

Home Secretary announces new UK points-based immigration system

Home Secretary Priti Patel will today (Wednesday 19 February) launch a new points-based immigration system which will open up the UK to the brightest and the best from around the world.

The new system, which takes effect from 1 January 2021, will end free movement, reassert control of our borders and restore public trust.

It will assign points for specific skills, qualifications, salaries or professions and visas will only be awarded to those who gain enough points.

The government has listened to the clear message from the 2016 referendum and the 2019 General Election and will end the reliance on cheap, low-skilled labour coming into the country.

Overall levels of migration will be reduced, with tighter security and a better experience for those coming to the UK.

The new single global system will treat EU and non-EU citizens equally. It will give top priority to those with the highest skills and the greatest talents, including scientists, engineers and academics.

The [global talent scheme](#) will also be opened up to EU citizens which will allow highly-skilled scientists and researchers to come to the UK without a job offer.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Today is a historic moment for the whole country.

We're ending free movement, taking back control of our borders and delivering on the people's priorities by introducing a new UK points-based immigration system, which will bring overall migration numbers down.

We will attract the brightest and the best from around the globe, boosting the economy and our communities, and unleash this country's full potential.

The points threshold will be carefully set to attract the talent the UK needs. Skilled workers will need to meet a number of relevant criteria, including specific skills and the ability to speak English, to be able to work in the UK. All applicants will be required to have a job offer and, in line with the [Migration Advisory Committee's \(MAC\) recommendations](#), the minimum salary threshold will be set at £25,600.

The new points-based system will also expand the skills threshold for skilled workers. Those looking to live and work in the UK will now need to be qualified up to A level or equivalent, rather than degree level under the current system. This will provide greater flexibility and ensure UK business has access to a wide pool of skilled workers.

In line with the government's manifesto commitment there will be no specific route for low-skilled workers. It is estimated 70% of the existing EU workforce would not meet the requirements of the skilled worker route, which will help to bring overall numbers down in future.

Professor Alice Gast, President of Imperial College London, said:

British science is global. The new post-study work and global talent visas will help us to attract the world's brightest students and researchers, wherever they come from.

From the race to develop a coronavirus vaccine to clean energy, British science's international collaborations drive innovation and excellence.

Student visa routes will also be points-based and be opened up to EU citizens, ensuring talent from around the globe has access to the UK's world-class universities. Those wishing to study in the UK will need to demonstrate that they have an offer from an approved educational institution, that they can support themselves financially and that they speak English.

In addition, the seasonal workers pilot will also be expanded in time for the 2020 harvest from 2,500 to 10,000 places, responding to the specific temporary requirements of the agricultural sector.

EU citizens and other non-visa nationals will not require a visa to enter the UK when visiting the UK for up to 6 months. However, the use of national identity cards will be phased out for travel to the UK and the Home Office will set out our plans in due course.

Those EU citizens resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 can still apply to settle in the UK through the [EU Settlement Scheme](#) until June 2021.