



Frequently Asked Questions – In country applications

Once you have received both a job offer and a valid Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) from Aston University, you can apply for permission to stay in the UK. We are able to sponsor you to work in the UK because we have a sponsor licence from the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) which enables us to do so. Please see the following guidance regarding the visa application process.

Do I need a visa to work at the University?

The following individuals do not need a visa for the UK, but do still have to prove their right to work before employment can commence:

- **British Citizens or Irish Nationals**
- **EU/EEA/Swiss nationals resident in the UK by or before 31 December 2020**
- **Non-EEA nationals with Indefinite Leave to Remain/Settlement in the UK**

If you or your close family member started living in the UK before 1 January 2021, you may be able to apply to the free EU Settlement Scheme. Otherwise you need a visa to work in the UK. Irish citizens do not need to apply for a visa or to the EU Settlement Scheme.

You can check if you need a UK VISA at the following [link](#).

I am an EU, EEA, Swiss citizen, resident in the UK – Do I need a Visa to continue to work here?

This will depend if you were a resident in the UK before 31 December 2020. If you were not then you will require a visa to work in the UK.

If you are an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen and were a resident in the UK before 31 December 2020, you and your family members need to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to continue to live, work and study in the UK beyond 30 June 2021. If you are an EU/EEA citizen resident in the UK by 31 December 2020, the deadline for applying to the EU settlement scheme is 30 June 2021.

You can apply via the Government webpage <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

Irish Nationals do not need to apply for settlement as they retain the right to work in the UK.

What is the Skilled Worker VISA?

The Skilled Worker Visa is open to individuals of all nationalities (except British and Irish) who have an offer of an eligible skilled job in the UK. The route can lead to settlement and applicants can be joined by dependent partners and children.

In order to secure a Skilled Worker Visa, you will need to be sponsored to do a specific job, which meets certain skill and salary requirements. Further guidance on the new Points-Based Immigration System and routes to work in the UK can be found on the [Government website](#).

Who is eligible for the new points based immigration system (Skilled Worker VISA)?

No further applications for Tier 2 visas can be made from 1 December 2020, but **existing Tier 2 visa holders** will **retain** their current visas with no change to their conditions, and at the point of extension will apply for a Skilled Worker Visa under the rules of this visa route.

With the end of free movement for EU/EEA/Swiss nationals from 1 January 2021, the UK's new immigration system will apply equally to new arrivals of EU/EEA/Swiss nationals as it will to new and existing non-EU nationals who require a visa.

If you are an EU/EEA national and will be arriving in the UK to take up employment at Aston please contact the Recruitment Team to check that you have the appropriate right to work or to ensure that, if a visa is required, it can be obtained prior to the start date. This does not apply to Irish Nationals who retain the right to work in the UK.

You can find more information on the <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

I already hold a Tier 2 visa; can I extend my Tier 2 Visa.

Yes if you are eligible to do so. However, you will need to apply for an extension via the Skilled Worker Visa route. From 1 December 2020, the Tier 2 visa was replaced by the 'Skilled Worker Visa' within the points-based immigration system (PBS). All current Tier 2 visa holders who are eligible can extend their leave under this new route and obtain a Skilled Worker Visa.

How do I apply for the visa?

For Skilled Worker Visa applications, please see further information and how to apply [online here](#):

For information getting a faster decision on your visa or settlement application please visit the [UKVI Website for further information](#).

How long will the application process take?

Once you've applied online, proved your identity and provided your documents, you'll usually get a decision on your visa within:

- 3 weeks, if you're outside the UK
- 8 weeks, if you're inside the UK

Please see [UKVI](#) for further information.

How much does it cost?

Please see here for up-to-date guidance on visa fee costs: <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa/how-much-it-costs>

What is the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)?

The Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) is an additional charge, over and above the visa fee and must be made up-front at the time of the visa application.

Payment of the surcharge will ensure that you have **access to the NHS** on the same terms as a permanent UK resident. You usually need to pay the healthcare surcharge if you're applying for a visa or immigration application:

- for more than 6 months, if you're applying outside the UK
- for any length of time, if you're applying inside the UK

For further guidance, and who needs to pay, please see the UKVI webpages: <https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application>

Can the University help with my visa costs?

Recognising the significant initial cost incurred by obtaining a UK visa, the University has introduced a loan scheme to assist new and existing international staff with spreading the costs of securing UK visas. Further details can be found on this web page.

What documents do I need to submit for my Skilled worker visa?

When you apply you'll need to provide the [following documents](#) :

If you are applying for your VISA on or after the 21 May you may also require an [ATAS](#) certificate. Please see UKVI website for further information.

What are the conditions of holding a Skilled Worker Visa?

We were able to sponsor you to work in the UK because we have a licence from the UKVI which enables us to do so. However, it is a condition of retaining this licence that we keep certain information about you up-to-date and that we report any changes to the UKBA within 10 days of the change happening.

