



HM Government

The UK's Points-Based Immigration System



Overview

- The policy statement on the UK's Points-Based System published on 19 February 2020 set out the overall parameters for the new system.
- On 13 July 2020 the Home Office published an additional statement which provides **further details** to applicants, employers and educational institutions on the draft requirements and conditions underpinning the key immigration routes.
- The routes described cover **the main economic migration routes for those wishing to apply to work or study or set up a business in the UK**. It also set out our provisions for visitors.
- It is intended to give **time to prepare** ahead of some these new routes opening later this year in advance of ending free movement for EU citizens on 31 December. Unless otherwise stated, these **routes will be open by January 2021**.
- We will confirm the final details for the Points-Based System later this year, providing further guidance for applicants and updating the Immigration Rules.



Re-cap: February Policy Statement



Ending free movement



EU and non-EU treated equally



Implementing a points-based system



Delivering for the whole of the UK



Ongoing engagement and communications



Skilled worker route

The points-based system will include a route for skilled workers, both EU and non-EU citizens, who meet the following requirements:

Job offer from HO approved sponsor

Speak English

Criminality threshold

Skill level RQF3 (A-level and equivalent) and above

Relevant salary – either the general threshold or going rate, whichever is higher.

What's new for the skilled worker route?

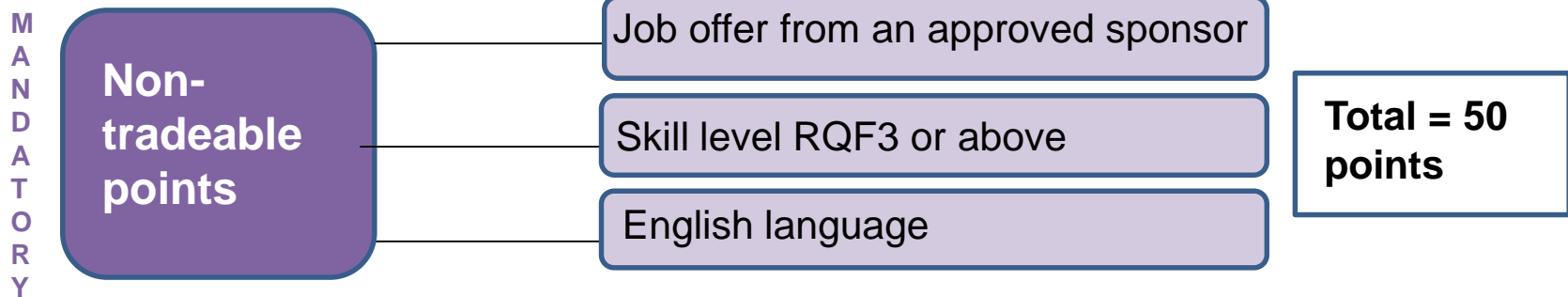
- No cap on numbers
- No Resident Labour Market Test
- Expanded skills threshold – now RQF3 (equivalent to A-level) and above
- Tradeable points – points for certain characteristics will be tradeable against salary



