

# Guidance for a Skilled Worker visa application made outside the UK

## Overview

This document provides guidance on the requirements for a Skilled Worker visa application made overseas.

You will be issued with a unique Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) number by the University of Oxford Staff Immigration Team via email. You **must** then submit your Skilled Worker application within three months from the date that the University issued the CoS after which it will automatically expire.

You cannot apply for your visa any earlier than three months before the start date given on your CoS.

Once your application is approved you will be issued with a vignette, which is a paper visa in your passport valid for 90 days which you will use to enter the UK. You will also receive instructions to create a UKVI account to access your digital immigration status for the full length of time granted.

If your visa duration is for six months or less you will instead receive a vignette in your passport valid for the full length of time granted.

If you hold a biometric passport from an EU country, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland and use the ID App you will not receive a vignette in your passport. You will hold a digital immigration status only accessed via the UKVI account.

A UKVI account allows you to; view the details of your visa; update your personal details, including your current travel document(s); and obtain a 'share code' to prove your status to others, for example for working and renting in the UK: <https://www.gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status>.

Applicants are advised to refer to the [Home Office comprehensive guidance](#) alongside this document.

## Arrival date – key points

If your start date is delayed by more than **four weeks**, your sponsorship will have to be withdrawn. The start date listed on your CoS can be amended before you submit the visa application. After this point the four week limit on any delayed start would apply. **If you have any concerns about meeting the start date listed on your CoS please contact us.**

**You must not travel to the UK earlier than the issue date printed on your vignette or stated on your electronic immigration status. Arriving before this date means you enter the UK as a visitor. This will not allow you to commence your employment and risks automatically cancelling your Skilled Worker visa.**

## Application processing timescales

We strongly recommend that you and your dependants do not make any travel arrangements until your application(s) have been approved. The University is **not** able to request that a visa application is treated urgently.

You should receive a decision within 3 weeks of completing the online application and registering your biometric details.

Some (not all) visa application centres offer a priority visa service at an additional cost. This generally means your application is placed at the front of the queue. The priority service can be paid through the online application described on the following page.

Further information on this service can be found via the visa application centre website:  
[www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre](http://www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre)

The current visa application fees are listed on our website at:  
<https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/skilled-worker-payments-and-costs>

## Outline of the Skilled Worker application process

Each country's application process varies slightly so please refer to the local visa application centre website [www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre](http://www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre) for specific information. However, as an overview, the general process steps are:

1. Staff Immigration Team issue a Skilled Worker CoS via email.
2. You should apply for a Skilled Worker visa via the online system:  
<https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa/apply-from-outside-the-uk>
3. Dependants do not require a CoS, but you must create and submit a separate online application for each dependant. Dependant applications are usually submitted at the same time as the main applicant, although applications can be submitted separately, if necessary.

**Please note:** When applying for dependant children (under the age of 18), **both** parents must be applying for a visa at the same time, or be lawfully present in the UK (other than as a visitor), unless you are the one surviving parent with sole responsibility for their upbringing or serious or compelling family considerations.

4. You must pay the appropriate Immigration Health (NHS) Surcharge, if you are coming to the UK for more than 6 months.

During the online application process both you and any dependants will be redirected to make a separate payment for this NHS Surcharge. You should ensure you make this payment and then return to the visa application within 30 minutes.

Information about the NHS Surcharge can be found here: [www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application](http://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application).

Please note that this fee is based on the length of your visa, not your CoS, so will be linked to the arrival date you list in your visa application. You should check the fees you will need to pay using the [Home Office's Immigration Health \(NHS\) Surcharge calculator](#)

5. Once the online application is submitted, you will need to print out a copy of the application and book to attend an appointment at the visa application centre.

EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland nationals holding a biometric passport can use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app rather than attending an appointment. You will not receive a vignette as detailed at point 8. Details can be found at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/using-the-uk-immigration-id-check-app](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/using-the-uk-immigration-id-check-app)

6. If you need to attend an appointment, you will need to submit your biometric details (fingerprints and facial image).
7. You must arrange for your supporting documents to be submitted, this may be part of the appointment or by scanning and uploading copies electronically.
8. If you are applying for a visa with a duration of 6 months or less, the vignette stamped into your passport will state the full duration of your visa.

If you are applying for more than 6 months you will be issued with 90 day vignette in your passport to enable you to enter the UK. You will also receive instructions to create a UKVI account to access your digital immigration status.

## Online application – key points

Answers to some of the general questions:

### **Due to a problem with the online visa application form you may need to state that you do not hold an academic PhD, even if you do.**

As in most cases your application will already meet the points requirement without needing to rely on points for your PhD, we may have stated that you should answer 'No' when asked if you hold a PhD. Answering 'Yes' to this question may result in delays and additional costs to your application, as you may have to verify and translate your qualification certificate if it was obtained overseas.

The Home Office are due to amend these questions in the online visa application form to make things clearer and only require verification and translations from those who also confirm that they need to rely on their PhD for additional points, but as a 'workaround' for now, you should answer 'No' to this question if we have suggested this.

When issuing your Skilled Worker CoS, we will have included a Sponsor Note explaining that '*the applicant has a PhD but is not relying on this for points*' so that the Home Office is aware you have had to answer 'No' to this because of the problem with the online visa application form.

### **Some applicants will need to state 'Yes' and rely on PhD points.**

In some cases applicants will need to rely on points for their PhD so if your CoS states that you are relying on PhD tradeable points you must enter 'Yes' to this question, and enter the UK ENIC reference number (as listed on the CoS) or provide a copy of your UK PhD certificate with your supporting documents.

