



1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)
2. Visas and immigration (<https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration>)
3. Work in the UK (<https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/work-visas>)

General work visa (Tier 2)

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 (<https://www.gov.uk/eu-eea>)

Getting sponsored

You need to be employed by a licensed sponsor (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-workers>) to apply to live in the UK.

Your sponsor checks that you can do the job they're hiring you for and if it qualifies you for a visa. They'll assign you a certificate of sponsorship (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/eligibility>) to prove this.

They must also give you other information you need when you apply, for example how much you'll be paid.

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.

Check the guide processing times (<https://www.gov.uk/visa-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.

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	£610	£704	£1,314
If you're a citizen of Turkey or Macedonia	£555	£649	£1,259

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)
All dependants	£610 each person	£704 each person	£1,314 each person

You'll also have to pay the healthcare surcharge (<https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/pay>) as part of your application. Check how much you'll have to pay before you apply (<https://www.immigration-health-surcharge.service.gov.uk/checker/type>).

Up to 3 years - shortage occupation

A shortage occupation is a skilled job where there is a shortage of workers in the UK (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-k-shortage-occupation-list>).

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	£464	£464	£1,074
You - as a citizen of Turkey or Macedonia	£409	£409	£1,019
All dependants	£464 each person	£464 each person	£1,074 each person

You'll also have to pay the healthcare surcharge (<https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/pay>) as part of your application. Check how much you'll have to pay before you apply (<https://www.immigration-health-surcharge.service.gov.uk/checker/type>).

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	£1,220	£1,408	£2,018
You - as a citizen of Turkey or Macedonia	£1,165	£1,353	£1,963
All dependants	£1,220 each person	£1,408 each person	£2,018 each person

You'll also have to pay the healthcare surcharge (<https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/pay>) as part of your application. Check how much you'll have to pay before you apply (<https://www.immigration-health-surcharge.service.gov.uk/checker/type>).

More than 3 years - shortage occupation

A shortage occupation is a skilled job where there is a shortage of workers in the UK (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-k-shortage-occupation-list>).

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	£928	£928	£1,538
You - as a citizen of Turkey or Macedonia	£873	£873	£1,483
All dependants	£928 each person	£928 each person	£1,538 each person

You'll also have to pay the healthcare surcharge (<https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/pay>) as part of your application. Check how much you'll have to pay before you apply (<https://www.immigration-health-surcharge.service.gov.uk/checker/type>).

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.

You can start your stay up to 14 days before the start date on your certificate of sponsorship (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general-visa/eligibility>).

Example

Your start date is 15 July - the earliest you can start your stay is 1 July.

You can apply to extend (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/extend-your-visa>) this visa for up to another 5 years, as long as your total stay is not more than 6 years.

What you can and cannot do

You can:

- work for your sponsor in the job described in your certificate of sponsorship
- do a second job (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/second-job>) in certain circumstances
- do voluntary work
- study as long as it does not interfere with the job you're sponsored for
- travel abroad and return to the UK
- bring family members (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/family-members>) with you

You cannot:

- own more than 10% of your sponsor's shares (unless you earn more than £159,600 a year)
- get public funds (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-funds--2>)
- apply for a second job until you've started working for your sponsor

2. Eligibility

You need to:

- have a valid certificate of sponsorship for your job
- show you're being paid an appropriate salary for your job
- prove your knowledge of English (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/knowledge-of-english>)
- have personal savings so you can support yourself when you arrive in the UK
- show you can travel and your travel history over the last 5 years
- have tuberculosis test results if you're from a listed country (<https://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/countries-where-you-need-a-tb-test-to-enter-the-uk>)
- provide a criminal record certificate (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/documents-you-must-provide>) 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

You need to have an eligible qualification if you're switching from a Tier 4 visa (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/switch-to-this-visa>).

Certificate of sponsorship

A certificate of sponsorship holds your personal details and information about the job you've been offered. It's an electronic record, not a paper document. Your sponsor will give you a certificate of sponsorship reference number to add to your application.

You can only use your certificate of sponsorship reference number once. You must use it 3 months after getting it.

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 (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-j-codes-of-practice-for-skilled-work>) for the job you've been offered.

