

1. What is the UK Global Talent Visa?

A UK immigration route for leaders or potential leaders in:

Digital Technology

Academia & Research

Arts & Culture

It allows you to work in the UK without employer sponsorship.

2. Who is eligible?

People who can prove:

You are already a leader (Talent)

OR

You show strong potential to become one (Promise)

3. What fields qualify?

Digital Technology

Engineering

Science & Medicine

Humanities

Arts & Culture

4. Talent vs Promise

Talent

Promise

Established leader Emerging leader

3-year ILR route 5-year ILR route

5. Minimum age?

18 years old.

6. Job offer required?

No.

7. Can apply inside UK?

Yes (if switching from eligible visa categories).

8. Required documents?

Passport

3 recommendation letters

Personal statement

CV

Evidence documents

Endorsement letter

9. Can students apply?

Yes, if they meet endorsement criteria.

10. Non-technical but related role?

Yes — if your contribution is significant and impactful.

11. Is it points-based?

No. It is endorsement-based.

12. Freelancer/self-employed allowed?

Yes.

13. English test required?

No.

14. Proof of funds?

Only if applying from inside UK after short stay.

15. Employment gaps allowed?

Yes, if justified.

B. Endorsement Stage (16–35)

1. What is endorsement?

Approval from an authorised UK body confirming you meet criteria.

2. Choosing endorsing body?

Depends on your field:

Tech → Tech Nation (now replaced)

Academia → UK Research and Innovation

Arts → Arts Council England

3. Tech Nation replacement?

As of 2023, digital tech endorsements moved under endorsing bodies appointed by the UK Home Office.

4. Endorsement documents?

3 letters

10 evidence documents (max)

CV

Personal statement (1000 words max)

5. How many recommendation letters?

3 mandatory.

6. Who can write them?

Senior experts in your field.

7. What must letters include?

Relationship with you

Your achievements

Why UK benefits from you

Signed, on letterhead

8. Required seniority?

Recognised industry leader.

9. Referee outside UK?

Yes.

10. Coworkers/friends allowed?

No (unless senior and independent).

11. Acceptable evidence?

Awards

Media recognition

Salary proof

Innovation proof

GitHub projects

Publications

12. How many evidence docs?

Up to 10.

13. Significant contribution?

Proof you played key role in product/company success.

14. Innovation evidence?

Patent, startup founder, novel tech creation.

15. Recognition evidence?

Awards, conference speaking, press coverage.

16. Unpublished work allowed?

Yes, if impactful.

17. Paid consulting allowed?

Yes.

18. Processing time?

~3–8 weeks (can vary).

19. Appeal if rejected?

You can request administrative review.

20. Organising evidence?

PDF index + numbered sections. Clear and concise.

C. Sector-Specific

Tech (Digital Technology)

Criteria?

Innovation

Impact

Recognition

Leadership

Software engineer required?

No.

Product management?

Yes (if innovation-driven).

IT support?
Usually no (unless strategic/innovation).

Cybersecurity?
Yes.

AI/ML?
Yes.

Open-source?
Yes.

GitHub allowed?
Yes (with explanation of impact).

UI/UX?
Yes.

Startup experience?
Yes (especially founder/CTO roles).

Academia & Research
Evidence?
Publications
Grants
Research roles

What is research grant?
Funding awarded for research project.

Publications count?
Yes.

International recognition required?
Usually yes for Talent route.

Fast-track letters?
From research institution + funder.

D. Application Process
Step-by-step:
Apply for endorsement
Receive endorsement
Apply for visa
Provide biometrics
Decision

Can apply both together?
No — endorsement first (unless exceptional route).

Total timeline?
2–4 months average.

Cost?
£524 endorsement
£192 visa stage
Immigration Health Surcharge (~£1,035 per year)

Immigration Health Surcharge?
Paid online during visa stage.

After endorsement?
Apply for visa within 3 months.

Forms?
Online Global Talent visa form.

Biometrics?
At visa centre.

Switch from another visa?
Yes (most routes allowed).

Endorsement expiry?
Valid 3 months.

Track application?
Yes via UKVI account.

Mistake correction?
Use admin review or contact UKVI.

Translated documents?
Yes, certified translation required.

Interview required?
Rare.

Visa centre appointment?
Yes (unless ID app eligible).

