents have been confirmed to be false
- the check returns an inconclusive result

If the documents have been confirmed as genuine, you must continue to consider the application.

If the documents have been confirmed as false, you must refer to guidance on Part Suitability. You must retain the document verification report on the case work system.

If the verification check returns as inconclusive, you must discount the document as evidence. The applicant cannot rely on this evidence, if alternate evidence has also been provided, that meets the requirement, this can be used instead.

Translating documents

If the documents are not in English or Welsh, the applicant must provide a fully certified translation from a professional translator or translation company that can independently be verified by the Home Office. The translation must include all the following information:

- confirmation it is an accurate translation of the document
- the date of the translation
- the full name and signature of the translator or an official from the translation company
- the translator or translation company’s contact details

If no translation is supplied, you should request one. If the applicant still does not provide a translation or if you are unable to verify the translation, the document must not be accepted as evidence.

Related content
OPI 1184 - VC Sheffield Enrichment Team
Contents

Related external links
Evidential Flexibility guidance
Global Universities List (GUL)

Validity for entry clearance and permission to stay

This section tells you where to find the validity requirements an applicant must meet when they apply for entry clearance or permission to stay as a High Potential Individual.

Before considering suitability and eligibility, you must check the application is valid by referring to paragraphs HPI 1.1 to HPI 1.7 and reviewing the information on the case work system.

If you are not satisfied the application meets all the validity requirements, you should consider whether to request more information, reject the application or proceed to consider.

You must consult the Validation, variation and withdrawal of applications guidance.

Application fees and Immigration Health Charge

The applicant must have paid the relevant application fee and any Immigration Health Charge (sometimes called the Immigration Health Surcharge or IHS). For further information, see the guidance on the Immigration Health Charge.

Biometrics and identity documents

You must check that the applicant's biographics match those in their valid passport or other travel document.

Minimum age

All applicants must be aged 18 or over on the date of application.

Government or international scholarship agency awards

Where an applicant has received an award covering fees and living costs from a government or international scholarship agency in the 12 months before the date of application, the government or agency must provide written consent to the application.

Switching

An applicant who is in the UK cannot apply to switch into the High Potential Individual route if they have, or were last granted, permission:

- as a Visitor
- as a Short-term Student
- as a Parent of a Child Student

- as a Seasonal Worker
- as a Domestic Worker in a Private Household
- outside the Immigration Rules

An applicant who is applying for permission to stay and has, or last had, permission as a student must have completed the course of study for which the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) was assigned (or a course to which paragraph ST 27.3 of Appendix Student applies). Alternatively, if the course was leading to a PhD award they must have completed at least 24 months of that course.

You can normally determine whether the applicant has completed their course by checking the end date on the CAS. However, the applicant may have completed their studies and therefore met the requirement of the Rules, in advance of the end date on the CAS. If the end date on the CAS indicates they have not yet completed their studies, you should consider whether the course may have been completed by looking at any information provided with the application (for example: a results transcript) and any notifications made by the Student Sponsor. You should also check if the course stated on the CAS was at PhD level and if so, use the course start date to assess whether they have completed at least 24 months.

If required, you should write to the applicant using the Validity reminder template, advising them that they have not shown that they have completed their studies and giving them an opportunity to do so before rejecting the application as invalid.

An application which does not meet all the above validity requirements is invalid and may be rejected and not considered: see guidance on Validation, variation and withdrawal of applications.

Previous periods of postgraduate permission

You must check the applicant's immigration history to make sure that the applicant has not previously been granted permission as a High Potential Individual, as a Graduate or on the Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES). If they have previously been granted permission as a High Potential Individual, a Graduate or on the DES, the application must be rejected as invalid.

Route cap

The application must not have exceeded the annual cap, which is 8,000, between 1 November and 31 October each year. The cap is automated, which should prevent applications being made outside of this.