**We hope that this problem will be resolved soon to avoid the need of this 'workaround' in future applications.**

**Health and Care visa**, you must answer '**No**' to the question about whether you are eligible for the Health and Care visa otherwise your application will be rejected as invalid.

**Is your job with the University of Oxford on the shortage occupation list?** In most cases the answer is '**No**'. If your role is a shortage occupation this will be listed on the CoS and in the email correspondence you receive from the Staff Immigration Advisor.

**Criminal record checks.** Criminal record checks are only required for a few limited employment professions. It does not apply to the job type for Researchers (SOC code: 2119) and Lecturers (SOC code: 2311).

If you are unsure how to answer questions relating to criminal record checks, please refer to the [Home Office website](#) or contact your Staff Immigration Advisor.

## Tuberculosis (TB) pre-screening

If you are applying to come to the UK for more than 6 months, from a country which is considered to have a high incidence of tuberculosis (TB), you and any dependants, must provide a valid medical certificate (issued by a Home Office approved medical practitioner) which confirms you have undergone screening and have been diagnosed as free from active TB.

The list of countries affected and country-specific guidance in relation to the process and testing of dependants (including children) can be found on the Home Office website at: [www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/overview](http://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/overview).

If you are required to undertake TB Screening we recommend you do this as early as possible. While the results of the test should be made available quickly, if the results are inconclusive additional tests will be required. Where TB is detected a medical certificate will not be issued until after treatment has been received (which can take up to 6 months).

The medical certificate confirming that you are free from TB must be submitted with your application and the Home Office recommends that this is carried in your hand luggage when you come to the UK to present to the immigration officer on arrival if requested.

## Supporting documents

All applicants in general are required to submit the following **original** documents:

- A valid passport
- Medical certificate confirming that you are free from Tuberculosis (TB) (if applicable)
- Official record of any criminal convictions (if applicable)
- Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate (if applicable)

### Evidence of sufficient maintenance funds:

- The Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) may specify that the University of Oxford, as an A-rated (Premium) Sponsor, is certifying your maintenance this will be stated at the top of the first page of the CoS and the bottom of the second page.

If this is not the case you will need to provide original personal bank/ building society statements covering at least 28 consecutive days ending no more than 31 days before the date of the visa application. This must show your name, account number, date of the statement, financial institution's name and logo, transactions covering 28 days, and that the account balance has always been at least £1,270 during this period. **Please note even £1 under on 1 day means you will not meet the requirements.** Full details on the acceptable documents can be found in the Home Office guidance here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/financial-evidence-for-sponsored-or-endorsed-work-routes>

### Evidence of English language proficiency:

- An original and valid passport for nationals of a majority English speaking country. A list of countries recognised by the Home Office can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa/knowledge-of-english>

*OR*

- An academic qualification at UK bachelor degree level or above awarded by a UK University - the original qualification certificate must be submitted

*OR*

- An academic qualification recognised by UK ENIC as having been taught in English **at CEFR level B1** and equivalent to a UK bachelor's degree or above. An 'English proficiency' certificate from UK ENIC can be applied for through their website <https://ecctis.com/Qualifications/VAN/Default.aspx>. UK ENIC will charge a fee for this.

**PLEASE NOTE: the original qualification certificate must be submitted, along with a certified translation (if not in English), and the UK ENIC 'English proficiency' certificate.**

*OR*

- Passing an approved English Language Test. On successfully passing a test a SELT unique reference number is issued by the test provider which must be entered in the visa application. For a list of approved English Language Tests, please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prove-your-english-language-abilities-with-a-secure-english-language-test-selt>

## Supporting documents – Dependants

Dependants will be required to submit:

- A valid passport
- Medical certificate confirming that they are free from Tuberculosis (TB) (if applicable)
- Official record of any criminal convictions (if applicable)
- Marriage or Civil Partnership Certificate (for married/civil partners)
- Evidence of the relationship to the main applicant (for those who are not married or in a civil partnership)
- Birth Certificate (for children under the age of 18)
- If the Certificate of Sponsorship does not specify that the University of Oxford will support the maintenance requirement for your dependant(s) you will need to provide evidence that the main applicant or dependant has an extra £285 of funds for a dependent partner, as well as an additional £315 for the first dependent child, and a further £200 for any dependent children after that. These extra funds must have been present in the account for at least 28 consecutive days ending no more than 31 days before the date of the visa application. **Please note even £1 under on 1 day means you will not meet the requirements.**

## Important points to note

1. The University offers an interest free loan scheme to assist you and your dependants with the payment of UK visa fees and NHS Surcharge costs.  
Details can be found on the Staff Immigration Team page:  
<https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>  
The scheme is not, unfortunately available to 'college only' appointments.
2. The Staff Immigration Team cannot guarantee the successful outcome of any visa application as this decision is made by the Home Office.
3. Applications are likely to be automatically rejected if they are submitted with missing or incorrect documents.
4. All documents provided must be **original**, not copies.
5. Any documents not in English must be accompanied by a fully certified translation. Translations must be carried out by a professional translator, and include details of the translator's credentials, confirmation that it is a true and entire translation and show the date and signature of the translator.
6. Bank statements must be dated no more than **31 days** prior to the date of application.

Should you have any queries regarding the requirements for a Skilled Worker application, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards,

Staff Immigration Team

<https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/contact-us>