

Skilled Worker visa

Overview

A Skilled Worker visa allows you to come to or stay in the UK to do an eligible job with an approved employer.

This visa has replaced the Tier 2 (General) work visa.

Some [health workers and their families will get their visas extended for free](#) because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Eligibility

Your job

To qualify for a Skilled Worker visa, you must:

- work for a UK employer that's been approved by the Home Office
- have a 'certificate of sponsorship' from your employer with information about the role you've been offered in the UK
- do a job that's on the list of eligible occupations
- be paid a minimum salary - how much depends on the type of work you do

The specific [eligibility depends on your job](#).

You must have a confirmed job offer before you apply for your visa.

Knowledge of English

You must be able to speak, read, write and understand English. You'll usually need to [prove your knowledge of English](#) when you apply.

If you're not eligible for a Skilled Worker visa

You may be eligible for [another type of visa to work in the UK](#).

How long you can stay

Your visa can last for up to 5 years before you need to extend it. You'll need to apply to extend or update your visa when it expires or if you change jobs or employer.

If you want to stay longer in the UK

You can apply to extend your visa as many times as you like as long as you still meet the eligibility requirements.

After 5 years, you may be able to [apply to settle permanently in the UK](#) (also known as 'indefinite leave to remain'). This gives you the right to live, work and study here for as long as you like, and apply for benefits if you're eligible.

How to apply

You must apply online.

How you apply depends on whether you're:

- [outside the UK](#) and are coming to the UK
- inside the UK and [extending your current visa](#)
- inside the UK and [switching from a different visa](#)

If you want to change your job or employer, you must [apply to update your visa](#).

You can include [your partner and children](#) in your application to stay in the UK if they are eligible.

How long it takes

You can apply for a visa up to 3 months before the day you are due to start work in the UK. This date is listed on your certificate of sponsorship.

As part of your application, you'll need to prove your identity and provide your documents.

You may need to allow extra time if you need an appointment to do this. You'll find out if you need one when you start your application.

Getting a decision

Once you've applied online, proved your identity and provided your documents, you'll usually get a decision on your visa within:

- 3 weeks, if you're outside the UK
- 8 weeks, if you're inside the UK

If you need to go to an appointment, you may be able to pay for a faster decision. How you do this depends on whether you're [outside the UK](#) or [inside the UK](#).

How much it costs

You, your partner or children will each need to:

- pay the application fee
- pay the healthcare surcharge for each year of your stay
- prove you have enough personal savings

[Check how much money you'll need](#).

If you work in public sector healthcare

If you're a doctor or nurse, or you work in health or adult social care, check if you're eligible to apply for the [Health and Care Worker visa](#) instead. It's cheaper to apply for and you do not need to pay the annual immigration health surcharge.

What you can and cannot do

With a Skilled Worker visa you can:

- work in an eligible job
- study
- [bring your partner and children with you as your 'dependants'](#), if they're eligible
- [take on additional work](#) in certain circumstances
- do voluntary work
- travel abroad and return to the UK
- apply to settle permanently in the UK (also known as 'indefinite leave to remain') if you've lived in the UK for 5 years and meet the other eligibility requirements

You cannot:

- apply for most benefits ([public funds](#)), or the State Pension
- change jobs or employer unless you apply to update your visa

If your application is successful, you'll get a full list of what you can and cannot do with a Skilled Worker visa.

Your job

You must meet all of the following requirements to be eligible for a Skilled Worker visa:

- your job is eligible for this visa
- you'll be working for a UK employer that's been approved by the Home Office
- you'll be paid at least the minimum salary for the type of work you'll be doing

The minimum salary for the type of work you'll be doing is whichever is the highest out of the following 3 options:

- £25,600 per year
- £10.10 per hour
- the 'going rate' for the type of work you'll be doing

Check if your job is eligible

Before you can find out if your job is eligible, you need to know its 4-digit occupation code.

If you already have a job offer, ask your employer for your occupation code.

Look up your job's occupation code

If you do not know your code, you can search for your job in the [ONS occupation coding tool](#).

Not every job title is included. If you cannot find your exact job title, try searching for similar jobs.