Irish citizens

Most Irish citizens do not need permission to live and work in the UK and therefore are not eligible to apply for permission under the Immigration Rules

For further information on Irish Citizens, see Common Travel Area (CTA) guidance on Irish citizens) Common Travel Area. You must reject any application for a visa from an Irish citizen as invalid, except where they are subject to:

- a deportation order made under section 5(1) of the Immigration Act 1971
- an exclusion decision, or an exclusion order made under regulation 23(5) of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016
- a travel ban implemented under section 8B of the Immigration Act 1971

If an Irish citizen falls within one of the above categories, you should consider their application in line with the rules in the same way as any other applicant.

If further information is required, contact the CTA Policy Team.

Related content
Validation, variation and withdrawal of applications
Immigration health surcharge
Contents

Suitability for entry clearance and permission to stay applications

This section tells you where to find the suitability requirements an applicant must meet when they apply for entry clearance or permission to stay as a High Potential Individual.

You must check the application meets the suitability requirements by referring to:

- the suitability requirements for High Potential Individual, set out in paragraphs HPI 2.1 to HPI 2.2

Applications which do not meet the suitability requirements must be refused. You will need to review the applicant's immigration history, the answers given to the suitability questions on the application form and consider the guidance on Part Suitability.

Overstaying

You must check the applicant is not in breach of immigration laws, except for where there are exceptions for overstayers. Refer to the guidance for overstaying. You can check the applicant's current immigration status on Atlas.

Immigration bail

Any applicant who is in the UK on immigration bail is not suitable for the High Potential Individual route. You can check whether the applicant is on bail by checking the relevant case - worker systems.

Related content
Immigration Bail
Contents

Related external links
Part Suitability

Eligibility for entry clearance and permissions to stay applications

This section tells you the requirements an applicant must meet to be granted either entry clearance or permission to stay as a High Potential Individual.

The requirements for granting entry clearance or permission to stay can be found in the eligibility requirements contained in Appendix High Potential Individual.

To be eligible applicants must be awarded 70 points (for the Global Universities List degree, English language skills and financial requirement). In some cases (mainly entry clearance applications), applicants must also satisfy non-points requirements regarding tuberculosis testing.

The eligibility requirements can be found in the rules as set out below:

- Entry requirement (HPI 3.1)
- Tuberculosis certificate (HPI 3.2)
- Points requirement (overview) (HPI 4.1)
- Points for Global Universities List degree requirement (mandatory) (HPI 5.1-5.4)
- Points for the English language requirement (mandatory) (HPI 6.1-6.3)
- Points for the Financial requirement (mandatory) (HPI 7.1-7.4)

Applications which do not meet these requirements must be refused.

Related content
Contents

Tuberculosis certificate

This section tells you about the tuberculosis (TB) certificate requirement for application for entry clearance in the High Potential Individual route.

An applicant must provide a valid TB certificate with their application, if they have been present within a country listed in Appendix Tuberculosis (TB) of the Immigration Rules for more than 6 months immediately before the date of application.

If an applicant has not supplied a valid TB test certificate when they are required to, you should refuse the application under paragraph HPI 3.2.

There is information on Tuberculosis tests for visa applicants regarding which applicants are required to obtain a TB certificate before applying and the valid test centres.

Related content
Contents

Related external links
Appendix Tuberculosis (TB)

Mandatory points requirement

This page provides an overview of how mandatory points are scored for a High Potential Individual.

Under paragraph HPI 4.1 an applicant must score 70 mandatory points against the following requirements:

Type of application	Relevant requirement to be met	Relevant rules	Points
All applications	Global Universities List degree	HPI 5.1 to HPI 5.4	50
All applications	English language skills at B1 (intermediate)	HPI 6.1 to HPI 6.3	10
All applications	Financial requirement	HPI 7.1 to HPI 7.4	10

If an applicant scores fewer than 70 mandatory points, you must refuse their application and explain which requirements have not been met and why.

Related content
Contents

Global Universities List degree

This section explains how to assess the Global Universities List degree requirement for High Potential Individuals.

The applicant must score 50 points for this requirement. To award these points, you must be satisfied the application meets the requirements in paragraphs HPI 5.1 to HPI 5.4.

Global Universities List

The Global Universities List (GUL) will be published annually by the Home Office on the GOV.UK website. The lists will consist of non-UK universities that have been included within the top 100, subject to any exclusions the Home Secretary considers appropriate, of at least two of the following ranking systems:

- Times Higher Education World University Rankings
- Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings
- The Academic Ranking of World Universities

As each of the ranking lists are published in different months of the year (between June and October), the Home Office will compile and publish the GUL once all 3 rankings lists have been published.

