Skilled Worker visa Guidance for candidates

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Contents

Background Information

Thank you for your interest in working at UWE Bristol.

This document is relevant for anyone who isn't a British or Irish citizen and doesn't already have right to work in the UK.

The way in which UK organisations with Skilled Worker licenses can offer sponsorship for international candidates to work in the UK changed from 1 December 2020. This was an exciting development for us at UWE Bristol as it has meant that we could appoint international candidates to more of our posts, bringing new dynamics to our workplace.

Skilled Worker processes have been reviewed and further updated as of 22 July 2025. Please ensure you are familiar with the new processes and thresholds even if you currently hold a Skilled Worker visa.

The Skilled Worker criteria means that as a candidate you will need to assess whether you are eligible to be sponsored by the organisation in which you are applying to work. UWE Bristol is an A rated sponsor and this allows us to offer sponsorship for many roles within our organisation.

If you wish to be sponsored under our Skilled Worker license then please conduct a self-assessment before applying for one of our roles to check whether you are eligible to be sponsored.

We also recommend that you use the Home Office online checking tool to check if you need a visa to work in the UK.

If we are not able to offer you sponsorship under the Skilled Worker route then we recommend you explore other self-application visa types, for example Youth Mobility, Graduate or Global Talent visas which will allow you to work with us.

Mandatory and Tradeable Criteria

Eligibility is assessed using a Points Based System. You must meet all of the mandatory criteria to score 50 points (see table below) and you must score a further 20 points from one of the tradeable points tables on the following pages, therefore scoring a total of 70 points.

Mandatory (non-tradeable) points		Points available
Job offer from an approved sponsor	UWE is an approved sponsor and therefore being offered a job with us automatically fulfils this criteria.	20
Job offered is at an appropriate skill level (RQF level 6, in some cases levels 3-5) with a corresponding SOC Code. RQF - Registered Qualification Framework	All jobs have a corresponding Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code. Each SOC code has a designated skill level. This determines whether the job meets the requirements of the Skilled Worker route. You must check the role you wish to apply for has a SOC code.	20
English Language skills at an appropriate level	Ways to meet this are as follows: • being a national of a majority English speaking country; • having an academic degree taught in English (we will require a copy of ECCTIS Certificate if the qualification was awarded outside the UK); • passing a secure English language test; • having shown they meet the required level in a previous successful immigration application (for example if you are already on a tier 2/skilled worker visa)	10

Tradeable Criteria

You must score 20 points here to be eligible (you cannot score more than 20 points). You must meet one of the salary options from the table below.

If you were <u>not</u> granted continuous permission as a Skilled Worker before 4 April 2024, you must obtain these 20 points from Options A – E.

If you <u>were</u> granted continuous permission as a Skilled Worker <u>before</u> 4 April 2024 and are applying for an extension or change of employment before April 2030, use Options F - J

Option	Requirements	Points
A	The applicant's salary equals or exceeds both: • £41,700 per year; and • the full going rate for the SOC 2020 occupation code as stated in Table 1 or Table 1a of Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Occupations.	20
B	The applicant has a PhD in a subject relevant to the job and their salary equals or exceeds both: • £37,500 per year; and • 90% of the standard going rate for the SOC 2020 occupation code as stated in Table 1 or Table 1a of Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Occupations.	20
C	The applicant has a PhD in a STEM subject relevant to the job and their salary equals or exceeds both: • £33,400 per year; and • 80% of the standard going rate for the SOC 2020 occupation code as stated in Table 1 or Table 1a of Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Occupations.	20
D	The applicant is being sponsored for a job on the Immigration Salary List and their salary equals or exceeds both: • £33,400 per year; and • the full going rate for the SOC 2020 occupation code as stated in Table 1 or Table 1a of Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Occupations.	20
E	The applicant is a new entrant and their salary equals or exceeds both: • £33,400 per year; and • 70% of the standard going rate for the SOC 2020 occupation code as stated in Table 1 or Table 1a of Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Occupations.	20
Option	Requirements	Points
F	The offered salary equals or exceeds both: • £31,300 per year; and • the full going rate for the SOC 2020 occupation code as stated in Table 2 or Table 2aa of Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Occupations.	20

