

Frequently Asked Questions – in-country applications

Alongside this letter you will have received your Certificate of Sponsorship. Please see the guidance below regarding the visa application process.

I already hold a Tier 2 visa; can I apply under that route again?

No. The Tier 2 (General) visa route closed to new applicants on 1 December 2020, and was replaced with the Skilled Worker Visa route. All current Tier 2 visa holders can extend their leave under this new route and obtain a Skilled Worker Visa. All time already accrued on Tier 2 visas will still count toward the 5-year settlement requirement where combined with time spent on a Skilled Worker Visa.

How do I apply for the visa?

- For ‘standard’ Skilled Worker Visa applications, apply online here: https://apply-to-visit-or-stay-in-the-uk.homeoffice.gov.uk/sort/country-nationality/skilled_worker_in_uk?_ga=2.71895259.932256208.1606726929-1125884475.1606387631

If you wish to **expedite your visa application** at an additional cost, there are ‘value added services’ which are available to select as part of the online application process, which you can access locally, **however due to COVID-19 all fast-track services are currently suspended.**

- **In all cases, you must apply for your new visa before your current visa expires.**
- **Once you submit your visa application, you cannot leave the UK for any reason until the application is granted, or your application will be automatically withdrawn by immigration.**

How much will the visa cost?

Please see here for up-to-date guidance on visa fee costs: <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa/how-much-it-costs>

How long will the application process take?

UK Visas and Immigration provide for an 8 week service standard for all online applications. The 8 weeks starts from the date you enrol your biometrics at a [UKVCAS centre](#).

For applications made through the Priority and Premium services, you will receive your new Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) by post within 10 working days.

Can the University help with my visa costs?

Yes. The University operates a loan scheme for all current and prospective staff applying for Skilled Worker Visas where their contract will be for 12 months or more, covering common costs associated with making such an application, including the cost of visas for dependants.

You will find a loan application form attached to the email which contains your CoS. Further details of the scheme can be found here: <https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-services/visas-immigration/working-uk/skilled-worker-visa/skilled-worker-visa-loan-scheme>

What is the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)?

The payment of the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) is mandatory for all non-EEA nationals who are issued a visa of **more than 6 months** in length. It is an additional charge, over and above the visa fee and must be made up-front at the time of the visa application. Payment of the surcharge will ensure that you have **full access to the NHS** on the same terms as a permanent UK resident.

The surcharge will cost an additional **£624 per person per year that your visa is valid**. **Children aged under 18 pay a reduced fee of £470.**

For further guidance, please see the UKVI webpages: <https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application>

What documents do I need to submit?

After you submit your application online, you will be provided with an information sheet which confirms which documents you need to submit.

What are the conditions of holding a Skilled Worker Visa?

Please see the UKVI webpages here: <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa>

You are also permitted to undertake supplementary employment in line with the conditions here: <https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-services/visas-immigration/working-uk/supplementary-employment-skilled-worker-visa-tier-2-tier-5>

What happens if my application is refused?

You must notify your recruiting department immediately if your visa is refused.

Switching, Extending or Changing Employment?

As you are making a Skilled Worker Visa application from inside the UK, the type of application you make will be classed as either a **Switching, Extension or Change of Employment application**.

Please see the appropriate guidance below, only **one** of which will be applicable to you:

Switching – Page 3

Extensions – Page 5

Changes of Employment – Page 6

For guidance on **Settlement/ILR**, please see page 7

Switching

- ❖ **This section is only applicable to you if you are already in the UK and hold a visa in a different category**

Who can switch into the Skilled Worker visa route?

You can switch visa categories inside the UK whilst holding any other UK visa type, except the following:

- on a visit visa/visitor status granted at the border
- on a short-term student visa
- where granted permission to stay outside the immigration rules (for example on compassionate grounds)

You can switch to the Skilled Worker Visa route at any time, provided you apply before your current visa expires.

How do I meet the English language requirements?

Please see the guidance here:

https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/swv_english_language_guidance.pdf

How do I meet the Financial requirements?

If you have been in the UK for 12 months or longer on any visa type, you are exempt from the Financial requirements of the Skilled Worker Visa route.

If you are not exempt, please check the final entry on your Certificate of Sponsorship which will confirm if the recruiting department has agreed to certify the financial/maintenance for you. If they have, then no further action is required.

If they have not, then you must ensure you have at least £1,270 in your bank account/savings to show you can support yourself in the UK. You will need to have had the money available for at least 28 days in a row. Day 28 must be within 31 days of applying for this visa.

