

Fast-track routes for gifted stars to come to the UK

Illustrious award winners and sport stars will be able to live and work in the UK more easily under new simplified Immigration Rules announced by the government.

New Immigration Rules laid today (Friday 10 September), will create the new fast-track International Sportsperson route, which will make it more straightforward for professional athletes across sports to work in the country.

While continuing to offer an option for anyone wishing to come to the UK for 12 months or less, the new route, which opens next month, brings together and replaces the current Tier 2 and Tier 5 paths, providing a dedicated and simplified visa for sportspeople and their sponsors.

The government has also added more illustrious prizes to the Global Talent Visa, making it simpler for more of the world's most gifted minds to come to the country.

Individuals at the pinnacle of their career and who have won prestigious awards from the world of arts, science, engineering, medicine and more will now be able to use their prowess to take advantage of the Global Talent Visa. This includes winners of the Booker Prize, Academy Awards, BAFTA and the Wolf Prize,

Under this path, applicants who hold a qualifying prize will be able to fast-track the endorsement application and instead make a single visa application.

Today's immigration changes are part of the UK's points-based immigration system to attract the brightest and best to the country, delivering on the government's New Plan for Immigration.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

We want to attract the world's greatest minds at the crowning point of their careers, so the UK remains number one on the global leader board in sports, the arts, science, film and technology sectors.

Through our points-based system we focus on talent and skills, not where someone comes from, and the immigration changes we're making today demonstrate this, making it much easier for the brightest and best to live and work in the UK.

Immigration Minister Kevin Foster said:

The UK is a proud home to some of the world's most talented stars and the changes we've made will make it even easier for people at the top of their game to come and work in the UK.

Our immigration rule changes put our words into action, delivering on the government's ambition to attract the brightest and best talent to the UK and ensure we build back better.

A spokesperson for the Football Association said:

The FA welcomes the Home Office changes to simplify the rules required for a visa application for an International Sportsperson. Ensuring a faster system after obtaining a Governing Body Endorsement from The FA will allow for the world's best footballers to enter the country more easily.

Among the 73 prestigious awards added to the Global Talent Visa include:

- science, engineering, humanities and medicine: Benjamin Franklin Medal, Faraday Medal, L'Oréal-UNESCO Award for Women in Science, various Wolf Prize categories
- arts and culture: the Booker Prize, various Queen Elizabeth Competition categories, International Dublin Literary Award
- film and television: best supporting actor and actress across the Academy Awards, BAFTA and Golden Globes

The government's Immigration Rule changes announced today follow last month's Sponsorship Roadmap which demonstrates how the immigration system will continue to ease administrative processes for British organisations sponsoring workers from abroad.