Check the guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-2-worker>) for situations when you can be paid less - for example if:

- 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

Personal savings

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

You do not need to prove this if you have a fully approved ('A-rated') sponsor (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-workers>) who can give you at least £945 to cover your costs for a month if you need it. Your sponsor must confirm this on the certificate of sponsorship.

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 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests>) 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 (<http://www.naric.org.uk/visasandnationality>) 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 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-2-worker>) for detailed information.

Exceptions

You will not 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 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-2-worker>).

4. Documents you must provide

When you apply you'll need to provide:

- your certificate of sponsorship reference number
- proof of your knowledge of English (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/knowledge-of-english/knowledge-of-english>)
- a bank or building society statement or letter that shows you have enough personal savings (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/eligibility>) (unless your certificate of sponsorship shows your sponsor can support you)
- a current passport or travel document to prove you can travel - you need a page in your passport that's blank on both sides for your visa

- expired passports or travel documents if you need them to show your travel history
- your tuberculosis test results if you're from a listed country (<https://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa/countries-where-you-need-a-tb-test-to-enter-the-uk>)
- a criminal record certificate - if you're working with vulnerable people

If your documents are not in English or Welsh you'll also need to provide a certified translation (<https://www.gov.uk/certifying-a-document>).

Read the guide for a list of documents you can provide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-2-worker>).

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

Criminal record certificate

You'll need to provide a criminal record certificate (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>) 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

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/582187/Criminal_Record_Checks_FAQ_De_c_16.pdf) that need to get a certificate.

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

5. Apply

You should read the full policy guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-2-worker>) before you apply.

You'll have to pay the healthcare surcharge (<https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/pay>) as part of your application. Check how much you'll have to pay before you apply (<https://www.immigration-health-surcharge.service.gov.uk/checker/type>).

Apply outside the UK

You must apply online (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/apply-visa-type/tier2>) for a Tier 2 (General) visa.

You'll need to have your fingerprints and photograph taken at a visa application centre (<https://www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre>) (to get a biometric residence permit) as part of your application.

You'll have to collect your biometric residence permit (<https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/collect>) within 10 days of when you said you'd arrive in the UK.

You may be able to get your visa faster or get other services (like translation) depending on what country you're in - check with your visa application centre.

North Korea

You cannot apply online if you're living in North Korea.

To apply from North Korea you must:

- download the application form and guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-form-for-uk-visa-to-work-study-and-for-dependants-and-right-of-abode-form-vaf2>) - read the guidance if you need help filling in the form
- read the instructions (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/democratic-peoples-republic-of-korea-apply-for-a-uk-visa>) to find out where to take your completed form

Apply in the UK

Check if you can apply from inside the UK to:

- extend (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/extend-your-visa>) your existing Tier 2 (General) visa
- switch (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/switch-to-this-visa>) to this visa from another visa

6. Extend your visa

You may be able to apply to extend your stay in the UK under a Tier 2 (General) visa.

You should include any dependants who are on your current visa on your application to extend. This includes children who have turned 18 during your stay. They'll also need to submit a separate application (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/family-members>).

You should apply before your current visa expires.

Eligibility

You must have current permission to enter or stay on a Tier 2 (General) visa.

You must also meet the following conditions:

- you have the same job as when you were issued your previous permission to enter or stay in the UK
- you're still working for the employer who assigned your certificate of sponsorship
- you're still earning an 'appropriate salary' - read the guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-2-worker>) if you're not sure

You must be in the UK to extend your visa.

How long you can stay

You can apply to extend your visa for up to another 5 years, as long as your total stay is not more than 6 years.

Fees

Check the fee for your type of visa (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general>).

How to extend your visa

Read the Tier 2 guidance notes (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-2-worker>) before you apply.

You'll also have to pay the healthcare surcharge (<https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/pay>) as part of your application. Check how much you'll have to pay before you apply (<https://www.immigration-health-surcharge.service.gov.uk/checker/type>).

If you're in the UK you can:

- apply online (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier2-general>) as an individual or family group, using the standard or priority service (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-priority-applications>)
- get a same-day decision at a premium service centre (<https://www.gov.uk/ukvi-premium-service-centres/overview>), by booking a premium service appointment when you apply online (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier2-general>)

Biometric information

You must also pay £19.20 to have your biometric information (fingerprints and a photo) taken. You'll be told how to do this after you've applied.

