

Points-based immigration system opens

Applications for the new skilled worker visa open today (1 December), meaning the brightest and the best from around the world can now apply to work in the UK from 1 January 2021.

Under the points-based immigration system, points will be awarded for a job offer at the appropriate skill level, knowledge of English and being paid a minimum salary. Skilled worker visas will be awarded to those who gain enough points.

The new immigration rules will ensure that businesses can recruit the most highly qualified from across the globe to drive the economy forwards and keep the UK at the frontier of innovation.

It will also encourage employers to focus on training and investing in the UK workforce, driving productivity and improving opportunities for individuals, especially those impacted by coronavirus.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

This government promised to end free movement, to take back control of our borders and to introduce a new points-based immigration system. Today, we have delivered on that promise.

This simple, effective and flexible system will ensure employers can recruit the skilled workers they need, whilst also encouraging employers to train and invest in the UK's workforce.

We are also opening routes for those who have an exceptional talent or show exceptional promise in the fields of engineering, science, tech or culture.

People will normally need to be paid at least £25,600 per year unless the 'going rate' for that job is higher.

Applications are made online, and as part of this, people will need to prove their identity and provide their documents.

Once someone outside the UK has gone through all these steps, they will usually get a decision within 3 weeks.

They will need to have enough money to pay the application fee (ranging from £610 to £1,408), the healthcare surcharge (usually £624 per year) and be able to support themselves (usually by having at least £1,270 available).

The visa lasts for up to 5 years before it needs to be extended.

Alongside the skilled worker visa, a number of other routes have opened

today.

These include:

- Global Talent visa for people who can show they have exceptional talent or exceptional promise in the fields of science, engineering, humanities, medicine, digital technology or arts and culture
- Innovator visa for a person seeking to establish a business in the UK based on an innovative, viable and scalable business idea
- Start-up visa for a person seeking to establish a business in the UK for the first time
- the Intra-company Transfer visa, which is for established workers who are being transferred by the business they work for to do a skilled role in the UK

The Student route and Child Student route opened on 5 October 2020 to eligible international students from across the globe.