

New international student immigration routes open early

New routes for international students to apply for visas will open early delivering on the government's commitment to introduce a new points-based immigration system.

As detailed in the immigration rules laid in Parliament today (10 September 2020), the Student route and Child Student route will both open on 5 October 2020 to the best and brightest international students from across the globe.

International students play a key part in the government's agenda to unleash the UK's potential now that we have left the EU. They make important contributions economically, academically, and financially. We recognise that as a result of coronavirus, some overseas students are choosing to defer their entry onto courses in the UK until the spring semester of 2021. Introducing these new routes now means that students will be able to benefit from the new streamlined process whilst still giving sponsors time to adapt after their autumn intake.

The routes treat all students equally, with international students, including those from Europe coming to study after the transition period ends, using the same, simplified route when it opens for applications.

It will ensure our world-leading education sector can continue to welcome talented and high potential students to our globally renowned universities, further education and English language colleges, and independent schools.

Minister for Future Borders and Immigration Kevin Foster said:

Now we have left the EU, we are free to unleash this country's full potential and implement the changes we need to restore trust in the immigration system and attract talent to drive our economy forward.

Launching the Student route early sends a clear message to the world we want the best and brightest to come to the UK to study at our globally renowned education institutions.

There will be no limit on the number of international students who can come to the UK. This will help to increase the total number of international students choosing to study in the UK higher education system each year to 600,000 by 2030, as set out in the International Education Strategy published in March 2019.

Chief Executive of the Russell Group Dr Tim Bradshaw said:

The UK is a global leader in higher education, research and

innovation. As we look to the UK's future place in the world, we want to protect our hard-won status and the opportunities it provides to help with the economic recovery of towns and cities across Britain – as well as finding solutions to the wider challenges that face our society.

We welcome these changes to the immigration rules, which will help to ensure the UK remains an internationally attractive place for the best and brightest students to study. We will continue to work with the government to ensure our visa system remains flexible and responsive to developing issues, such as those emerging from the coronavirus pandemic.

Cardiff University's Vice-Chancellor Professor Colin Riordan said:

Given the continuing uncertainties arising from the global pandemic, it's even more important that the UK is seen as open and welcoming so we can retain our hard-won status as a global leader in higher education, research and innovation.

That's why these changes are welcome. The new arrangements will send a clear message that we have the support of our government to welcome talented students from across the world to come and study with us.

The new Student route improves on the previous Tier 4 route by making it more streamlined for sponsoring institutions and their students, creating clearer pathways for students, and ensuring the UK remains competitive in a changing global education market.

Students will require a total of 70 points to be granted leave. They will achieve the required points if they can demonstrate that they have an offer from an approved educational institution, speak English and are able to support themselves during their studies in the UK.

We also want to ensure we retain the brightest and the best students to continue to contribute to the UK post-study, which is why we are launching the Graduate route in the summer of 2021. This additional new route will allow those who have completed a degree at a UK Higher Education provider with a track record of compliance to stay in the UK for two years (three years for PhD graduates) and work at any skill level, and to switch into work routes if they find a suitable job.

The government is on track to deliver its new points-based immigration which will attract talent and take back control by treating people from every part of the world equally and giving us control of our borders.