

# Navigating Visas

A guide for international candidates

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## Introduction

The University of Southampton can only employ people with permission to work in the UK. If you are an overseas national, this will mean obtaining a visa under one of the UK's immigration routes if you don't already have permission to work in the UK. This guide will provide an overview of the different options.

We are not permitted to provide you with immigration advice, such as deciding which visa is best for you. If you wish to, you can engage with an [Immigration Adviser](#) at your own cost.

You can also visit gov.uk websites for details:

- [Visas and immigration](#)
- [Work in the UK](#)
- [Check if you need a UK visa](#)

It is your responsibility to check which visa you require to undertake the role at the university and to apply for your visa from UK Visas and Immigration (UK Government department).

## University-Sponsored Visas

The University is a licenced sponsor which means we can provide sponsorship for a time-limited UK work visa if your job is eligible, and all other criteria and requirements are met. Visa sponsorship at the University is limited to the Skilled Worker visa (formally Tier 2) for employees, and the Government Authorised Exchange (GAE, formally Tier 5) visa for visiting Sponsored Researchers.

To apply for a Skilled Worker visa or a GAE visa, you will require a Certificate of Sponsorship (COS), which is a digital record with its own unique reference number. Without a COS number, you cannot apply for the Skilled Worker or GAE visa.

### Skilled Worker Visa Route

This visa is directly linked to a contractual job at the University and is for individuals who will be directly employed by the University. Eligibility criteria and requirements must be shown to be met before the University of Southampton can provide a COS under this visa route. Requirements include, where relevant:

- Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)
- Financial Requirement
- Criminal Records Check
- English Language
- Tuberculosis test

HR Recruitment will initiate the processing of assigning a COS if you indicate you require a Certificate of Sponsorship for this route within your job application. It is also possible to switch into this visa from within the UK if you already hold an eligible UK visa. This includes if you already hold a Tier 2/Skilled Worker visa with another sponsor.

Please see the links below for further details:

- [GOV.UK Skilled Worker visa](#)
- [University of Southampton | Visas and Immigration | Skilled Worker](#)

## Temporary Worker-sponsored Researcher - GAE

Under the GAE route, the University can sponsor people coming to the UK on a temporary basis to take part in certain activities, such as a formal project or research collaborations, or to give ad-hoc lectures (not linked to a teaching post). The maximum period of visa sponsorship is 2 years. Eligibility criteria and requirements must be shown to be met before the University of Southampton provides a COS under this visa route. Requirements include, where relevant:

- Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)
- Financial Requirement
- Criminal Records Check
- Tuberculosis test

Please see the links below for details:

- [GOV.UK Government Authorised Exchange](#)
- [University of Southampton | Visas and Immigration | Guidelines - Visa Routes for International Visitors](#)

## Global Talent Visa

The Global Talent visa is a flexible, **non-sponsored visa** which allows the most highly skilled to come to the UK or existing visa holders to switch into (where eligible). There are normally two stages to apply for this visa: apply for endorsement, and then apply for the visa. Endorsement can be applied for in four different ways depending on your eligibility.

HR Recruitment will initiate this process if you indicate you wish to apply for this route within your job application.

Please see the below links for details:

- [GOV.UK Global Talent visa](#)
- [University of Southampton | Visas and Immigration | Global Talent visa](#)
- [Global Talent Visa Explained](#)

## Other UK Visas

If you are not eligible for a Skilled Worker visa or a Global Talent visa, you may still be eligible for another type of visa to work in the UK. Below are some examples of other work visas:

- [British National \(Overseas\) Visa Overview](#)
- [Graduate Visa Overview](#)
- [Youth Mobility Scheme Visa Overview](#)
- [India Young Professionals Scheme Visa Overview](#)
- [UK Ancestry Visa Overview](#)
- [High Potential Individual \(HPI\) Visa Overview](#)

## Partners and Families

You may be able to bring your dependants with you or they can apply to join you if you are already in the UK. You will need to check if your chosen visa route allows dependants and ensure that they can meet the eligibility criteria.

## Financial Support

If your visa application is successful, the University may be able to assist you by reimbursing your visa application fee and other costs associated with making your visa application. For further details and full eligibility criteria, please see the University's '[Visa and Immigration Costs Assistance](#)' policy.

### Immigration Healthcare Surcharge Fee

If you are eligible, as part of your visa application you will need to pay the UK Healthcare Surcharge to use the National Health Service (NHS). You can find out if you need to pay and how much it will cost via gov.uk. If you meet the eligibility criteria for reimbursement, the University may reimburse half of this fee for your application.

Please see the below links for details:

- [GOV.UK Pay for the UK healthcare as part of your immigration application](#)

### Interest-Free Loan for Visa and Immigration Costs

The University offers an interest free loan provision, to assist with costs of visa application fees and associated costs for both yourself and your dependents. Please see the policy and form to request the loan via [Immigration and visas | Human Resources | University of Southampton](#)

### Financial Requirement Maintenance Loan

As part of your Skilled Worker visa application, you will usually need to demonstrate that you have enough money in your bank account to show you can support yourself in the UK, this is known as the Financial requirement. Your partner and children will also need to prove they can support themselves whilst they are in the UK too. The University can, where necessary, provide an interest free loan to maintain you up to the end of your first month of employment, and for your dependants up to the first month of any permission which is granted to them. You will need to let your HR contact know if you need the University to cover this cost, and you will need to complete an application form.

Please see the below links for details:

- [GOV.UK Skilled Worker - How much it costs – Money to support yourself](#)
- [University of Southampton | Visas and Immigration | Maintenance](#)

## Right to Work Check

Before you start work with the University, you will need to complete a right to work check. If you have a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) card or have a UKVI account with an eVisa (digital immigration status), you will need to use the Home Office Online right to work checking service to prove your right to work. Your HR Recruitment Administration Officer will arrange this with you. Please see the below link for details:

- [University of Southampton | Right to work checks](#)

## Contact for Help

If you have any questions on your visa application and you are already in contact with an HR Recruitment Administration Officer, please continue to liaise with them. If you have any other visa-related or HR questions, please contact [AskHR](#) where your enquiry will be logged and responded to via the service portal.