Top Tips for your UK work visa application
Work visas

1. Apply early

You can apply for your visa up to three months before you are due to start work in the UK, except for Tier 5 (Youth Mobility Scheme) when you can apply up to six months before you intend to arrive in the UK. Summer is the UK’s busiest period for processing visas so apply as far in advance as you can.

2. Chose the right work visa

There are different types of visa for working in the UK. You must chose the right visa and understand what activities you can and can’t do with each visa type. To find out which work visa is right for you visit [www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa](http://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa). It is also important that you understand and comply with the conditions of your visa and do not overstay. If you remain in the UK once your visa expires, you can be banned from returning to the UK in the future and from accessing further work.

3. Check what documents you need

You will need a reference number for your certificate of sponsorship (CoS) from your intended employer if you are applying for a Tier 2 or Tier 5 visa. Make sure you have all the documents you need ready when you apply. You can check what documents are required for your application at [www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/work-visas](http://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/work-visas). Applications from some countries will also require a Tuberculosis certificate, to find out more visit [www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/overview](http://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/overview).
4. Knowledge of English

You may have to prove your knowledge of the English language when you apply for a work visa. This may mean passing a secure English language test (SELT) which you must do before you apply for your visa. To find a centre near you and book your English language test visit:

- [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org) (for tests outside the UK)
- [www.trinitycollege.com/SELT](http://www.trinitycollege.com/SELT) (for tests inside the UK)

You won’t need to pass a SELT if you are a national of a majority English-speaking country, are applying for a T2 Intra-company transfer, or have a degree which we recognise as having been taught in English to the required level.

5. Ensure you can pay the visa fee

Visa fees vary according to the type of visa and how long it lasts for. When you apply, ensure you have sufficient funds to cover the visa fee, including those for dependants.

6. Go priority if you’re in a hurry

If you are on a tight timescale you may be able to use our priority services, which will place your application at the front of the queue. In many countries we offer a range of fee-paid services and options for additional flexibility. These include our Super Priority visa processed in 24 hours, our 5 day Priority visa and the Keep your Passport service, which enables customers to retain their passport for the majority of the application processing period. Find what services are available from your local visa application centre:

- Europe, Africa and parts of the Middle East visit [https://uk.tlscontact.com](http://https://uk.tlscontact.com)
- All other countries visit [www.vfsglobal.co.uk](http://www.vfsglobal.co.uk)

7. Health surcharge

If you’re coming to the UK for more than six months as a non EEA national, you’ll need to pay a health surcharge of **£200 per year**. If you are liable for the surcharge you and any dependants must pay at the same time as your visa application.
8. **Overseas criminal record certificate**

In April 2017, the Government extended the requirement to provide a criminal record certificate to Tier 2 visa applicants and their dependents who are coming to work in education, health and social care sectors.

Applicants and any adult dependents coming to work in these sectors will need to submit a criminal record certificate from each country in which they have resided continuously or cumulatively for 12 months or more in the 10 years before making their application.

9. **Biometric residence permit**

If you apply from outside the UK you will need to book an appointment at a visa application centre to have your fingerprints and photo taken. This forms part of your visa application and will enable you to get your biometric residence permit once in the UK, which provides evidence of your immigration status. You’ll have to collect your biometric residence permit within 10 days of your arrival date in the UK.

10. **Booking your travel**

We advise visa applicants not to confirm any travel arrangements until their visa has been granted and those of travel companions. Our processing times vary according to the type of visa application and can also vary during busy periods.

11. **If you need help**

You can contact UKVI and receive a reply within 24 hours in a range of languages via our International Enquiry Service. If you need to speak to someone you can call the helpline. Visit **www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-outside-uk** for details. Please note that British Embassies and Consulates cannot answer visa questions.