E. Visa Conditions
Stay duration?
Up to 5 years (renewable).

Any employer?
Yes.

Start business?
Yes.

Freelance?

Yes.

Notify job change?

No.

Dependants allowed?

Yes.

Dependants rights?

Work & study allowed.

Separate applications?

Yes.

Children school?

Yes (free public school).

Spouse work?

Yes.

Study allowed?

Yes.

Travel outside UK?

Yes.

Absence affects ILR?

Yes (180 days rule per year).

Taxes?

UK income tax + NI if resident.

Switch to another visa?

Yes.

F. Settlement & Extensions

ILR timeline?

3 years (Talent)

5 years (Promise)

ILR requirements?

Continuous residence

Earnings in UK

Still active in field

Minimum salary?

No fixed threshold.

Extension?

Apply before expiry.

New endorsement for extension?
Usually no.

Earnings in UK?
Income related to your endorsed field.

Combine visas?
Sometimes (depends on route).

British citizenship?
Yes, after ILR + 12 months.

Continuous residence?
No more than 180 days absence/year.

ILR cost?
~£2,885 (subject to change).

Dependants ILR?
Yes (after 5 years usually).

Appeal ILR refusal?
Yes.

G. Other Queries
How competitive?
High for tech; evidence quality matters.

Common rejection reasons?
Weak letters
No innovation proof
Generic evidence
Poor documentation

Strong portfolio tip?
Show measurable impact:
Revenue numbers
User growth
Awards
Leadership proof

Consultant allowed?
Yes, but not mandatory.

Official guidance?
Check:
UK Visas and Immigration
Official site: GOV.UK

The Global Talent Visa

The Global Talent Visa enables the brightest and best tech talent from around the world to come and work in the UK's digital technology sector, contributing their cutting-edge expertise, creativity and innovation to maintaining the UK's position at the forefront of the global digital economy. Tech Nation is the official Home Office designated endorsing body authorised to assess endorsement applications from individuals with expertise in digital technology and who want to come to the UK under the Global Talent visa. The Tech Nation Visa is for founders and employees with technical or business backgrounds, including all tech sub-sectors like fintech, AI, cyber, and games. The visa is valid for up to 5 years, enabling you to work, change employers, or be self-employed, without the need for further authorisation. The Tech Nation Visa can be extended to your immediate family members and after the initial visa period, you can either apply for an extension or permanent settlement in the UK. If you are a talented or promising individual and want to work in the UK's digital technology sector, the Tech Nation Visa is for you.

Typical applicants

Tech Nation's criteria are designed for applicants with technical and business skills in the digital technology sector. Suitable skill types are listed below. This list is not complete and provides an indication of the typical applicants assessed by Tech Nation.

1. Technical applicants (i.e. programmers) from non-technical organisations are eligible.
2. Non-technical applicants (i.e. business roles) from technical organisations are eligible.
3. Non-technical applicants from non-technical organisations are generally not eligible.

Technical applicants must demonstrate proven technical expertise with the latest technologies in building, using, deploying or exploiting a technology stack and building technical infrastructure.

Business applicants must demonstrate a proven commercial, investment, or product expertise in building digital products or leading investments in significant digital product businesses.

Examples of Technical Skills

- DevOps / SysOps engineers
- Principal software engineers/developers
- Experienced data scientists/data engineers
- Artificial Intelligence, Natural Language
- Processing and Machine Learning experts (AI, NLP, ML)
- Cybersecurity experts
- Hardware engineers
- Experienced front-end developers
- Operating systems engineers
- Experienced video game developers
- Experienced UX/UI designers
- Experienced Mobile App developers
- Experienced back end developers leading development of, or contributing heavily to major new technologies or open-source projects (e.g. blockchain, Scala, Golang, Elasticsearch etc)
- CTO or VP engineering experience managing teams of in-house employees at a growing digital business

- Virtual and augmented reality developers

Examples of Business Skills

- Experience of leading substantial VC investment over £25m GBP
- Experience as a commercial/business lead (P&L, growth, sales and distribution strategy) in a digital business
- Experience of expanding or growing a significant product-led digital technology business
- Sector-specific experience e.g. payment infrastructure in FinTech / international expansion in EdTech etc.
- Solution sales experts
- Experienced Product Manager
- SaaS or enterprise sales leadership for digital services