Global Talent Visa

Guidance for current and prospective staff
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Overview of the Global Talent Visa

The Global Talent Visa route replaced the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa route on 20th February 2020. Those holding Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visas issued before 20th February 2020 are not required to do anything to preserve their visa status - all their existing terms, conditions and validity remain intact.

From 1 January 2021, this route is accessible by new arrivals of EU/EEA & Swiss nationals.

The Global Talent Visa is available for people who are internationally recognised as leaders or potential leaders in the fields of science and the arts, and who require a visa to work in the UK. The visa comes with many benefits over its counterpart, the Skilled Worker Visa:

- Greater flexibility in your employment. With a Global Talent Visa you can freely move between institutions, locations, jobs/roles. By contrast, a Skilled Worker Visa ‘ties’ you to a particular employer and job role, requiring you in most cases to apply for a new visa if you move jobs.

- A low cost, flat-rate visa (typically half the cost of a 5 year Skilled Worker Visa).

- Greater flexibility to undertake collaborations within the UK.

- Your choice in visa length (from one year to five years) with the option to retain this visa category indefinitely.

- An application for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)/settlement can be made after 3 years, which will exempt you from the requirement to hold a visa to work in the UK.

- No cap on visa numbers.

Applying for a Global Talent visa is a two-stage process:

For the first stage, you must apply to be endorsed by one of the endorsing bodies who have been given authority by the Home Office to determine who meets the visa criteria:

- The Royal Society
- The British Academy
- The Royal Academy of Engineering
- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)
- Arts Council England

In all cases, the endorsement cost is non-refundable.

After gaining an endorsement, you are then able to proceed to the second stage, which is the visa application itself. If you gain an endorsement, you are guaranteed a Global Talent visa (subject to normal immigration checks).
Applying for an Endorsement (stage 1)

It is possible to apply for the endorsement from either inside or outside the UK, regardless of your visa status. However, for the visa application (stage 2), there are certain restrictions on where and how this can be submitted. Further guidance on this can be found in the ‘Applying for the visa’ section of this guidance.

There are four potential paths through which an endorsement for Global Talent can be gained. Each path has specific application criteria and eligibility. Please see the following guidance for each path:

1. Appointed to senior academic or research position
2. Awarded an eligible individual Fellowship
3. Name or job title listed on eligible grant application
4. ‘Standard’ peer review path
Path 1 – Appointed to a Senior Academic or Research position

Any individual appointed to a role with responsibility for “academic or research leadership or development”, or “directing or leading a programme of research” at the University will be automatically eligible for a Global Talent Visa.

In practice, the following roles at the University will be able to access this route: Professor, Associate Professor, Reader, Head of Department, Director of Research and Principal Research positions.

Please note that postdoctoral research positions (i.e. Research Associate, Research Assistant) are not eligible to access this route.

Steps to apply

1) Upon acceptance of a job offer for a senior academic or research position at the University, your department may make you aware of this path to a visa. If not, please contact the HR Immigration Compliance Team in the first instance.

2) The Immigration Team will provide a letter for you, which will form the basis of your application for an endorsement for Global Talent. A signed copy of this letter will be provided to you by email. You will not need to submit the original.

3) Once you have the letter, you can apply for endorsement online: https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/global-talent-endorsement

   a) On the application form, you will first be asked to enter your personal details. Once you complete those sections, the form will ask you about your application. Please see the following guidance on some of the questions which may not be clear:

   This question is asking if you want to apply for the visa (stage 2) at the same time as the endorsement application (stage 1).

   You do not need to do so; this is only really beneficial to you if you are currently in the UK and your current visa is about to expire. Please contact the HR Immigration Compliance Team if you need further advice on this issue.
Select ‘Exceptional talent’.

Enter your field of talent as listed on gov.uk. If your particular field is not listed, please select the closest option.

Select the most appropriate endorsing body, again with reference to the above webpage.