Eligible degree

The applicant must have been awarded an overseas degree level qualification in the 5 years immediately before the date of application, which has been verified by Ecctis as being equivalent to a UK bachelor's, or UK postgraduate degree (normally master's or PhD). Ecctis will also verify and confirm the date of award by providing the month and year of award in the Academic Qualification Level Statement.

The awarding institute must also be listed on the GUL in respect of the year in which the qualification was awarded.

Examples

Scenario	Date of Application	Qualification	Date of Award as confirmed by Ecctis	Institute	Requirements met
A	22 June 2022	Master's	11 May 2019	University of Toronto	Yes
B	22 June 2022	Master's	11 May 2017	University of Toronto	No – the date of award is not within the 5 years immediately

Scenario	Date of Application	Qualification	Date of Award as confirmed by Ecctis	Institute	Requirements met
					before date of application
C	22 June 2022	Master's	30 August 2017	Carnegie Mellon University	No – at the date of award the institute is not on the Global Universities List published on 1 November 2016

Scenario A

If an applicant submitted an application on 22 June 2022 and was seeking to rely on a master's degree from the University of Toronto, awarded on 11 May 2019, this would meet the requirements as the qualification was awarded within the 5 years immediately before the date of application and the university appeared on the Global Universities List published on 1 November 2018.

Scenario B

If an applicant submitted an application on 22 June 2022 and was seeking to rely on a master's degree from the University of Toronto, awarded on 11 May 2017, this would not meet the requirements as whilst the university appeared on the Global Universities List published on 1 November 2016, the qualification was not awarded within the 5 years immediately before the date of application.

Scenario C

If an applicant submitted an application on 22 June 2022 and was seeking to rely on a master's degree from Carnegie Mellon University, awarded on 30 August 2017, this would not meet the requirements as whilst the qualification was awarded within the 5 years immediately before the date of application, the university did not appear on the Global Universities List published on 1 November 2016 which is used to assess qualifications awarded between 1 November 2016 to 31 October 2017.

Checking qualifications

The applicant will be relying on a recognised qualification awarded by an overseas institution, which Ecctis (formerly UK NARIC) must have verified as genuine and equivalent to a UK bachelor's or UK postgraduate degree. The applicant must state the Ecctis reference number on the application form.

You must check the Ecctis UKVI Verification Portal. You will be asked to input the applicant's Ecctis reference number and date of birth. The portal will return one of four outcomes. It will also return the UK equivalency of the qualifications and the month and year of award.

Outcome	What it means	Case - worker action
'Verified as genuine' and equivalency is 'bachelor's, master's or PhD'	Qualification is genuine and meets the standard of at least a UK bachelors.	Check that the institute appears on the applicable Global Universities List.
'Verified as genuine' and any other equivalency	Qualification is genuine but does not meet the standard of at least a UK bachelor's	Award 0 points for the qualification.
'Unable to verify'	Qualification may or may not be genuine.	Request evidence of the qualification from the applicant.
'Does not match the institution's records'	Applicant has not shown that they have the qualification.	Award 0 points for the qualification. Refer to guidance on false representations.

An example of when Ecctis may be unable to verify a qualification could be where the overseas university no longer exists, due to military conflict.

If the Ecctis reference number is incorrect, this may have been a simple error. You should check the application to see if the correct number has been provided elsewhere. If not, you should contact the applicant to give them an opportunity to provide the correct number.

Related content
Contents

Related external links
Global Universities List (GUL)

Language requirement

This section explains how to assess the Language requirement for High Potential Individuals.

The applicant must score 10 points for English language skills equivalent to level B1 of the Common European Framework of References for English language in all 4 components (reading, writing, speaking and listening). To award these points, you must be satisfied the application meets the requirements in paragraphs HPI 6.1 to HPI 6.3 and Appendix English Language.

To assess whether the requirement is met, you should refer to the English language guidance.

