Working in the UK after your studies
The UK has an excellent offer for international students who wish to remain in the UK to work after they have graduated. Whether you are planning to remain in the UK to take up graduate-level employment, develop a business, or undertake professional training or an internship related to your qualifications, we have a choice of visas to suit your individual circumstances. You can find full details, and a tool to help you choose the right visa for you, on our website www.gov.uk/visas-immigration
Getting a graduate job with a UK based company

If you have an offer of a graduate-level job, from a registered Tier 2 sponsor, you can take up employment through Tier 2. Around 27,000 UK employers are licensed Tier 2 sponsors. You can start working with your sponsor as soon as you submit your Tier 2 application and if you have successfully completed a course at degree level or above at a higher education institution.

- Applying from within the UK is straightforward.
- If you apply from within the UK, your employer does not need to advertise the job before sponsoring you or pay the Immigration Skills Charge.
- There is no limit on the numbers of international students applying for Tier 2 within the UK.
- As a 'new entrant', you can work in jobs with lower salaries than other Tier 2 applicants for the first three years - minimum £20,800.
- It is easy for people in Tier 2 to change roles during or at the end of a graduate training programme.

For more information visit www.gov.uk/tier-2-general

Developing a business in the UK

The Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) route is the first of its kind in the world, with around 100 universities taking part. If you are identified by a higher education institution or the Department for International Trade’s ‘Sirius’ programme, you can stay on for up to two years to develop a business in the UK. You should spend the majority of your working time on your business but you can work in other jobs as well.

- You can switch to the Tier 1 (Entrepreneur) route at any time during the two years if you have secured £50,000 to invest in your business.
- You can also switch into Tier 2 under the terms described above.

For more information visit www.gov.uk/tier-1-graduate-entrepreneur-visa

Undertaking training or an internship

You can apply to switch into Tier 5 if you are a graduate wishing to undertake professional training or a corporate internship related to your qualifications, before pursuing a career overseas. You can only stay in the UK for up to 24 months in this route.

For more information visit www.gov.uk/tier-5-government-authorised-exchange

Option for PhD students

PhD students also have the option to apply to stay in the UK for an extra year under the Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme. You can use this time to gain further experience in your chosen field, seek skilled work or develop plans to set up as an entrepreneur before applying to switch into Tier 1 or 2.

For more information see the Tier 4 guidance and search for ‘doctorate extension scheme’.
Did you know?

98% of Tier 2 visa applications are successful.

There are over 300 visa application centres around the world, and seven premium service centres across the UK.

How to apply

You can apply whilst inside the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. An online application service is available for some application types.

Make sure you submit your application well in advance. If you remain in the UK after your current visa expires, you can be banned from returning to the UK, meaning you would not be able to gain further work or study. Those who remain in the UK illegally, without a valid visa, are not permitted to work, rent private property, hold a driving licence or access a wide range of publicly funded services and benefits.

Each person applying must also provide biometric information (fingerprints and a photo).

You can give biometric information at:

• certain Post Office branches if you apply online (this costs £19.20); and
• a premium service centre if you apply in person.

You’ll get a biometric residence permit if your application is successful.

Immigration Health Surcharge

For stays of less than six months, you will need to ensure you have adequate health insurance.

Non-European Economic Area (EEA) nationals who apply to come to or remain in the UK for a period of more than six months will be required to pay a health surcharge.

For further details, including exemptions, visit www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application

Additional services

Applicants can access a range of premium services (where available) to provide increased speed and flexibility such as:

• UK Premium services centre same day service;
• Super premium mobile service; and
• Tier 2 priority service.

Information on additional services is available on www.gov.uk/ukvi-premium-service-centres