

# Tier 2 (General) visa

## 1. Overview

You can apply for a Tier 2 (General) visa if:

- you've been offered a skilled job in the UK
- you're from outside the [European Economic Area \(EEA\) and Switzerland](#)

### Getting sponsored

You need to have a [certificate of sponsorship](#) from a licensed sponsor before you can apply to come to the UK to work.

The work you do in the UK must relate to the work of your sponsor organisation.

### How long it will take

You can apply for a visa up to 3 months before the day you're due to start work in the UK. This date is listed on your certificate of sponsorship.

You should get a decision on your visa within 3 weeks when you apply from outside the UK.

You can check the [guide processing times](#) to find out how long getting a visa might take in your country.

### Fees

How much you pay for a Tier 2 (General) visa depends on your situation, where you are and how you apply.

### Tier 2 General (up to 3 years)

Who you're applying for	Apply (outside the UK)	Extend or switch in the UK	Extend or switch in person in the UK (premium service)
You	£587	£677	£1,267
If you're a citizen of Turkey or Macedonia	£532	£622	£1,212
All dependants	£587 each person	£677 each person	£1,267 each person

You'll also have [to pay the healthcare surcharge](#) as part of your application. Check how much you'll have to pay [before you apply](#).

### Tier 2 General (up to 3 years) - shortage occupation

A shortage occupation is a skilled job where there is [a shortage of workers in the UK](#).

Who you're applying for	Apply (outside the UK)	Extend or switch by post in the UK	Extend or switch in person in the UK (premium service)
You	£446	£446	£1,036
If you're a citizen of Turkey or Macedonia	£391	£391	£981
All dependants	£446 each person	£446 each person	£1,036 each person

You'll also have [to pay the healthcare surcharge](#) as part of your application. Check how much you'll have to pay [before you apply](#).

### Tier 2 General (more than 3 years)

Who you're applying for	Apply (outside the UK)	Extend or switch by post in the UK	Extend or switch in person in the UK (premium service)
You	£1,174	£1,354	£1,944
If you're a citizen of Turkey or Macedonia	£1,119	£1,299	£1,889
All dependants	£1,174 each person	£1,354 each person	£1,944 each person

You'll also have [to pay the healthcare surcharge](#) as part of your application. Check how much you'll have to pay [before you apply](#).

## Tier 2 General (more than 3 years) - shortage occupation

A shortage occupation is a skilled job where there is [a shortage of workers in the UK](#).

Who you're applying for	Apply (outside the UK)	Extend or switch by post in the UK	Extend or switch in person in the UK (premium service)
You	£892	£892	£1,482
If you're a citizen of Turkey or Macedonia	£837	£837	£1,427
All dependants	£892 each person	£892 each person	£1,482 each person

You'll also have [to pay the healthcare surcharge](#) as part of your application. Check how much you'll have to pay [before you apply](#).

## How long you can stay

You can come to the UK with a Tier 2 (General) visa for a maximum of 5 years and 14 days, or the time given on your certificate of sponsorship plus 1 month, whichever is shorter.

Your stay must start no more than 14 days before the start date on your [certificate of sponsorship](#).

You can [apply to extend](#) this visa for up to another 5 years, as long as your total stay is not more than 6 years.

## What you can and can't do

You can:

- work for your sponsor in the job described in your certificate of sponsorship
- [do a second job](#)
- do voluntary work
- study as long as it doesn't interfere with the job you're sponsored for
- travel abroad and return to the UK

- bring [family members](#) with you

You can't:

- own more than 10% of your sponsor's shares (unless you earn more than £159,600 a year)
- get [public funds](#)
- apply for a second job until you've started working for your sponsor

## 2. Eligibility

You must:

- have a certificate of sponsorship reference number
- have an 'appropriate' salary
- have the [required level of English](#)
- follow additional rules if you're [switching to this visa](#) from a Tier 4 (General) visa
- have proof of £945 in savings, unless you're exempt
- provide a [criminal record certificate](#) from any country you've lived in for 12 months or more in the last 10 years, if you'll be working with vulnerable people

### Certificate of sponsorship

A certificate of sponsorship is a reference number which holds information about the job and your personal details. It's not an actual certificate or paper document.

Your sponsor will give you your certificate of sponsorship reference number.

They must also give you some other information to help you to apply, for example how much you'll be paid.

You'll need to add your certificate of sponsorship reference number to your application form - you can only use it once.

Your certificate of sponsorship is valid for 3 months from the date it's assigned to you.

## **Appropriate salary**

You'll usually need to be paid at least £30,000 per year or the 'appropriate rate' for the job you're offered - whichever is higher. Check the [appropriate rate](#) for the job you've been offered.

Check the [guidance](#) for situations when you can be paid less - for example if:

- your certificate of sponsorship was assigned to you before 24 November 2016
- you'll work as a medical radiographer, nurse, paramedic or secondary school teacher in some subjects
- you'll work as a pre-registration nurse or midwife

## **Savings**

You must have £945 in your bank account for 90 days before you apply. This is to prove you can support yourself.

You won't need savings if you have both a:

- [fully approved \('A-rated'\) sponsor](#)
- certificate of sponsorship stating that your sponsor will give you at least £945 to cover your costs for a month if you need it

## **3. Knowledge of English**

You may need to prove your knowledge of the English language when you apply.

You can prove your knowledge of English by either:

- passing an [approved English language test](#) with at least CEFR level B1 in reading, writing, speaking and listening

- having an academic qualification that was taught in English and is recognised by [UK NARIC](#) as being equivalent to a UK bachelor's degree, master's degree or PhD

You may be able to meet the English language requirement in other ways or need a higher level of English in some circumstances. Check the [full visa guidance](#) for detailed information.

## Exceptions

You won't need to prove your knowledge of English if you're a national of one of the following countries:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Australia
- the Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Canada
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Jamaica
- New Zealand
- St Kitts and Nevis
- St Lucia
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago
- USA

You also may not have to prove your knowledge of English in other circumstances - check the [visa guidance](#).

## 4. Documents you must provide

When you apply you'll need to provide:

- a current passport or other valid travel identification
- bank statements showing you've had at least £945 in savings continuously over the last 90 days, or your sponsor's certification that they can support and accommodate you for the first month you're employed
- proof that you meet the [English requirement](#)
- your [tuberculosis test results](#) if you're from a country where you have to take the test

You need a page in your passport that's blank on both sides for your visa.

You'll need to provide [a certified translation](#) of any documents that aren't in English or Welsh.

Read the [guide](#) for a full list of documents you can provide.

You may need to provide additional documents depending on your circumstances.

## **Criminal record certificate**

If you apply on or after 6 April 2017, you'll need to provide a [criminal record certificate](#) if you work in:

- education, for example teachers, education advisers and school inspectors
- healthcare, for example nurses, doctors, managers, pharmacists, dentists, ophthalmic opticians
- therapy, for example psychologists, speech and language therapists
- social services, for example social workers, managers, probation officers

[Check the full list of professions](#) that need to get a certificate.

You'll need a certificate from any country you've lived in for 12 months or more in the last 10 years.