If you have family members applying for dependant visas, and where this has not been certified by your recruiting department, your family members must also 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

Please contact your recruiting department before you submit your visa application if you cannot meet the financial/maintenance requirement.

Do you have a mobile pop-up service to enrol my biometrics?

No the University does not have access to this service.

I'm already employed by the University. Can I continue working if my visa expires?

Yes, but only if you made your new visa application before your current visa expires.

To ensure the University can legally continue to employ you whilst your Skilled Worker Visa application is pending:

- We **must** see evidence of your application in line with the guidance you can find on our webpages: <https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/visa-expiries-refusals-and-appeals>
- You **must** also sign and return the form entitled 'ECS employee permission', which you can download [here](#); we are legally required to verify your ongoing visa application with the Home Office, via the Employer Checking Service.

Please send all documentation to the Compliance Team:

Compliance.Team@admin.cam.ac.uk

I'm a Student. When can I start work?

Where you have either completed your degree or are within 3 months of your completion date, you can apply for the Skilled Worker visa, and following that application you can commence full-time permanent employment in the role for which the CoS has been assigned.

The Compliance Team will require evidence that you have completed your degree and that you have applied for your Skilled Worker Visa. Please contact the Compliance Team for further guidance: complianceteam@admin.cam.ac.uk.

Once your Skilled Worker Visa application has been granted, you **must** present your passport and your new BRP to your departmental administrator as soon as possible.

Extensions

❖ **This section is only applicable to you if:**

- You currently hold a Tier 2 or Skilled Worker Visa; **and**
- You are currently working for the University of Cambridge; **and**
- You will continue to work in the same occupation/SOC Code.

When can I apply for the visa?

You cannot apply **more than 3 months** before your current Tier 2/Skilled Worker Visa expires. However, you must apply before your current visa expires.

Do I need to meet the English language and maintenance requirements?

No. As you already hold a Tier 2 or Skilled Worker Visa, you are exempt from meeting these requirements for this application.

Do you have a mobile pop-up service to enrol my biometrics?

No the University does not have access to this service.

Can I continue working for the University if my visa expires?

Yes, but only if you made your new visa application before your current visa expires.

To ensure the University can legally continue to employ you whilst your Skilled Worker Visa application is pending:

- We **must** see copies of evidence of your application, in line with the guidance you can find on our webpages: <https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/visa-expiries-refusals-and-appeals>
- You **must** also sign and return the form entitled 'ECS employee permission', which you can download [here](#); we are legally required to verify your ongoing visa application with the Home Office, via the Employer Checking Service.

Please send all documentation to the Compliance Team:

Compliance.Team@admin.cam.ac.uk

Failure to provide the above documentation before your current visa expires may result in the termination of your contract.

Change of Employment

❖ **This section is only applicable to you if:**

- You currently hold a Tier 2 or Skilled Worker Visa; **and either:**
 - You are currently working for a different employer; **or**
 - You are currently employed by the University of Cambridge but are moving to a new role in a different SOC Code.

When can I apply for the visa?

You must apply before your current visa expires, but there are no restrictions beyond this. Please also see the section below on “When can I start work”?

Do I need to meet the English language and maintenance requirements?

No. As you already hold a Tier 2 or Skilled Worker Visa you are exempt from meeting these requirements for this application.

Do you have a mobile pop-up service to enrol my biometrics?

No the University does not have access to this service.

When can I start work?

You **must** have obtained your new Skilled Worker Visa BRP before you can start work in your new role, and this has been seen and verified by your departmental administrator.

It is possible for you to continue working for your previous employer or, if you are currently employed by the University of Cambridge working in your previous role, until the new Skilled Worker Visa application is **granted**.

When/how do I become eligible for Settlement in the UK?

After you have spent five years in the UK holding a combination of Tier 2 and/or Skilled Worker Visas, you are eligible to apply for Settlement (also known as Indefinite Leave to Remain). If you are successful in gaining settlement, you are no longer subject to visa restrictions in the UK and you will have the unlimited right to work.

In order to become eligible after the minimum five-year period, you need to be aware of the following criteria:

- You should not have more than 180 days' absence outside the UK in any 12-month rolling period across the five years holding Skilled Worker Visas.
- The above includes all personal and business-related travel. However, absences **in excess of 180 days** will be waived where you are in an academic or research role and the absences were for 'research purposes'.
- Please see our further guidance on the ILR process here:
<https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-services/visas-immigration/working-uk/indefinite-leave-remainsettlement>