Make sure the job description matches what you'll be doing. Some similar jobs have different codes, for example chefs and cooks. Chefs are eligible for a Skilled Worker visa, but cooks are not.

Check if an occupation code is eligible for this visa

When you know your occupation code, [view the table of eligible jobs](#) to see if it's included.

The table is very large. It's sorted in order of occupation code, with the smallest numbers at the top. You may be able to use your web browser to search for your code on the page.

Salary requirements

You'll usually need to be paid at least £25,600 per year or £10.10 per hour, whichever is higher. If the 'going rate' for your job is higher than both of these, you'll usually need to be paid at least the going rate.

Example Your salary is £27,000 per year, but the annual going rate for the job you'll be doing is £30,000. You do not meet the usual salary requirements for this visa.

Each occupation code has its own annual going rate. Check the going rate for your job in the [going rates table](#).

If you work in healthcare or education

There are different salary rules if you work in some [healthcare or education jobs](#), where the going rate is based on national pay scales.

When you can be paid less

If you do not meet the usual salary requirements, and you do not work in healthcare or education, you might still be eligible if your salary will be at least £20,480 per year and at least £10.10 per hour.

[Check when you can be paid less.](#)

Approved UK employers

You must have a job offer from an approved UK employer before you apply for a Skilled Worker visa. Approved employers are also known as sponsors, because they are sponsoring you to come to or stay in the UK.

View the [list of approved UK employers](#).

If you already have a job offer from an approved employer

Your employer - also known as your sponsor - will check that you meet the eligibility requirements. They'll give you a 'certificate of sponsorship' to prove this.

The certificate of sponsorship is an electronic record, not a physical document. It will have a reference number, which you'll need for your visa application.

You must apply for your visa within 3 months of getting your certificate of sponsorship.

Check which [documents you'll need to apply](#).

Documents you'll need to apply

When you apply you'll need to provide:

- your certificate of sponsorship reference number - your employer will give you this
- proof of your [knowledge of English](#)
- a valid passport or other document that shows your identity and nationality
- your job title and annual salary
- your job's occupation code
- the name of your employer and their sponsor licence number - this will be on your certificate of sponsorship

Ask your employer for a copy of your certificate of sponsorship if you do not have one.

Other documents you might need

Depending on your circumstances, you might be asked to provide:

- evidence that you have enough [personal savings to support yourself in the UK](#), for example bank statements (unless your certificate of sponsorship shows your employer can support you)
- proof of your relationship with [your partner or children](#) if they're applying with you
- your [tuberculosis test results if you're from a listed country](#)
- a criminal record certificate - if you're working in certain jobs
- a [valid ATAS certificate](#) if your employer tells you that you need one because your job involves researching a sensitive subject at PhD level or higher
- your UK PhD certificate, or your unique Ecctis reference number (formerly unique UK NARIC reference number) if your qualification is from outside the UK - you'll need to [apply through Ecctis](#)

You'll need a blank page in your passport for your visa if you're:

- from outside the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein
- from the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein but do not have a biometric passport with a chip in it

If your documents are not in English or Welsh you'll also need to provide a [certified translation](#).

Criminal record certificate

You'll need to provide a criminal record certificate if you're applying from outside the UK and you work in:

- education, for example teachers, education advisers and school inspectors, childminders, teaching assistants
- healthcare, for example nurses, doctors, paramedics, managers, pharmacists, dentists and dental nurses, ophthalmic opticians
- therapy, for example psychologists, speech and language therapists, counsellors
- social services, for example social workers, managers, probation officers, welfare and housing officers

[Check how to apply for criminal records checks.](#)

If you work in healthcare, you might be able to apply for the [Health and Care Worker visa](#) instead.

If you've lived in more than one country

You might need to provide a certificate from each country you've lived in, depending on your age and how long you stayed in each country.

If you're under 28, you'll need a certificate from any country you've stayed in for a total of 12 months or more since you turned 18.

If you're 28 or over, you'll need a certificate from any country you've stayed in over the last 10 years.

When you've got your documents ready

You can apply online once your documents are ready.