Tick the boxes and enter the employer name as shown, and enter the appropriate job title (the one which you have been offered) in the required box.
b) After you submit the application, you should send the HR letter, along with the details of your role, to the Home Office using the email address on the short ‘checklist’ you are provided.

c) The Home Office will forward the application to the Royal Society/British Academy/Royal Academy of Engineering (as appropriate). Within 14 days of this referral, you will receive your Global Talent endorsement confirmation via email.

d) You can then apply for stage 2, which is the visa application itself. You must do so within 3 months of receipt of the endorsement confirmation. Please see the ‘Applying for the visa’ section of this guidance.
Path 2 – Awarded an eligible Individual Fellowship

Any individual awarded a specific Individual Fellowship on the list approved by the British Academy, Royal Academy of Engineering and the Royal Society is automatically eligible to obtain a Global Talent visa. Please note that the list is divided in to ‘Exceptional Talent’ and ‘Exceptional Promise’ eligible fellowships.

Steps to apply

1) You are eligible for this path as soon as you are awarded an Individual Fellowship from the above list. You can be a current or prospective employee/visitor at the University.

2) You will require a copy of your Fellowship award letter. You will not need to submit the original.

3) Once you have the letter, you can apply for endorsement online: https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/global-talent-endorsement

   a) On the application form, you will first be asked to enter your personal details. Once you complete those sections, the form will ask you about your application. Please see the following guidance on some of the questions which may not be clear:

   This question is asking if you want to apply for the visa (stage 2) at the same time as the endorsement application (stage 1).

   You do not need to do so; this is only really beneficial to you if you are currently in the UK and your current visa is about to expire. Please contact the HR Immigration Compliance Team if you need further advice on this issue.

   Select either ‘Exceptional talent’ or ‘Exceptional promise’ depending upon which category your Fellowship falls under (as per the above link to eligible fellowships).
b) After you submit the application, you should send the Fellowship award letter (no other documents required) to the Home Office using the email address on the short 'checklist' you are provided.

c) The Home Office will forward the application to the Royal Society/British Academy/Royal Academy of Engineering (as applicable). Within 14 days of this referral, you will receive your Global Talent endorsement confirmation via email.

d) You can then apply for stage 2, which is the visa application itself. You must do so within 3 months of receipt of the endorsement confirmation. Please see the ‘Applying for the visa’ section of this guidance.
Path 3 – Job title or name listed on eligible grant/award

This path is open to any non-UK Research Assistant/Research Associate/Senior Research Associate or specialist technician at the University who meet the following criteria:

- Holds, or has been offered, at the point of applying for endorsement, a contract of employment/hosting agreement of at least one year in length; and
- Hosted/employed at University of Cambridge and will provide critical contributions to work supported by a research grant or award which lasts at least 2 years in total and is worth at least £30,000 from a funder approved by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI); and
- **Name or job title** (as above) is listed on the eligible grant/award; and
- Spending at least 50% of working time on the eligible grant/award (**not** 50% FTE – part time working is allowed and there are no minimum salary requirements). Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators may be able to aggregate time spent on multiple eligible grants.

**Steps to apply**

1) To be eligible for this path, you can be a current or prospective employee/visitor at the University. **You must meet the eligibility requirements as set out above.**

2) For documentation, you will require:
   
   a) a letter issued by HR Compliance which confirms your eligibility for the route; **and**
   
   b) written confirmation of the award from the grant/award funder that confirms eligibility (**note**: we may be able to include a link to the grant information in the letter at a) above, in which case you would not need to submit a grant document).

3) Once you have the required letter, you can apply for endorsement online: [https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/global-talent-endorsement](https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/global-talent-endorsement)

   a) On the application form, you will first be asked to enter your personal details. Once you complete those sections, the form will ask you about your application. Please see the following guidance on some of the questions which may not be clear:

   This question is asking if you want to apply for the visa (stage 2) at the same time as the endorsement application (stage 1).

