The UK's Points-Based Immigration System

An overview of key routes
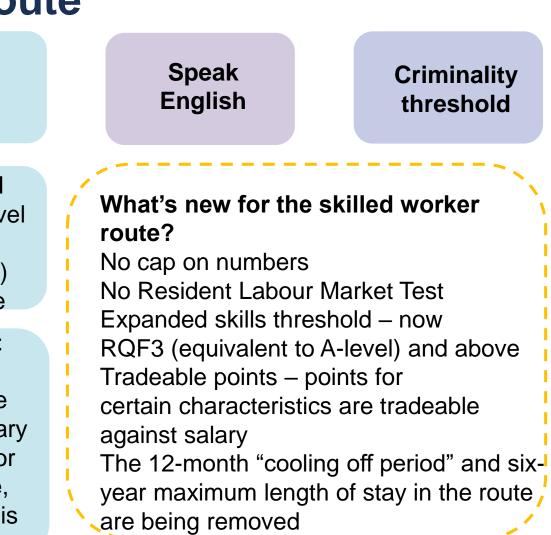
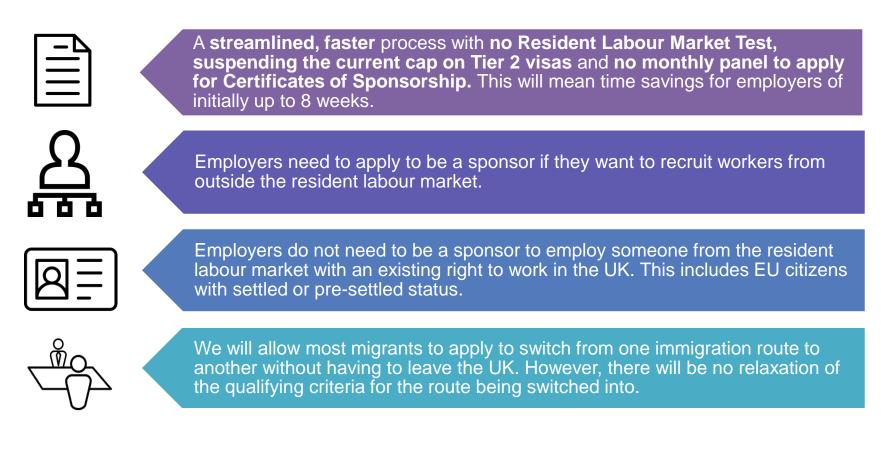**Bex Lissaman - Migration Policy**

Skilled worker route

The points-based system includes a route for skilled workers, both EU and non-EU citizens, who meet the following requirements:

Job offer from HO approved sponsor

Speak English

Criminality threshold

Skill level RQF3 (A-level and equivalent) and above

Relevant salary -Either the general salary threshold or going rate, whichever is higher

What's new for the skilled worker route?
No cap on numbers
No Resident Labour Market Test
Expanded skills threshold – now RQF3 (equivalent to A-level) and above
Tradeable points – points for certain characteristics are tradeable against salary
The 12-month "cooling off period" and six-year maximum length of stay in the route are being removed

Employing a worker- sponsorship

A **streamlined, faster** process with **no Resident Labour Market Test, suspending the current cap on Tier 2 visas** and **no monthly panel to apply for Certificates of Sponsorship.** This will mean time savings for employers of initially up to 8 weeks.

Employers need to apply to be a sponsor if they want to recruit workers from outside the resident labour market.

Employers do not need to be a sponsor to employ someone from the resident labour market with an existing right to work in the UK. This includes EU citizens with settled or pre-settled status.

We will allow most migrants to apply to switch from one immigration route to another without having to leave the UK. However, there will be no relaxation of the qualifying criteria for the route being switched into.

There will be longer term reforms to the design and user interface of the sponsorship process in 2022.

Global Talent

Under the Global Talent route, the most highly skilled workers who can achieve the required level of points, are able to enter the UK without a job offer if they are endorsed by a Home Office recognised endorsing body.

Endorsing bodies consider an individual's skills and experience:
- The Royal Society, for science and medicine
- The British Academy, for humanities
- The Royal Academy of Engineering, for engineering
- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), for researchers
- Tech Nation, for digital technology
- Arts Council England, for arts and culture

Recent changes to the Global Talent route include:
- A fast track option for holders of prestigious prizes and awards
- Revised criteria for consideration of senior appointments
- Expanded the definition of the types of academic and research roles that qualify

Graduate Route

Core application principles

Graduation

2/3 years leave

No sponsorship required

Fees

Biometrics

Graduate route – requirements and conditions

- The route will be points-based.

- There will be no English language requirement.

- There will be no maintenance requirement.

- Graduates will need to have completed a minimum of a year in the UK if studying a course longer than 12 months in length or the entirety of their course in the UK if they studying a course less than 12 months in length, although concessions around Covid-19 and distance learning are in place for this year's cohort.

- The applicant must have completed the qualification the CAS was issued for unless the student has made a permitted change on course. i.e. adding a work placement.

- Graduates are permitted to work at any level

- The graduates will have no recourse to public funds.

- Supplementary study is allowed, but not at a Student sponsor on a course type permitted under the Student route.

- Dependants already in the UK as a Student dependant may apply as a dependent of a Graduate at the same time as the applicant.

- Switching into work routes will be permitted if suitable employment is found.

Start-up and Innovator visas

These routes are for business founders wanting to set up an innovative, viable and scalable business in the UK.

Both routes require the migrant to:

- Be the founder, or on the founding team of a business which is innovative, viable and also scalable

- Have support from an endorsing body and maintain ongoing contact

- Demonstrate language proficiency

- Innovator - Must have funding of at least £50k

- Innovator - Limited to working only in their own businesses

No annual limits

Innovator allows settlement for the main applicant and their family, with accelerated for the most successful businesses

New and Reformed Immigration routes

In March the Government published the policy paper - Build Back Better: our plan for growth. This sets out the government's plans to support economic growth through significant investment in infrastructure, skills and innovation.

Global Talent route – expanded to include a new pathway for those with prestigious prizes or awards

Unsponsored route – allowing highly skilled people to come to the UK without a job offer or needing the approval of an endorsing body.

Innovator and Start-up routes - exploring how we can adapt the routes, so they continue to work in the best interests of the UK and provide an attractive offer for people.

Global Business Mobility – we will simplify existing arrangements into one single route ensuring the UK remains open and accommodating for those who wish to grow their business in the UK.

Other immigration routes

For a number of the main economic routes the main change is the bringing EU citizens into the routes. Examples of these include:

- Visitors
- Intra-Company Transfers
- Sporting
- Creative
- Charity
- Ministers of Religion and Religious Workers
- Government Authorised Exchange
- International Agreement
- UK Ancestry

Simplification

Underpinning these routes and the system as a whole will be simplified rules and guidance. We will make the best use of technology and implement the recommendations of the Law Commission to streamline and simplify the immigration system.

Questions welcome

How will the introduction of the Graduate Route affect how you use Start-up?