You'll get a biometric residence permit (<https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits>) if your application to extend your visa is successful.

How long it takes

Decisions are made:

- within 8 weeks for online applications
- within 10 days if you're able to use the Tier 2 priority application service (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-priority-applications>)
- usually on the same day if you use the premium service

You'll be contacted if your circumstances or application are more complicated, for example if:

- your supporting documents need to be verified
- you need to attend an interview
- you have a criminal conviction

Once you've applied you can stay in the UK until you've been given a decision, as long as you applied before your last visa expired.

If you change your job

You may need to make a new Tier 2 (General) visa application if:

- you want to change your job and your new job is with a different employer
- your job changes to a different standard occupation classification (SOC) code, and you're not in a graduate training programme
- you leave a job that's on the shortage occupation list for a job that is not on the list

You do not need to apply again if you stay in the same job, but your job is taken off the shortage occupation list

You will not need to make a new application if you'll be staying with your current employer but your job will change in other ways, for example you want to change to a job in the same SOC code, or your pay will increase.

You must have a new certificate of sponsorship and you must meet all other application conditions, but you will not need to provide evidence to support your application if you've provided it for a previous Tier 2 application.

You can continue working for your previous sponsor until the start date on your new certificate of sponsorship if your current permission to stay is still valid.

You should not start your new job until you've received your biometric residence permit (<https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits>) with your new permission.

7. Switch to this visa

You can apply to change ('switch') from another visa to a Tier 2 (General) visa.

You should apply before your current visa expires.

Eligibility

You must already be in the UK under any of the following visas or schemes:

- Tier 1 visa
- Tier 2 (Sportsperson) visa
- Tier 2 (Minister of religion) visa
- Tier 2 (Intra company Transfer) visa under the Immigration Rules in place before 6 April 2010 and you're applying to change sponsor
- Tier 4 visa - if you have an eligible qualification or you've done at least 12 months of a PhD

You can also switch to a Tier 2 (General) visa if you're:

- a dependent partner of someone with a Tier 4 visa
- a representative of an overseas business

You must leave the UK and make your Tier 2 (General) application from abroad if you're not in any of these categories.

Eligible qualifications for Tier 4 visa

You must have been sponsored by a licensed tier 4 sponsor (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-students>) to get one of the following qualifications:

- a UK bachelors degree
- a UK masters degree
- a postgraduate certificate in education
- a professional graduate diploma of education

PhD students

You must have completed at least 12 months' study during your most recent stay in the UK. This can be through a licensed Tier 4 sponsor or another visa that allowed you to study.

How long you can stay

You can stay in the UK for up to 5 years after switching to a Tier 2 (General) visa.

Fees

Check the fee for your type of visa (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general>).

How to switch your visa

Read the Tier 2 guidance notes (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-2-worker>) before you apply.

You'll also have to pay the healthcare surcharge (<https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/pay>) as part of your application. Check how much you'll have to pay before you apply (<https://www.immigration-health-surcharge.service.gov.uk/checker/type>).

If you're in the UK you can:

- apply online (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier2-general>) as an individual or family group, using the standard or priority service (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-priority-applications>)
- get a same-day decision at a premium service centre (<https://www.gov.uk/ukvi-premium-service-centres/overview>), by booking a premium service appointment when you apply online (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier2-general>)

Biometric information

Each person applying must also pay £19.20 to have their biometric information (fingerprints and a photo) taken. You'll be told how to do this after you've applied.

You'll get a biometric residence permit (<https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits>) if your application to switch your visa is successful.

How long it takes

Decisions are usually made:

- within 8 weeks for online applications
- within 10 days if you're able to use the Tier 2 priority application service (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-priority-applications>)
- on the same day if you use the premium service

You'll be contacted if your circumstances or application are more complicated, for example if:

- your supporting documents need to be verified
- you need to attend an interview
- you have a criminal conviction

Once you've applied you can stay in the UK until you've been given a decision, as long as you applied before your last visa expired.

8. Family members

Your family members ('dependants') can come with you when you come to the UK on this visa. Your family members must have a visa if they're from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland (<https://www.gov.uk/eu-eea>).