   **You do not need to do so**; this is only really beneficial to you if you are currently in the UK and your current visa is about to expire. Please contact the [HR Immigration Compliance Team](#) if you need further advice on this issue.
b) After you submit the application, you should send the HR Director letter and, if required, the grant award letter (no other documents required) to the Home Office using the email address on the ‘checklist’ you are provided.

c) The Home Office will forward the application to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). Within 14 days of this referral, you will receive your Global Talent endorsement confirmation via email.

d) You can then apply for stage 2, which is the visa application itself. You must do so within 3 months of receipt of the endorsement confirmation. Please see the ‘Applying for the visa’ section of this guidance.

e) If you currently hold a Tier 4/Student visa, you must not submit the visa (stage 2) application until:
i) Undergraduate and Masters students: you have completed your course (i.e. the course end date on your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) has passed).

If you meet the criteria for this path, the HR Compliance Team can provide the letter confirming your eligibility for the route up to 3 months before the course end date on your CAS. If you are a University of Cambridge student, we will verify this on our internal system. If you are an external student, you will be asked to provide a copy of your CAS.

ii) PhD students: you have completed at least 24 months of your current PhD studies.

If you meet the criteria for this path, the HR Compliance Team can provide the letter confirming your eligibility for the route 21 months after the course start date on your CAS. If you are a University of Cambridge student, we will verify this on our internal system. If you are an external student, you will be asked to provide a copy of your CAS.
Path 4 – ‘Standard’ Peer Review path

If you are not eligible for endorsement via any of the first three paths, you can still seek endorsement by the Royal Society/British Academy/Royal Academy of Engineering (as appropriate), and they will undertake a peer-review assessment of your career to determine eligibility for the visa.

Steps to apply

1) To be eligible for this path, you can be a current or prospective employee/visitor at the University.

2) Peer Review has two categories:
   a) Exceptional Talent, for those at an advanced stage in their career and who are leaders in their field; and
   b) Exceptional Promise, for those at an earlier stage in their career, who have the potential to be a leader in their field.

   It is up to you to be realistic in deciding into which category you fit best.

3) You must meet the following requirements:
   a) Be an active researcher in a university, a research institute or in industry; and
   b) Hold a PhD, or have equivalent research experience which can include industrial or clinical research, but cannot include time spent carrying out research while studying; and
   c) Be able to produce the required documents for assessment (see 4 below); and
   d) Exceptional Promise category only: Be at an early stage of your career.

4) You will require the following documentation to evidence your eligibility:
   a) Your most recent CV (3 sides of A4 paper at most); and
   b) A letter of personal recommendation from an eminent person resident in the UK who can support your application. Once completed, the letter should be sent to you for inclusion in your application pack. There are no issues with you seeing and reading the letter yourself. The letter should be dated and must include the following:
      o How the eminent person knows you;
      o Your achievements in the specialist field;
      o How in the opinion of the eminent person you exhibit Exceptional Promise/Talent;
      o How you would benefit from living in the UK; and
      o How you are likely to contribute to UK research/innovation and to wider society.
   c) Where you are seeking endorsement as a person of ‘Exceptional Talent’ (as opposed to ‘Exceptional Promise’, where this is not required), you must also include second letter which contains an objective assessment of your reputation in your field. The author
must be a senior member of a UK organisation involved in research or innovation in your field (the more senior/eminent in your field, the better). The letter should include:

- confirmation that the author is a senior member of a reputable UK organisation concerned with research or innovation in your field; and
- why the author considers that your work shows exceptional talent; and
- how you are likely to contribute to UK research or innovation excellence and to wider society; and
- confirmation that the author’s assessment is provided in their capacity as an objective expert in their field and is an objective assessment of your reputation in the field, notwithstanding any personal knowledge they may have of you or any direct involvement they may have (or previously have had) in your work.

d) Finally, within the application you will be required to write a personal statement "outlining your case for qualifying for Global Talent". It should be of about two pages and no more than 7,000 characters. There are no ‘rules’ concerning the content of the personal statement. However, a good structure to use is:

