

## **Frequently Asked Questions – Overseas applicants**

Congratulations on receiving a job offer at the University of Cambridge.

In order to work in the UK, you will require a Skilled Worker Visa. Alongside this letter you will have received your Certificate of Sponsorship which you need to make your visa application. Please see the guidance below regarding the visa application process.

### **When should I apply for the visa?**

As part of the visa application you will be asked for your intended travel date to the UK. The visa will then be valid from that travel date, which can be a maximum of 14 days before the employment start date as declared on the CoS.

You cannot enter the UK before the start date as recorded on your visa.

### **How do I apply for the visa?**

You must apply online here: <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa/apply-from-outside-the-uk>

### **Where can I apply for my visa?**

The visa application must be lodged in the country where you currently reside. This does **not** have to be your country of origin, but can be any country in which you are living/working/studying. You cannot be a 'Visitor' in that country.

### **Do I require a criminal record check as part of the visa application?**

In the majority of cases, no.

However, if you are applying for a visa and being sponsored for a job in any of the following occupation codes (see your CoS for details), then as part of the visa application you must provide a criminal record certificate from the relevant authority in any country in which you have been present for 12 months or more (whether continuously or in total) in the past 10 years, while aged 18 or over:

- 2317 Senior professionals of educational establishments
- 2449 Welfare professionals not elsewhere classified
- 3235 Counsellors
- 3239 Welfare and housing associate professionals not elsewhere classified
- 3562 Human resources and industrial relations officers

### **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 University's Sponsor Rating?**

The University of Cambridge is an A-rated Premium Sponsor.

### **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](https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/swv_english_language_guidance.pdf)

### **How do I meet the Financial requirements?**

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.

### **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?**

This will vary depending on the country in which you submit your visa application. For guidance on location specific timeframes, see here: <https://www.gov.uk/visa-processing-times>

Certain countries provide enhanced services which will expedite the visa application. For details on which services are available, including the processing times and the cost, see: <https://www.vfsglobal.co.uk/global/index.html>

### **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 is the application process for my dependants?**

Your dependants can apply at the same time as you to enter the UK. Alternatively, they can wait until you have entered the UK and started work before they apply.

Your dependants must apply here: <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa/your-partner-and-children>

We have comprehensive guidance for dependants on our webpages here: <https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-services/visas-immigration/working-uk/dependant-visas>

### **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 happens after the application is granted?**

If your application is granted, the visa you initially receive inside your passport will be valid for 90 days. This is known as an 'entry vignette' and will facilitate your entry into the UK. **You must enter the UK before the vignette expires or you will have to re-apply for your visa.**

Within ten days of your arrival in the UK, you are required to collect your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) from a UK Post Office. The BRP will state the full length of leave you have been granted and will supersede the entry vignette.

Full details of how you arrange collection of your BRP will be provided to you by UKVI at the point your application is approved. For further guidance, please see the UKVI webpages: <https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits>

### **What happens if my application is refused?**

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

If you are refused, there is no separate appeal process, but you may be able to lodge what is known as an 'Administrative Review'. Please see any correspondence from the Home Office that accompanies your refusal letter.

### **Where can I find information about relocating to the UK?**

The University provides comprehensive guidance on common issues and topics regarding relocating to the UK, including accommodation, healthcare, schooling, banking, tax, travel and more: <https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-services/relocating-uk>

### **What happens on my first day of work?**

Your departmental administrator will contact you in advance of your arrival to make arrangements for your first day. Under UK legislation, as an employer we are required to check that you hold permission to live and work in the UK before you start work. You can evidence this with your passport and your 30 day vignette or your BRP.

You must bring your identity documents as above to your department for copying before work commences. If you have not yet collected your BRP before your first day, you can start work on the basis of your 30 day vignette provided it is still valid. You then **must** obtain your BRP from the Post Office **as soon as possible** and present this to your departmental administrator.

### **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>

### **Can I extend my Skilled Worker Visa?**

Yes. You can hold an unlimited number of Skilled Worker Visas with as many employers as you wish, with **no maximum limit**.

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

After you have spent five years in the UK on a Skilled Worker Visa 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>