A 'dependant' is any of the following:

- your husband, wife or partner
- your child under 18
- your child over 18 if they're currently in the UK as a dependant

Read the guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-dependants-of-uk-visa-applicants-tiers-1-2-4-5>) on dependant applications before you apply.

They'll also have to pay the healthcare surcharge (<https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/pay>) as part of your application. Check how much they'll have to pay before they apply (<https://www.immigration-health-surcharge.service.gov.uk/checker/type>).

Personal savings

You must show that your dependants can be supported while they're in the UK.

Each dependant must have £630 available to them whether they apply with you or separately. This is in addition to the £945 you must have to support yourself.

You must have proof (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/documents-you-must-provide>) you have the money, and that it's been in your bank account or your dependant's bank account for at least 90 days before you or they apply.

Example You must have £2,205 if you want to bring your partner and one child with you to the UK (£945 to support yourself plus £630 for your partner and £630 for your child).

You will not need evidence of your savings if you have a:

- fully approved ('A-rated') sponsor (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-workers>)
- certificate of sponsorship stating that your sponsor will give each of your dependants at least £630 to cover their costs for a month if they need it

Dependants applying from outside the UK

Your family members must apply online (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/apply-visa-type/dependant>).

They'll need to have their fingerprints and photograph taken at a visa application centre (<https://www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre>) to get a biometric residence permit as part of their application.

They'll have to collect their biometric residence permit (<https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/collect>) within 30 days of when they said they'd arrive in the UK.

They may be able to get their visa faster or other services depending on what country they're in - check with the visa application centre.

North Korea

Your family members cannot apply online if they're applying from North Korea.

Each family member will need to make their own application. They must:

- download the application form and guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-form-for-uk-visa-to-work-study-and-for-dependants-and-right-of-abode-form-vaf2>) - they can read the guidance if they need help filling in the form
- read the instructions (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/democratic-peoples-republic-of-korea-apply-for-a-uk-visa>) to find out where they need to take their completed form

Dependants applying in the UK on their own

Your dependants can apply to extend or switch their visas to stay with you if they're already in the UK.

Your family members can apply online if they're your:

- partner (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/pbs-dependant-partner>)
- child (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/pbs-dependant-child>)

They can also ask to use the priority service (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-priority-applications>).

You can get a same-day decision at a premium service centre (<https://www.gov.uk/ukvi-premium-service-centres>).

It's best for your dependants to apply at the same time as you but they can apply at a later date.

Your family members cannot apply in the UK as your dependant if they hold a visitor visa (<https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/tourist-short-stay-visas>).

Biometric information

Each person applying must also pay £19.20 to have their biometric information (fingerprints and a photo) taken. You'll be told how to do this after you've applied.

They'll get a biometric residence permit (<https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits>) if their application is successful.

Children born while you're in the UK

If you have children while you're in the UK, you can apply for permission for them to stay.

You must do this if you want to travel in and out of the UK with your child.

When you apply you must provide a full UK birth certificate showing the names of both of your child's parents.

9. Taking a second job

You can take a second job on this visa if you're working up to 20 hours a week in either:

- the same profession as your main job and at the same level
- a profession on the shortage occupation list (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tier-2-shortage-occupation-list>)

You can also do unpaid voluntary work.

Otherwise, you'll need to apply for a new visa. You'll need to be sponsored by your second employer and get a new certificate of sponsorship.

When to apply for a new visa

You cannot apply for a new visa until you've started work with your first sponsor.

You cannot start work with your second sponsor until your visa application has been approved.

How to apply

Read the guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-2-worker>) before you apply online (<https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier2-general>).

You can get a same-day decision at a premium service centre (<https://www.gov.uk/ukvi-premium-service-centres>). You must book an appointment in advance (<https://www.gov.uk/ukvi-premium-service-centres/book-an-appointment>) as part of your online application.

You must be in the UK to apply.

Documents you must provide

You'll need to provide some documents (<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/documents-you-must-provide>) with your application.

You must also include a letter with your application explaining that you want to change your current permission to stay.

Your letter must state:

- your name

- your date of birth
- your current certificate of sponsorship reference number
- the date when your current permission to stay runs out