Related content
English language requirement
Contents

Financial requirement

This section explains how to assess the financial requirement for High Potential Individuals.

An applicant will automatically meet the financial requirement when they are applying for permission to stay in the UK, having been in the UK for at least 12 months with permission on the date of application. For details on how to consider this see the financial requirement guidance.

When the applicant is applying for entry clearance, or for permission to stay and has been in the UK for less than 12 months, an applicant can meet the financial requirement by providing evidence showing they have held funds of at least £1,270 for a 28-day period as set out in the financial requirement guidance.

Related content
Financial requirement guidance
Contents

Related external links
Appendix Finance

Grant or refuse

This section tells you how to grant or refuse an application under the High Potential Individual route.

The actions you must take will depend on the type of application:

- entry clearance
- permission to enter
- permission to stay

Period of permission granted

If the applicant meets the validity, suitability and eligibility requirements and was awarded 50 points for relying on a PhD or other doctoral level qualification to meet the Global Universities List degree requirement, you must grant entry clearance or permission to stay for 3 years.

If the applicant meets the requirements and was awarded 50 points for relying on another degree qualification (for example: bachelor's or master's) to meet the Global Universities List degree requirement, you must grant entry clearance or permission to stay for 2 years.

Related content
Contents

Conditions

This section tells you about the conditions attached to a grant of entry clearance or permission to stay on the High Potential Individual route.

Applicants granted entry clearance or permission to stay in the High Potential Individual route are subject to the following conditions:

- they have no access to public funds
- work (including self-employment and voluntary work) is permitted, except work as a professional sportsperson (including as a sports coach)
- study is permitted, except study with an education provider which is a Student sponsor and which would meet the approved qualification and level of study requirements of the Student route which are set out in Appendix Student
- study or research is subject to the ATAS condition in Appendix ATAS

Professional sportsperson condition

High Potential Individuals are not permitted to engage in professional sport (including coaching) during their permission but are able to participate in amateur sport (that is, engages in a sport or creative activity solely for personal enjoyment and not seeking to derive a living from the activity). Professional Sportsperson is defined in paragraph 6 of the Immigration Rules (Immigration Rules: introduction).

Related content
Contents

Grant or refuse entry clearance

This section tells you how to grant or refuse entry clearance on the High Potential Individual route.

Endorsements for grant

You must use the following endorsement: HIGH POTENTIAL INDIVIDUAL

The category is: High Potential Individual route.

Biometric information for entry clearance

Successful applicants for entry clearance are given an eVisa.

They will need to create a UKVI account to access their eVisa and view their immigration status. For further information, see: eVisas: access and use your online immigration status

Refuse entry clearance

You must refuse the application if you are not satisfied the applicant has met all the suitability and eligibility requirements of Appendix High Potential Individual.

Related content
Contents

Refuse entry at UK port

You must refuse permission to enter under paragraph 9.14.1 of the Immigration Rules if someone seeks entry as a High Potential Individual without a valid UK entry clearance or permission to stay for this purpose.

If you are considering cancelling an applicant's entry clearance or permission to stay as a High Potential Individual, you must refer to Part Suitability of the Immigration Rules.

Related content
Contents

Related external links
Part Suitability

Grant or refuse permission to stay

This section tells you how to grant or refuse permission to stay on the High Potential Individual route.

You should select the correct grant template in Atlas based on their period of grant.

Biometric information

Successful applicants for permission to stay are given an eVisa.

They will need to create a UKVI account to access their eVisa and view their immigration status. For further information, see: eVisas: access and use your online immigration status.

Rights of appeal and administrative review

If an application for entry clearance or permission to stay is refused there is no right of appeal against that decision. However, if they think the Home Office has made a casework error in considering their application, they can apply for an administrative review: see Appendix AR.

Related content
Contents

Related external links
Appendix AR

Dependants

This section tells case - workers about dependants in the High Potential Individual route.

The Immigration Rules covering entry clearance and permission to stay for High Potential Individual dependents appear in HPI 10.1 to HPI 19.3 of Appendix High Potential Individual.

For more information on the requirements dependants must meet in order to be granted permission in line with a High Potential Individual, see: Family members of points-based system migrants.

Related content
Contents