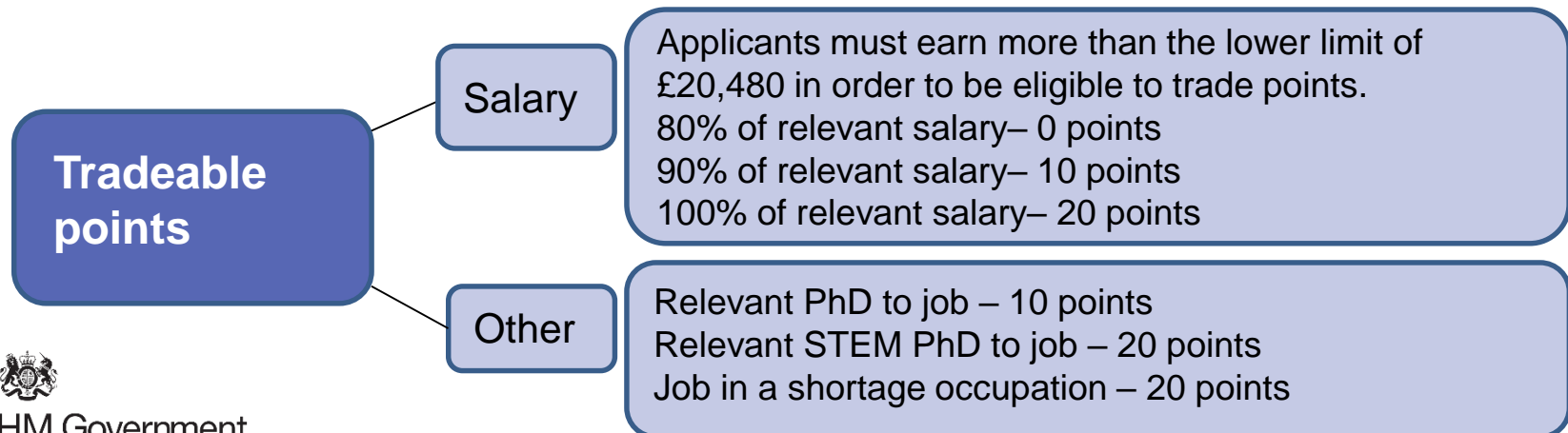
Skilled worker route

From 1 January 2021 anyone coming to the UK for work, EU and non-EU citizens alike, will need to demonstrate they meet a specific set of requirements for which they will score points. There is no overall cap on the number who can apply for this skilled worker route.

Every applicant must score at least **70 points** to be eligible for the skilled worker route. **50 of these points** must come from meeting the **mandatory** criteria below.



The remaining 20 points can be made up by trading points in one entry from each of the two categories ('salary' or 'other') below.



Skilled worker route – case study

Case study: General salary threshold is applied

Freya wants to come to the UK to undertake skilled work and has been offered a job as a lab technician for a salary of £21,000. She meets all of the mandatory characteristics under the Points-Based System, scoring 50 points.

Lab technicians need to meet the general salary threshold of £25,600, as this threshold is higher than the going rate for the profession. As Freya's salary offer is £21,000, she does not score any points for her salary. It is still above the minimum of £20,480, so she can still score 20 tradeable points elsewhere to be eligible for a visa.

In this instance Freya does get the 20 extra points by having a relevant STEM PhD in biochemistry.

The table below has been personalised to show how Freya has accumulated the requisite 70 points.

	Characteristic	Points	Total
Mandatory	Offer of a job by an approved sponsor	20	50
	Job at an appropriate skill level	20	
	English language skills at level B1 (intermediate)	10	
Tradeable	Salary of £20,480 - £23,039.99	0	20
	Education qualification: PhD in a STEM subject relevant to the job	20	
			70



Skilled worker route – case study

Case study: 'Going rate' salary threshold for the profession is applied

Richard wants to come to the UK to work and has been offered a job as a mechanical engineer for a salary of £26,750. He meets all of the mandatory characteristics under the Points-Based System, scoring 50 points.

As the going rate for mechanical engineers is £33,400 and higher than the general salary threshold, He must be paid according to the going rate for that occupation. This is because applicants must be paid according to whichever of the two is higher. Richard's salary is just above 80% of the going rate for his occupation, therefore while he scores no points from his salary, he is eligible to score 20 tradeable points elsewhere to be eligible for a visa. In this instance Richard scores the 20 extra points by having a job offer in a shortage occupation.

The table below is personalised to show how Richard has accumulated the requisite 70 points.

	Characteristic	Points	Total
Mandatory	Offer of a job by an approved sponsor	20	50
	Job at an appropriate skill level	20	
	English language skills at level B1 (intermediate)	10	
Tradeable	Salary at least 80% of the going rate	0	20
	Job in a shortage occupation (as designated by the MAC)	20	
Total			70



Further Developments - Settlement

- We will revise the salary requirements for those applying for settlement having completed 5 years under the Skilled worker route and/or Tier 2 (General).
- The current salary requirement is £36,200. This will be replaced by a requirement to meet the general salary threshold for the skilled worker route (currently £25,600) and the going rate for the role they are working in.
- No discounts will apply to the going rates.
- Those filling roles either on the shortage occupation list or have been on the shortage occupation list for part of their qualifying leave will be required to meet the lower salary threshold for the skilled worker route (currently £20,480) or the going rate for the role whichever is higher.
- Those filling roles in specified occupations that are subject to published national salary scales will be required to meet the salary associated with that national scale or the lower salary threshold (currently £20,480) whichever is higher.
- There will be no limit on the number of years a person can stay under the skilled worker route.
- There will be no 'Cooling off' periods in the skilled worker route.