- Your achievements to date
- Your current research interests
- Your future aspirations

5) **Apply for endorsement online:** [https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/global-talent-endorsement](https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/global-talent-endorsement)

a) On the application form, you will first be asked to enter your personal details. Once you complete those sections, the form will ask you about your application. Please see the following guidance on some of the questions which may not be clear:

```
Entry clearance or leave to remain
Are you applying for entry clearance or leave to remain (stage 2) at the same time as making this application for endorsement (stage 1)?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Save and continue  Cancel

Return to this application later
Show and edit answers
```

This question is asking if you want to apply for the visa (stage 2) at the same time as the endorsement application (stage 1).

**You do not need to do so;** this is only really beneficial to you if you are currently in the UK and your current visa is about to expire. Please contact the [HR Immigration Compliance Team](mailto:HRImmigrationComplianceTeam@yourcompany.com) if you need further advice on this issue.
Select either ‘Exceptional talent’ or ‘Exceptional promise’ depending upon which category you fall under (as per step 2 above).

Enter ‘academia/research’ into the field of talent box.

Select the most appropriate endorsing body, again with reference to the above webpage.

The Peer Review path is not fast-track, so select ‘No’.

Enter your academic field as listed on gov.uk. If your particular field is not listed, please select the closest option.

Note: on the following page, you should only tick the options for which you can provide documentary evidence. You do not need to tick every box.
b) After you submit the application, you should send the relevant documentation (as per step 4 above) to the Home Office using the email address on the ‘checklist’ you are provided.

c) The Home Office will forward the application to the Royal Society/British Academy/Royal Academy of Engineering (as applicable). Within **4-8 weeks** of this referral, you will receive your Global Talent endorsement confirmation via email.

d) You can then apply for **stage 2**, which is the visa application itself. You must do so within 3 months of receipt of the endorsement confirmation. **Further guidance on this can be found in the ‘Applying for the visa’ section** of this guidance.
Applying for the visa (stage 2)

If/when your application is endorsed, you will be notified via the email address you provided in your application form.

You must apply for the Global Talent Visa within three months of notification of endorsement.

How to apply depends on where you are applying from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am applying from outside the UK</th>
<th>I am applying from inside the UK</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You must apply online:</td>
<td>You must apply online:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can apply from any country in the world, (except Republic of Ireland) even if you are only temporarily resident there, i.e. as a visitor.</td>
<td>You can switch into Global Talent from any visa whilst inside the UK except if you hold:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A visitor visa/visitor status granted at the border;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A short-term study visa;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A visa issued outside of the Immigration Rules, i.e. ‘exempt status’.</td>
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For further information on how to apply, please see the published Home Office guidance: [https://www.gov.uk/global-talent](https://www.gov.uk/global-talent)

**Important:** if you are applying for a visa in the UK (in other words, if you are extending an existing Global Talent Visa, or you are applying to switch from another visa type) the start date will be the date the permission to stay is granted, rather than the day after your existing visa expires. You may wish to factor this in when deciding when to submit your visa application.

**Tier 4/Student visa holders**

If you are applying under paths 2 or 3, you **must not submit the visa (stage 2) application** until:

- Undergraduate and Masters students: you have completed your course (i.e. the course end date on your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) has passed).
- PhD students: you have completed at least 24 months of your current PhD studies.

No other path will allow you to apply without already holding a PhD.
How much does the application cost? (all paths)

Please see the [gov.uk webpage](https://www.gov.uk) for current visa costs.

**Immigration Health Surcharge**

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

*If you include family members in your visa application, the IHS payment page may say you do not have any dependants.* This is because, though you must pay for the IHS with your visa application, it is a separate system. Your dependants will need to pay the IHS when they submit their own visa applications.

If a visa application is refused or rejected, the IHS will be automatically refunded; however, there is no refund if you obtain a visa and then decide not to come to the UK, if you leave the UK earlier than the end of your visa, or if your visa is cancelled by the Home Office; nor is there any refund if you do not use the NHS.