How you apply depends on whether you're:

- [outside the UK](#) and are coming to the UK
- inside the UK and [extending your current visa](#)
- inside the UK and [switching from a different visa](#)

If you've read the guidance and you're not sure if you're eligible, you can use a [Home Office checker tool](#). You'll be asked to confirm that you meet [all of the eligibility requirements](#).

Apply from outside the UK

You must apply online for a Skilled Worker visa.

Check which [documents you'll need to apply](#).

Your [partner or children](#) will need to apply separately.

Proving your identity and providing supporting documents

As part of your application, you'll need to prove your identity. How you do this depends on where you're from and what type of passport you have.

You'll either:

- have your fingerprints and photograph taken at a [visa application centre](#) - this is to get a [biometric residence permit](#)
- use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to scan your identity document - you'll also create or sign into your UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account

You'll be told what you need to do when you apply.

If you do need an appointment:

- the centre may need to keep your passport and documents while they process your application
- you may have to travel to get to your nearest visa application centre (this could be in another country)

Apply for a Skilled Worker visa

Once you've started your application, you can save your form and complete it later.

[Start now](#)

Continue your application

Sign in to your account using the link from your sign-up email.

How long it takes to get a decision

Once you've applied online, proved your identity and provided your documents, you'll usually get a decision within 3 weeks.

You'll be contacted if your application will take longer, for example because:

- your supporting documents need to be verified
- you need to attend an interview
- of your personal circumstances, for example if you have a criminal conviction

If you've applied through a visa application centre, [find out if you can pay to get a faster decision](#) - this depends on where you're applying from.

After you apply

You can ask to [cancel your application](#). You'll only get your fee refunded if UKVI has not started processing your application.

You'll get an email containing the [decision on your application](#). This will explain what you need to do next.

Your partner and children

Your partner and children can apply to join you or to stay in the UK as your 'dependants' if they're eligible. If their application is successful, their visa will end on the same date as yours.

Your relationship

A dependant partner or child is any of the following:

- your husband, wife, civil partner or unmarried partner
- your child under 18 - including if they were born in the UK during your stay
- your child over 18 if they're currently in the UK as your dependant

You'll need to provide evidence of your relationship when you apply.

Your partner

You must be able to prove that either:

- you're in a civil partnership or marriage that's recognised in the UK
- you've been living together in a relationship for at least 2 years when you apply

If your child is 16 or over

They must:

- live with you (unless they're in full-time education at boarding school, college or university)
- not be married, in a civil partnership or have any children
- be financially supported by you

If your child lives with you, you'll need to provide evidence of their address such as:

- a bank statement
- credit card bills
- driving licence
- NHS registration document
- an official letter from their university or college

Money they need to support themselves

Your partner and children must have a certain amount of money available to support themselves while they're in the UK.

You - or your partner or child - will need:

- £285 for your partner
- £315 for one child
- £200 for each additional child

Example

You - or your partner or child - would need to have £600 to bring your partner and one child with you to the UK (£285 for your partner and £315 for your child).

You would also need to have £1,270 available to support yourself for your own application.

You - or your partner or child - will need to have had the money available for at least 28 days in a row. Day 28 must be within 31 days of you or them applying for this visa.

You'll usually need to [show proof of this when they apply](#), unless either:

- you have all been in the UK with a valid visa for at least 12 months
- your employer can cover your family's costs during your first month in the UK - this must be confirmed on your certificate of sponsorship

If your partner or child is applying at a different time to you, they'll only need to prove they have enough money to support themselves if they have been in the UK for less than 1 year.

Apply from outside the UK

Your partner and children must either:

- [apply online as your partner](#)
- [apply online as your child](#)

Each family member will need to complete a separate application and pay the [visa fee](#).

They'll also need your application number - you'll get this when you apply. This number is called a Global Web Form (GWF) or a Unique Application Number (UAN). You'll find it on emails and letters from the Home Office about your application.

Proving their identity

As part of their application, your partner and children will need to prove their identity.

