

BIOMETRIC RESIDENCE PERMIT (BRP) CARDS – FAQs

Overview

Why is the Home Office changing the visa process for overseas associates?

BRP cards provide a more secure, streamlined and faster method for applicants, businesses and the Home Office to verify an individual's identity and right to be in the UK. Introducing BRP cards is a legal requirement that allows the Home Office to comply with EC regulations to issue BRP cards in place of visas.

Who does this impact?

This process change impacts associates submitting their visa applications offshore from 15 April 2015. There is no impact on associates already onsite.

What happens if an associate holds a visa issued prior to 15 April 2015?

There is no impact (this applies whether or not the associate has travelled to the UK).

What happens if an associate has submitted a visa application prior to 15 April 2015 but the visa is yet to be issued?

There is no impact.

What are the main differences?

The visa is being replaced by a two stage process, where the associate will receive:

- a) a 30 day visa in his passport to travel to the UK; and
- b) a BRP card which will include the full conditions of stay, which is to be collected once the associate enters the UK.

What is the process for dependant family members?

The new process as outlined above will also apply to dependant family members. They will be issued with a 30 day visa and will then be required to collect their BRP card upon arrival in the UK.

Offshore visa application

The associate will need to provide a 30 day travel window and postcode as part of his visa application. It is important that the associate and business unit carefully considers the expected travel date, as the associate will only have a 30 day travel window.

The postcode provided will dictate the closest Post Office branch for collection of the associate's BRP card and can be either for his work or home address in the UK, whichever is more convenient.

Once the associate makes a visa application, he will then be required to book an appointment to submit his biometrics at a Visa Application Centre and submit his documents.

Upon approval of the associate's visa application, the associate's passport will be endorsed with a 30 day visa. He will also be provided with a Home Office decision letter confirming the duration of his work dates, together with details on when and where to collect his BRP card in the UK.

What happens if the associate fails to travel within the 30 day visa period?

If the associate fails to travel within the 30 day period, he will need to apply for a new 30 day visa in order to enter the UK. This will incur an additional fee (yet to be confirmed by the Home Office) and extended processing times of approximately 2 – 3 weeks. The associate will also have to resubmit his biometrics.

What will the BRP card be used for and does it need to be carried at all times?

The purpose of the BRP card is to evidence the associate's immigration status. Whilst the BRP card does not need to be carried at all times, it will need to be produced if the associate is required to demonstrate his right to work. The BRP card is a small plastic card, similar to a driver's licence:



What happens if there is an error on the 30 day visa?

Any errors identified on the 30 day visa must be promptly corrected. The associate should contact his Local Support Services Team for assistance.

Arrival in the UK

BRP cards will be available for collection from a Post Office branch in the UK. The details will be provided on the Home Office decision letter the associate receives upon approval of his visa application offshore.

When does the BRP card need to be collected?

Within 10 working days of arrival in the UK or before the 30 day visa expiry date, whichever is the earlier.

What documents should be presented at the Post Office branch?

The associate's Home Office decision letter and original passport containing the 30 day visa and UK entry stamp.

What happens if the associate's work location changes?

Once the associate has arrived in the UK, it will be possible for him to request that his BRP card be transferred to a different Post Office branch for collection. The associate will need to contact the Post Office branch directly to make this request and will have to pay a fee (yet to be confirmed by the Home Office.) It is therefore important for the associate to carefully identify the most convenient Post Office branch when he is making his visa application.

Can someone collect the BRP card on behalf of the associate?

A family member (18 years or older) who has travelled to the UK with the associate may collect the BRP card on his behalf. They will need to provide evidence that they have travelled together (for instance, original passports containing the same UK entry stamp date or flight itinerary documents).

What happens if the associate loses his BRP card?

The associate must promptly report the loss of his BRP card to the UK Global Mobility Team (email address: immigration.uk@cognizant.com) and comply with the process to replace it. All losses and thefts of BRP cards must be reported to the police and the Home Office immediately.

What happens if there is an error on the BRP card?

Any errors identified on a BRP card must be promptly corrected. The associate should contact the UK Global Mobility Team for assistance (email address: immigration.uk@cognizant.com).

Right to work checks

How does the associate complete his right to work check?

Upon arrival in the UK, the associate will receive an email to his Cognizant address with detailed instructions. It is therefore important that the associate's UK contact details are updated in HCM and Cognizant emails are regularly checked.

Who should check the associate's work authorisation?

The check must be conducted in person, by a Cognizant colleague (the 'verifier').

Who can act as a verifier?

The verifier may be any Cognizant colleague, as nominated by the associate. Examples include a peer or manager. Please note that the verifier does not need to be of a particular grade. However, he cannot be a client or external individual.

Can the associate present a copy of his BRP card to the verifier?

No. At the time of the right to work check, the associate must present his original BRP card to the verifier.

Remote hires

If the associate works in a remote location and is unable to identify a Cognizant colleague to check his BRP card, he should contact the UK Right to Work Team (email address: UKRightToWork@cognizant.com).

The UK Right to Work Team will then assist with nominating a Cognizant colleague who can act as the verifier.

When must the right to work check be completed?

After arrival in the UK, within the validity period of the 30 day visa.

Having arrived in the UK, what happens if an associate does not collect his BRP card and complete the right to work check within the validity period of his 30 day visa?

If the associate fails to collect his BRP card, it will be returned to the Home Office by the Post Office and the associate may be subject to sanctions such as a financial penalty or cancellation of leave.

To ensure compliance with immigration requirements, the UK Global Mobility Team will monitor travel dates and visa expiry dates.

Can the associate work in the UK before he collects his BRP card?

Yes. However it is important to note that the associate must collect his BRP card and complete the right to work check before the expiry of his 30 day visa, to be able to continue to work in the UK.