For further guidance, including information on who needs to pay the IHS and how much it costs, please see the UKVI webpages: [https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application](https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application)

**Tuberculosis Testing**

Individuals applying to enter the UK for more than 6 months from a listed country must provide a valid medical certificate issued by a medical practitioner approved by the Secretary of State, confirming that they have undergone screening for active pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) and that such TB is not present in the individual.

More information on Tuberculosis screening can be found in a joint [Public Health England and Home Office leaflet](https://www.gov.uk) (pdf download).

**What documents will I need to provide with stage 2?**

- In all cases you will be required to submit your valid passport.
- As part of the application you will be required to give consent for the Endorsing Body to contact the Home Office and share the outcome of your endorsement. Therefore you do not need to submit the email you received confirming the endorsement was granted.
- If TB testing is required (as above), you will require a copy of the test outcome.
- For dependants – you will be directed on the application form as to which documents you will need to provide.
On your 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. Depending on your nationality, the documentation required will be as follows:

**EU/EEA/Swiss nationals**

Your visa status will be granted as a ‘digital status’, linked to your passport, which will facilitate your entry into the UK. **You must not enter the UK before the start date on your digital status. If you do, you will be classed as a Visitor will be unable to start work until you have left the UK and re-entered during the validity period on your digital status.**

To prove your right to work, before employment commences, you will be required to undergo an ‘online right to work check’, facilitated via your recruiting department. They will ask you to provide a ‘share code’ in the first instance, which you can generate via this UK government weblink: [https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work](https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work)

**Non-EEA nationals**

**If you have recently entered the UK and have an entry clearance vignette in your passport**

If your application to come to the UK from overseas is granted, the visa you initially receive inside your passport will be valid for 90 days. This is known as an entry clearance vignette and will facilitate your entry into the UK. **You must enter the UK within the validity period of your vignette; if you do not, you will need to re-apply for your visa or, if you have been able to enter the UK, leave and re-enter when your vignette is valid.**

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/prove-right-to-work).

To prove your right to work, before employment commences, you will be required to undergo an ‘online right to work check’, facilitated via your recruiting department. They will ask you to provide a ‘share code’ in the first instance, which you can generate via this UK government weblink: [https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work](https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work)

**If you were already in the UK and applied to extend or switch into Global Talent**

Your BRP will be delivered to the address you used in your visa application.

To prove your right to work, you will be asked by your department to provide a ‘share code’ in the first instance, which you can generate via this UK government weblink: [https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work](https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work).
Extension applications

If/when you are applying for an extension of your Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa or Global Talent visa, you only need to make a single application and you do not need to obtain a new endorsement.

You will need to pay the full Global Talent visa fee in a single payment.

To be approved you must meet the following criteria:

- The endorsing body that originally endorsed your stage 1 endorsement application has not advised the Home Office that this has been withdrawn; and

- During your most recent period of leave as a Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) or Global Talent visa holder, you have earned money in the UK as a result of employment or self-employment in your field of expertise. This is the field for which the endorsing body endorsed you. For practical purposes, you will need to provide: (a) a copy of your employment contract with University of Cambridge and (b) a letter from your department stating that, during your most recent period of permission, you have earned money in the UK in your field of expertise.

- Apply online here: https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/global-talent

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. Dependents are not involved in any way with the first stage (endorsement).

A dependant visa provides the right to work in the UK and/or study at any private or State-funded school, Further Education College or University.

We have comprehensive guidance concerning dependants available at https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-services/visas-immigration/working-uk/dependant-visas

Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)/Settlement

You are eligible to apply for settlement after 3 years holding either a Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa or Global Talent visa, regardless of the path under which you were endorsed. Dependents must be resident for 5 years but, at the point you apply for ILR, they can apply to extend their dependant visa to allow them to accrue the full 5 years.

The University has comprehensive guidance on making an ILR application on its webpages at https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-services/visas-immigration/working-uk/indefinite-leave-remainsettlement