G	The applicant has a PhD in a subject relevant to the job and their salary equals or exceeds both: • £28,200 per year; and • 90% of the going rate for the SOC 2020 occupation code as stated in Table 2 or Table 2aa of [Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Occupations]().	20
H	The applicant has a PhD in a STEM subject relevant to the job and their salary equals or exceeds both: • £25,000 per year; and • 80% of the going rate for the SOC 2020 occupation code as stated in Table 2 or Table 2aa of [Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Occupations]().	20
I	The applicant is being sponsored for a job on the Immigration Salary List and their salary equals or exceeds both: • £25,000 per year; and • the full going rate for the SOC 2020 occupation code as stated in Table 2 or Table 2aa of [Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Occupations]().	20
J	The applicant is a new entrant and their salary equals or exceeds both: • £25,000 per year; and • 70% of the going rate for the SOC 2020 occupation code as stated in Table 2 or Table 2aa of [Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Occupations]().	20

New Entrant Definition

A new entrant to the labour market (as designated by the MAC) is defined as:

a) Someone who is switching from the Student or Graduate route to the Skilled Worker route; or

b) Someone who is under the age of 26 on the date of their application; or

c) Someone who is working towards a recognised professional qualification or is working towards registered or chartered status with the relevant professional body for the job for which they being sponsored for; or

d) moving directly into a postdoctoral position (lecturing/research positions are included as post-doctoral positions).

Please note that applicants can be new entrants for a total maximum of 4 years.

The 4 year limit includes time spent in any Tier 2, Graduate or Skilled Worker route, whether or not that permission was for a continuous period. An applicant cannot be considered as a new entrant for only part of the time their visa application covers so the duration of the visa will be capped.

Salary criteria and Standard Occupation Classification codes

Our adverts will state if we can provide sponsorship that role. Those roles will have a corresponding Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) code and this will detail a 'Going Rate'.

The 'Going Rate' is a minimum salary requirement set for that role, in some cases our salary range might not meet the 'Going Rate', in which case we will not be able to offer sponsorship.

The full SOC code tables are available to view here.

The most popular SOC codes relevant to working at UWE are:

2311 Higher education teaching professionals	• Fellow (university) • Lecturer (higher education, university) • Professor (higher education, university) • Tutor (higher education, university) • University lecturer • University teaching assistant
2162 Other researchers, unspecified discipline	• Postdoctoral researcher • Research assistant (university) • Research fellow (university) • University researcher
2119 Natural and social science professionals not elsewhere classified Note: For Skilled Worker purposes, SOC 2020 occupation code 2119 includes researchers in research organisations other than universities.	• Operational research scientist • Scientific officer • Scientist • Sports scientist • Technical officer (laboratory) • University research fellow (sciences)

If you are unsure which SOC code relates to the post you wish to apply for then please contact the staff recruitment team on HRresourcing@uwe.ac.uk or 0117 3285109.

When you know which SOC code corresponds with the role you are applying for, you must then check the going rate against the salary on offer for the role. If the available salary meets the going rate *and* salary threshold, then you will score 20 points.

In some circumstances it may be possible to earn less than the Going Rates as there may be discounts available, for example if you hold a relevant PhD or are classed as a new entrant, as outlined in the Table on pages 5 and 6.

Please note that we usually appoint candidates at the starting point of the grade unless there are demonstrable skills and experience relevant to the role, we are unable to pay more just to meet UKVI salary requirements.

Process for applying for a Skilled Worker Visa

Once you have been offered a role we will need you to provide us with some background information, ID documents and personal details so that we can verify your eligibility for sponsorship and establish how you will score the 70 points required to meet the criteria.

We must provide details of the role, some of your personal details and explain how you meet the criteria to the Home Office via the UKVI Sponsorship Management System (SMS), and create and assign a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS). You will need an assigned CoS in order to apply for your visa.

Ahead of applying for your visa you will also need to ensure you have enough funds to pay for the visa and any other associated costs, such as the Immigration Health Surcharge and any dependent visas. There is more information on the UKVI website:

https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa/how-much-it-costs

For some roles you will also need an approved ATAS Certificate before you can apply, we will let you know if this is required, but in all cases your help and prompt responses will be vital in navigating the steps involved and avoiding unnecessary delays.

Please note that UWE does not cover any costs associated with visa applications.