Further Developments - Other

- We will suspend the minimum hours requirements for those filling roles on the shortage occupation list.
- We will remove the current restrictions around working as a doctor or a dentist in training.
- We will remove the requirement for skilled work visas to have leave commence up to two weeks before a job start date. Leave start dates will be aligned to date of expected travel. Applicant's can continue to apply for their visa up to three months before their job start date.



Health and Care Visa

Overview

The Health and Care Visa will ensure individuals working in eligible health occupations with a job offer from the NHS, social care sector or employers and organisations which provide services to the NHS, who have good working English, are able to come to the UK.

Key aspects

Open to all nationalities who have a confirmed job offer in one of the defined healthcare professions within the NHS, the social care sector or for NHS commissioned service providers.

The main applicant must meet the requirements of the skilled worker route, including the relevant skill and salary threshold.

Fast-track entry, with reduced application fees and dedicated support regarding the application process.

Eligible individuals will be able to bring their families.

Exemption from the Immigration Health Surcharge for both applicants and their families.

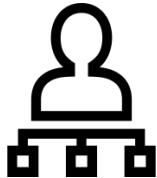


Employing a worker - sponsorship

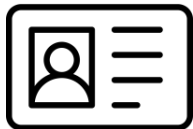
From January 2021



A streamlined, faster process with **no Resident Labour Market Test**, **suspending the current cap on Tier 2 visas** and **no monthly panel to apply for Certificates of Sponsorship**. This will mean time savings for employers of initially up to 8 weeks.



Employers need to apply to be a sponsor if they want to recruit workers from outside the resident labour market.



Employers do not need to be a sponsor to employ someone from the resident labour market with an existing right to work in the UK. This includes EU citizens with settled or pre-settled status.

