

Frequently Asked Questions – Overseas applicants

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

When should I apply for the visa?

You cannot enter the UK before the start date as recorded on your visa. The start date of your visa will be recorded as either:

- 14 days **before** the start date on your Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS), which is your employment start date; **or**
 - 7 days **before** your date of travel, provided this is **not** more than 14 days beyond your CoS start date (as above); **or**
 - The date your visa is actually issued.
- **The visa start date will be determined by whichever of the above is the latest**

(Please also see the section below entitled ‘What happens after the application is granted’)

How do I apply for the visa?

You must apply online here: <https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/apply-visa-type/tier5>

Where prompted, please select: “*Tier 5 (Temporary Worker) visa - Government Authorised Exchange*”

Where can I apply for my visa?

The visa application can be lodged in any country in the world, provided you are present in that country lawfully (this can include as a visitor).

(Entry Clearance guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/where-to-apply-ecb05/ecb5-where-to-apply-the-policy>)

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 is the University's Sponsor Rating?

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

How do I meet the Maintenance requirements?

Please check the final entry on your Certificate of Sponsorship which will confirm if the recruiting department has agreed to certify maintenance for you. If they have, then no further action is required.

If they have not, then you must ensure you have a bank/savings account in your name that holds at least £945. You must have had this in your bank account for **a full 90 days before you apply**. If the balance of your account has fallen below £945 for even a single day in that 90 day period, your visa application will be refused.

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

How much will the visa cost?

Please see here for up-to-date guidance on visa fee costs: <https://www.gov.uk/tier-5-government-authorised-exchange>

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 **£400 per person per year that your visa is valid**. For example, if you apply for a three year visa, you will be charged an additional £1,200. If you have dependants, the surcharge will also apply to their visa applications on the same basis. The full cost must be paid at the point of application.

For further guidance, please see the UKVI webpages: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-health-surcharge-information-for-migrants>.

How do I pay the IHS?

As part of the online visa application process, you will be prompted to pay the surcharge via a separate online portal. After payment of the charge, you will automatically be issued a long reference number which will start 'IHS'.

When prompted in the online visa application, you must enter this reference number in order to proceed.

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 then they can apply to join you here.

We have comprehensive guidance for dependants on our webpages here:

<http://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-services/immigration/visas-and-right-work-uk/time-limited-right-work/dependant-visas>

What happens after I submit and pay for the application?

There may be slight variations depending on the country in which you submit your application, but in general, after you submit your application online and make payment you will be sent an e-mail from the Home Office requesting you to attend a local Visa Application Centre to enrol your fingerprints and photographs.

Once that is complete, you will be asked to send all your supporting documentation to the Embassy, who will then consider your application. **You will be informed by the Home Office where you need to send your documents.**

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 only be valid for 30 days. This is known as a '30 day 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 30 day 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.

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 Tier 5 visa?

Please see the UKVI webpages here: <https://www.gov.uk/tier-5-government-authorised-exchange>

You are also permitted to undertake supplementary employment in line with the conditions here: <http://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-services/immigration/visas-and-right-work-uk/time-limited-right-work/tier-2tier-5-supplementary>

Can I extend my Tier 5 visa?

Yes, but only up to a **maximum of 2 years**. It is not possible to extend beyond this time for any reason.