



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Interest-free visa loan scheme

Applicant guidance



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Version control

Version number: **7**

Date: **22 April 2025**

Document owner: **Immigration and Compliance**

HR Shared Services | Human Resources

<https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-services/visas-immigration>

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Introduction

The interest-free Visa Loan Scheme ('the Scheme') forms part of an enhanced relocation provision under the University's People Strategy. It is designed to assist staff retention by helping current employees with the costs of making certain immigration applications for themselves and/or their family members, and specific associated costs. The loan will be repaid by the employee through either 10 or 20 equal monthly deductions from their pay (dependent on the amount of the loan, as outlined below).

Who is eligible

The Scheme is available to current members of staff who are applying for Skilled Worker visa, Global Talent visa or Indefinite Leave to Remain for themselves and/or applying for associated dependant visas for their family members.

The employee must have an existing contract of employment with the University which will last at least a further 12 months from the point they apply for a loan.

Skilled Worker applicants

If an employee is applying for a Skilled Worker visa, the University is required to offset the amount of any loans it provides to them, including a visa loan, against their gross salary when assessing their eligibility for a Skilled Worker visa. The amount must be averaged over the length of the CoS. Please see the examples below.

Those considering applying for a visa loan may wish to take this into account, as any loan amount will need to be considered when assessing whether their salary is sponsorable under the Skilled Worker route.

Example 1

Dr Giancarla Fiori is a Research Assistant with a Graduate visa, and she would like to switch into Skilled Worker. She would like to request a visa loan of £10,000 which she would repay over 20 months.

The length of her CoS is 5 years. Despite repaying the loan over 20 months, when assessing whether Dr Fiori's salary is sufficient to be sponsored, the total loan amount must be averaged over the length of the CoS ($£10,000 \div 5$ years).

The 'cost' of Dr Fiori's loan is therefore £2,000 per year. Her annual salary is £35,116 so, when checking whether she is eligible to switch to a Skilled Worker visa, this must be assessed at £33,116 ($£35,116 - £2,000$).

Based on Skilled Worker minimum salary rates as at April 2025, Dr Fiori could be sponsored for up to 4 years from the start of her Graduate visa, as the minimum salary for her role would be £30,960.

Example 2

Mr Chun Wang joined the University in November 2023 as an Senior Software Developer. He has 3 year Skilled Worker visa and took out a visa loan for £5,000. The outstanding balance of the loan is £750. He is now applying to extend his visa and wants to request a further loan of £4,000 which will be repaid over 20 months. This will mean that the total amount he owes to the University will be £4,750.

The length of his CoS is 2 years. Despite repaying the loan over 20 months, when assessing whether Mr Wang's salary is sufficient for continued sponsorship, the total loan amount must be averaged over the length of the CoS ($£4,750 \div 2$ years).

The 'cost' of Mr Wang's loan is therefore £2,375 per year. His annual salary is £40,497 so, when checking whether he is still eligible for a Skilled Worker visa, this must be assessed at £38,122 ($£40,497 - £2,375$).

Based on Skilled Worker minimum salary rates as at April 2025, Mr Wang could continue to be sponsored as the minimum salary for his role would be £35,816.

Who is not eligible

Employees will be unable to take out a visa loan if:

- the loan would be required for any other visa type or immigration application (such as GAE visa, Student visas, Ancestry visas, Citizenship, or a visa for another country);
- the employee has a contract of less than 12 months at the point that the loan is applied for;
- they have served their notice of resignation to the University;
- they have received notice of dismissal;
- they are subject to disciplinary proceedings which may result in dismissal;
- they have previously been declared bankrupt.

Scheme conditions

Eligible employees may apply to receive a loan of up to £10,000¹ for costs associated with making a Skilled Worker visa, Global Talent visa or Indefinite Leave to Remain (settlement) application and/or an associated dependant application. Costs are limited to the following:

- Visa/Indefinite Leave to Remain (settlement) application fees
- Immigration Health Surcharge fees
- Priority/Super Priority processing fees

¹ Employees cannot hold loans from the University which exceed a total of £10,000 across any and all loan schemes, such as the [Rental Deposit Loan Scheme](#), operated by the University.

- Fees associated with meeting the English language requirements for the Skilled Worker visa (including the UK Ecctis service or approved English language tests²)
- Fees associated with taking the Life in the UK test
- Fees associated with approved TB testing, in relation to visa requirements
- Biometric Enrolment fees (where applicable)

The loan cannot be used for any other means, including for any other cost associated with making the visa application, such as legal fees.

The University will decide at its absolute discretion whether to grant a loan to an employee and whether the full amount of the loan requested will be provided. Each application will undergo a credit worthiness assessment to determine affordability. In exceptional circumstances, this may include a credit check.

The University has a [loan calculator](#) that allows the employee to check whether their net monthly pay will cover the monthly repayments for the loan amount they have requested.

The full terms and conditions of the loan scheme are set out within the Loan Agreement and the associated documentation. A draft copy of the Loan Agreement and the Adequate Explanation Document are available upon request.

Repayment schedule

- A loan totalling £3,000 or less will be repaid over 10 months.
- A loan totalling more than £3,000, up to £10,000, will be repaid over 20 months.

Process

A loan application form will be sent by the HR Compliance Team to the employee via email at the same time that they are assigned their Certificate of Sponsorship (Skilled Worker visa applications) or provided with their Statement of Guarantee (certain Global Talent visa applications). Otherwise, it is available on request from visaloans@admin.cam.ac.uk.

The HR Compliance Team will review the application, carry out relevant checks and process the application within 5 working days. The team will endeavour to inform the employee of the decision within this timeframe.

If the application is successful, the HR Compliance Team will send the loan documentation to the employee. Once the employee has read the documentation and they have decided that they wish to proceed, they must return the signed documents to the HR Compliance Team. Upon receipt, the HR

² The full list of approved English language tests for Skilled Worker visa purposes can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests>

Compliance Team will notify the Finance Division who will endeavour to make payment of the loan into the employee's bank account within the next 5 working days.

The employee must provide copies of UKVI receipts for payments as part of their visa application(s) to the HR Compliance team within 10 working days of payment being made to UKVI.

Review

The operation of this scheme will be reviewed annually by the HR Compliance Team and Finance Division.

For any clarification of the scheme, please contact visaloans@admin.cam.ac.uk.