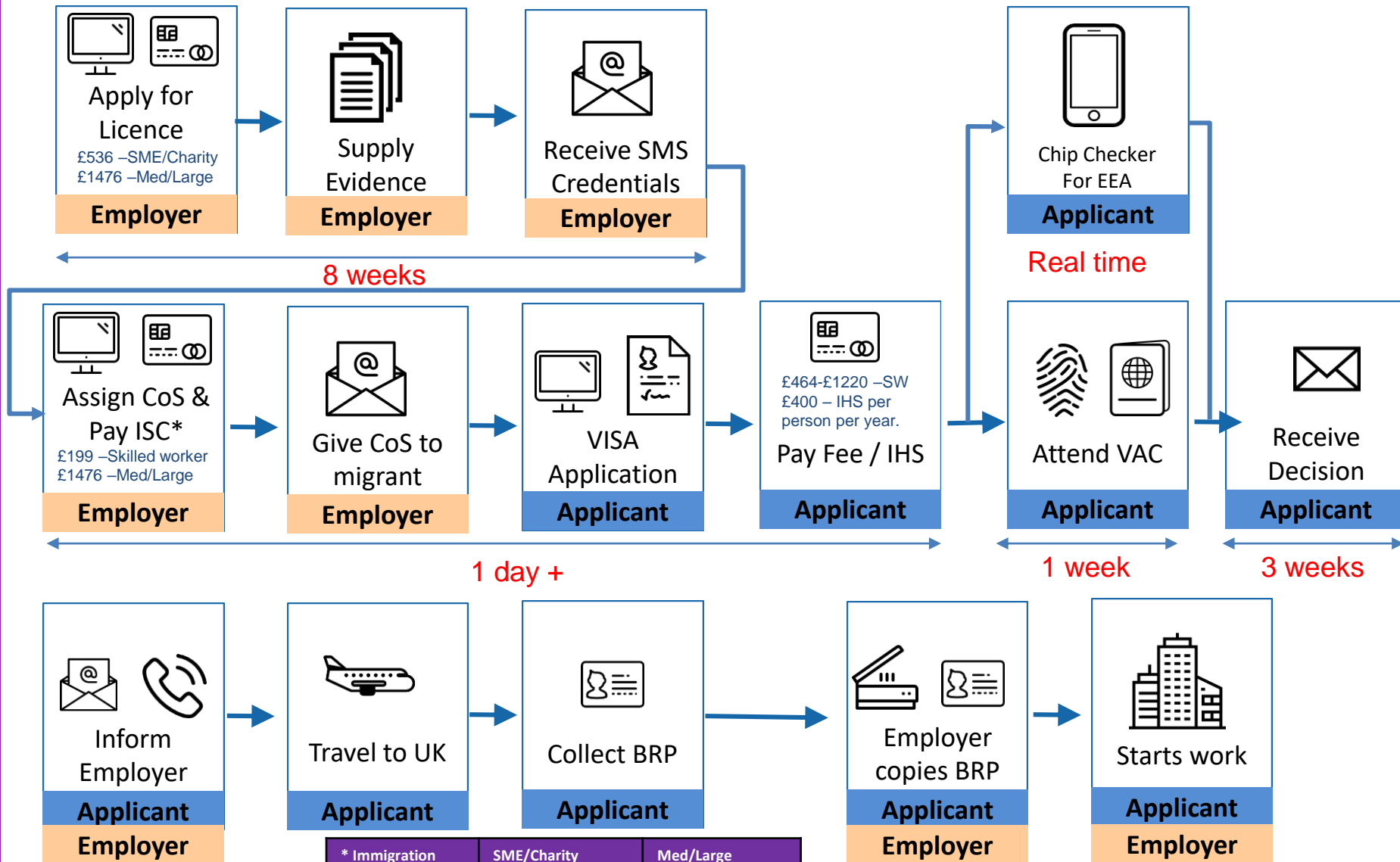


We will allow most migrants to apply to switch from one immigration route to another without having to leave the UK. However, there will be no relaxation of the qualifying criteria for the route being switched into.

There will be longer term reforms to the design and user interface of the sponsorship process in 2022, which we will test with stakeholders.



Employing a worker: **From January 2021**



* Immigration Skills Charge	SME/Charity	Med/Large
First 12 months	£364	£1,000
Additional 6 months	£182	£500

Total: 12 weeks +

Note: Fees subject to inflation

Highly skilled workers

For January 2021

We will extend the current **Global Talent route** to EU citizens on the same basis as non-EU.

Under the Global Talent route, the most highly skilled workers who can achieve the required level of points, will be able to enter the UK without a job offer if they are endorsed by a Home Office recognised endorsing body.

The Global Talent route has recently been expanded to be more accessible to those with backgrounds in STEM. A cross-departmental **Office for Talent** will be set up.

Longer term

We will create a new **broader unsponsored route**. This would allow a small number of the most highly skilled workers to come to the UK without a job offer. We will explore this with stakeholders in the coming year.



Those who don't meet skills and salary thresholds

The UK Points-Based Immigration System **will not include a route for those who do not meet skills and salary thresholds**



Shift away from a reliance on labour from Europe



Greater flexibility for employers with changes to salary and skills thresholds



Over 4.0 million EU nationals have already applied to stay in the UK
An estimated 170,000 non-EU citizens in lower-skilled occupations



Seasonal workers pilot will provide employers in the agricultural sector with further flexibility



For January 2021

No limit on the number of international students who can come to the UK to study.

The Government has an ambition to increase the number of international students in higher education to 600,000 by 2030.

Students will be covered by the Points-Based System. If they can demonstrate that they have an offer from an approved education institution, speak English and are able to support themselves during their studies, then they will have the requisite number of points.

Longer term

A new Graduate route will be launched in summer 2021 to provide international students the opportunity to stay in the UK to work or look for work after they graduate. Undergraduate and masters degree students will be able to stay for two years under the route, whilst PhD students will be able to stay for three years.



Other immigration routes

For January 2021

For a number of the main economic routes the main change that will be implemented for January 2021 is bringing EU citizens into the current non-EU routes. Examples of these include:

- Start-up and Innovator
- Intra-Company Transfers
- Youth Mobility Scheme
- Sporting
- Creative
- Charity
- Ministers of Religion and Religious Workers
- Government Authorised Exchange
- International Agreement
- UK Ancestry

Simplification

Underpinning these routes and the Points-Based System as a whole will be simplified rules and guidance. We will make the best use of technology and implement the recommendations of the Law Commission to streamline and simplify the immigration system.