Please ensure that you inform your [HR Business Partner](#) or [HR Admin](#) **immediately** if;

1. If you do not turn up for your first day of work, you must keep [HR Recruitment](#) and your line manager informed of your intended start date and the reason for the change in start date. You must also ensure you arrange to meet HR with all your documents on your first day of employment.
2. You must keep your address, home telephone number or You must apply before your current visa expires telephone number updated through the [Staff Portal](#) as soon as anything changes. If, for any reason you are unable to access portal once you have received your staff account details, you must let HR know immediately.
3. If you are absent from work without permission for more than 10 days, HR will inform UKVI of this. It is therefore essential that you keep your line manager informed of any circumstances (sickness, holidays, conferences etc) which could prevent you coming into the University to carry out your work.
4. If you intend to resign you must do so in writing and send a copy of this letter to your line manager with a copy to HR.
5. You must inform HR immediately of any changes to your personal circumstances which might affect this (for example, obtained indefinite leave to remain, acquired British Citizenship or moved to an immigration tier that does not require a Sponsor e.g. Global Talent Visa). HR must see documentary evidence (passport stamp and/or letter from the Home Office) of any change in immigration status.
6. We need to inform UKVI if your visa changes for any reason. To allow us to do this you must inform HR immediately if your visa is withdrawn, amended or renewed for any reason.

Please see the UKVI webpages here: <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa>

What happens if my application is refused?

You must notify recruitment@aston.ac.uk immediately if your visa is refused.

Who can switch into the Skilled Worker visa route?

You might be able to apply to change ('switch') to a Skilled Worker visa if you're already in the UK on a different type of visa. Please see further details and eligibility requirements [here](#).

Do I need to prove my knowledge of English before applying:

Unless you did this in a previous successful visa application, you will usually need to prove your knowledge of the English language when you apply.

Candidates should check their eligibility to enter or remain in the UK in advance of making any job application via the UKVI website <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/work-visas>. Before applying you should ensure that you meet the requirements, including meeting the English Language requirements. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, any application for a work visa would be unsuccessful.

Please see links for further information:

[Skilled Worker visa: Knowledge of English - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Prove your English language abilities with a secure English language test \(SELT\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Who cannot apply to switch to this visa

The following [link](#) provides details of those visa's that are currently not eligible to switch from within the UK.

Do you have a mobile pop-up service to enrol my biometrics?

No the University does not have access to this service.

I'm already employed by Aston University. Can I continue working if my visa expires?

Yes, but only if you made your new visa application before your current visa expires.

To ensure the University can legally continue to employ you whilst your Skilled Worker Visa application is pending:

- We **must** see copies of evidence of your application
- You **must** grant permission for us to use the Employee Checking Service (ECS). We are legally required to verify your ongoing visa application with the Home Office, via the ECS. Please contact hr_admin@aston.ac.uk for further information.

Can I apply for an extension to my current visa?

You can usually apply to extend a Skilled Worker visa or a Tier 2 (General) work visa if all of the following are true:

- you have the same job as when you were given your previous permission to enter or stay in the UK
- your job is in the same [occupation code](#) as when you were given your previous permission to enter or stay in the UK
- you're still working for the employer who gave you your current certificate of sponsorship

For further information please see [Skilled Worker visa: Extend your visa - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

When can I apply for the visa?

You cannot apply **more than 3 months** before your current Tier 2/Skilled Worker Visa expires. However, you must apply before your current visa expires.

If you require an [ATAS](#) certificate you will need to apply as soon as possible before your visa expires. You will not be able to apply for your VISA or VISA extension until this has been received. Please see our information on ATAS for further guidance.

Do I need to meet the English language and maintenance requirements?

No. As you already hold a Tier 2 or Skilled Worker Visa, you are exempt from meeting these requirements for this application.

Can I continue working for the University if my visa expires?

Yes, but only if you made your new visa application before your current visa expires.

To ensure the University can legally continue to employ you whilst your Skilled Worker Visa application is pending:

- We **must** see copies of evidence of your application
- You **must** grant permission for HR Admin. to use the Employee Checking Service (ECS). We are legally required to verify your ongoing visa application with the Home Office, via the ECS.

Please send all documentation to HR Admin.

Failure to provide the above documentation before your current visa expires may result in the termination of your contract.

I'm currently working for a different employer when can I start work?

You **must** have obtained your new Skilled Worker Visa BRP before you can start work in your new role, and this has been seen and verified by HR.

It may be possible for you to continue working for your previous employer or, if you are currently employed by Aston University working in your previous role, until the new Skilled Worker Visa application is **granted**.

If you require an [ATAS](#) certificate for your new role, you will need to apply as soon as possible before your visa expires. You will not be able to apply for your new VISA until this has been received. Please see our information on ATAS for further guidance.