They'll either:

- have their fingerprints and photograph taken at a [visa application centre](#) - this is to get a [biometric residence permit](#)
- use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to scan their identity document - they'll also create or sign in to their UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account

They'll be told what they need to do when they apply.

If they do need an appointment:

- the visa application centre may need to keep their passport and documents while they process their application
- they may have to travel to get to their nearest centre (this could be in another country)

How long it takes to get a decision

Once they've applied online, proved their identity and provided their documents, they'll usually get a decision within 3 weeks.

They may be able to pay to get their visa faster or use other services depending on which country they're in - check with the visa application centre.

Extend your visa

You can usually apply to extend a Skilled Worker visa or a Tier 2 (General) work visa if all of the following are true:

- you have the same job as when you were given your previous permission to enter or stay in the UK
- your job is in the same [occupation code](#) as when you were given your previous permission to enter or stay in the UK
- you're still working for the employer who gave you your current certificate of sponsorship

Some [health workers and their families will get their visas extended for free](#) because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Your [partner or children](#) will need to apply separately.

You must not travel outside of the UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man until you get a decision. Your application will be withdrawn if you do.

Update your visa if you change job or employer

You'll need to apply to update your Skilled Worker or Tier 2 (General) work visa if:

- you want to change your job and your new job is with a different employer
- your job changes to a different occupation code, and you're not in a graduate training programme
- you leave a job that's on the shortage occupation list for a job that is not on the list

You do not need to apply again if you stay in the same job, but your job is taken off the shortage occupation list.

If you'll be doing a different job for your current employer, you only need to apply to update your visa if your new job is in a different [occupation code](#).

Your [partner or children](#) will need to apply separately.

Eligibility and documents you'll need to apply

Your new job must meet the [eligibility requirements](#) and you'll need a new certificate of sponsorship to prove this.

You'll only need to [provide other evidence](#) again if you've been in the UK for less than one year.

If you're applying to add a second job to your current visa

You must apply to update your visa if you take on a second job that is either:

- more than 20 paid hours a week in addition to the job you're being sponsored for
- in a different occupation code

Your second job must meet the [eligibility requirements](#) and you'll need a new certificate of sponsorship to prove this.

You'll also need to include a letter with your application explaining that you want to change your current permission to stay.

Your letter must state:

- your name
- your date of birth
- your current certificate of sponsorship reference number
- the date when your current permission to stay runs out

If your application is successful, you'll get a new visa giving you permission to do both jobs.

You do not need to apply to update your visa if you're [taking on additional work](#) in the same occupation code or you'll be doing less than 20 paid hours a week.

When to apply to update your visa

You can apply to update your visa up to 3 months before the start date of your new job.

You can continue working in your current job while your new application is being considered, or to work out your notice period - as long as you apply before your current visa expires.

You should not start your new job until you've got confirmation of your new permission.

You must not travel outside of the UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man until you get a decision. Your application will be withdrawn if you do.

Proving your identity and providing supporting documents

As part of your application you'll need to prove your identity. How you do this depends on where you're from and the type of passport you have.

You'll either:

- give your fingerprints and a photograph (biometric information) at a [UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services \(UKVCAS\)](#) service point - this is to get a [biometric residence permit](#)
- use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to scan your identity document - you'll also create or sign in to your UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account

You'll be told what you need to do when you apply. You'll also be told how to provide your supporting documents if you need to.

Apply to update your visa

You must apply online.

Once you've started your application, you can save your form and complete it later.

[Apply now](#)

Continue your application

Sign in to your account using the link from your sign-up email.

How long it takes to get a decision

You'll usually get a decision within 8 weeks of your application date.

You'll be contacted if your application will take longer, for example because:

- your supporting documents need to be verified
- you need to attend an interview
- of your personal circumstances, for example if you have a criminal conviction

You may be able to [pay to get a faster decision](#) - you'll be told if you can when you apply.

After you apply

If you need to change something in your application after you've sent it [contact UK Visas and Immigration \(UKVI\)](#).

You can ask to [cancel your application](#). You'll only get your fee refunded if UKVI has not started processing your application.

You'll get an email or a letter containing the [decision on your application](#). This will explain what you need to do next.