

Switching From UK Graduate Visa To Skilled Worker Visa In 2025

Everything employers need to know to help their potential hires switch from the Graduate Visa to the Skilled Worker Visa under the current visa rules

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With growing pressure on UK businesses to fill critical skills gaps—particularly in sectors like tech, engineering, and healthcare—employers are increasingly turning to international graduates already in the UK. These individuals, often on a Graduate Visa, represent a valuable opportunity for long-term recruitment.

By helping a recent graduate **switch from a Graduate Visa to a Skilled Worker Visa**, your company can retain top talent, avoid the delays of overseas hiring, and simplify compliance under the UK's sponsorship system.

This guide for 2025 explains how the employers can support international graduates in making the switch. We also dive into recent immigration changes mean for salary thresholds and sponsorship requirements, and how to ensure a smooth transition from temporary post-study work to long-term employment under the Skilled Worker route.

What Is a Graduate Visa?

The UK Graduate Visa allows international students who have completed an eligible UK degree to stay for:

- 2 years (Bachelor's or Master's)
- 3 years (PhD or Doctoral qualifications)

Note: It is non-renewable and does not count toward settlement.

→ [More on the Graduate Visa](#)

Can You Switch from a Graduate Visa to a Skilled Worker Visa?

Yes. You can switch to a Skilled Worker Visa at any time before your Graduate Visa expires. Many employers prefer hiring Graduate Visa holders due to ease of onboarding.

2025 Skilled Worker Visa Changes: What's New?

2025 has brought a handful of [changes to UK immigration policy](#) that will impact those switching between visa types. Here are the headline changes:

1. Increased Salary Thresholds

implemented fully in 2025:

- Minimum salary:
- New entrants (including some Graduate Visa holders): may qualify for a lower threshold depending on job role

2. Immigration Salary List (ISL)

The Shortage Occupation List has been replaced by the Immigration Salary List. Fewer roles now qualify for salary discounts – check if your job is included.

3. Dependant Rules

Graduate Visa holders cannot bring new dependants unless they were already listed on a prior Student Visa. However, Skilled Worker Visa holders, other than care workers, can bring dependants.

Eligibility requirements

- **Job offer:** You must have a job offer from a UK employer that is licensed to sponsor a Skilled Worker visa.
- **Sponsorship:** The employer must provide you with a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS).
- **Role requirements:** The job must be skilled to at least RQF Level 6 (equivalent to a degree) and the salary must be at least the minimum of £41,700 per year or the "going rate" for the job, whichever is higher.
- **Completed studies:** You must have completed the course of study for which you were granted your Graduate visa.
- **English language:** You must be able to read, write, speak, and understand English at a CEFR Level B1 or higher. You can prove this with your UK degree or by taking a test.
- **Funds:** You must have enough money to support yourself upon arrival, unless your sponsor confirms they will cover your maintenance.
- **Application:** You must be in the UK and apply before your current Graduate visa expires.

What you need to apply

- Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) reference number
- Valid passport or travel document
- Proof of English language ability
- Proof of funds, if required

- TB test results and/or criminal record certificate, if applicable based on your country of residence or the job role
- Application fees and Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)

Step-by-Step: How to Switch Visas

1. **Secure a job offer** from a UK sponsor
2. Receive a **Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)**
3. Check **salary requirements** (standard or discounted)
4. **Apply online** to switch visa types
5. **Await decision** (average 8 weeks)