

A blurred background image showing two people working at desks. On the left, a woman is looking at a laptop screen. On the right, a man is looking at a laptop screen. There are coffee cups on the desks. The overall atmosphere is professional and focused.

# Immigration Specialists for Every Journey

Guidance Document: Skilled Worker

# Skilled Worker



*"I have to be very honest I have been travelling all around the world and working with many different departments. I haven't seen this precise services!!! They care about every detail, they reply really fast, they're up to date with you about all the steps. They're fast in the process in general, we are very happy to have chooses to work with them."*

SA, Skilled Worker visa applicant

The UK Skilled Worker visa allows overseas nationals to live and work in the UK in an eligible, sponsored role with an approved employer. It is the UK's primary long-term work route for skilled migrants across a wide range of industries.

## What Is the Skilled Worker Visa?

The Skilled Worker visa is a sponsored immigration route that allows UK employers to hire skilled overseas workers to fill genuine vacancies where the role meets specific skills and salary thresholds. Applicants must have a confirmed job offer from a Home Office-licensed sponsor before applying.

This route supports long-term employment in the UK and provides a pathway to settlement. It differs from temporary transfer routes such as the [Global Business Mobility visa](#), which is designed for short-term overseas assignments, and from unsponsored high-skilled options such as the Global Talent route.

## Who Can Apply for a Skilled Worker Visa?

To qualify for a Skilled Worker visa, applicants must meet all of the following core requirements:

- Have a confirmed job offer from a UK employer that holds a valid sponsor licence
- Be sponsored in an eligible occupation at the required skill level
- Be paid at or above the applicable minimum salary threshold
- Meet the English language requirement
- Satisfy the genuine vacancy requirement

The sponsoring employer must also meet extensive compliance and reporting obligations throughout the employment. These ongoing duties are explained in more detail on our [Sponsor Compliance](#) page. Unlike some temporary work routes, the Skilled Worker visa can lead to settlement in the UK after five years of continuous residence, provided all requirements continue to be met. Further details are available on our [Indefinite Leave to Remain](#) page.

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# Skilled Worker

*"Have had a wonderful experience dealing with Migrate UK twice over. I got prompt and clear answers to all my queries and constant support from all levels in the organisation"*

*SB, UK Ancestry Visa Applicant*

## How to Apply for a Skilled Worker Visa

- **Step 1 – Confirm Eligibility & Job Offer**

The applicant must first secure a compliant job offer from a licensed sponsor and confirm that the role meets the skill and salary thresholds.

- **Step 2 – Receive Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)**

Once all role and employment details are confirmed, the employer assigns an electronic CoS to the worker. This document contains the key information required for the visa application and the applicant's details must be accurate.

- **Step 3 – Prepare Supporting Documents**

The applicant gathers all required personal documentation, alongside any role-specific evidence.

- **Step 4 – Submit Application & Biometrics**

The application is submitted online, the Immigration Health Surcharge and application fee are paid, and the applicant attends a biometrics appointment. The sponsor must continue to meet all reporting and record-keeping duties throughout this process under Sponsor Compliance.

Applicants who later intend to settle permanently should ensure their employment history aligns with future ILR requirements from the outset.

# Skilled Worker

*"I highly recommend Migrate UK! From start to finish, the entire visa application process was incredibly smooth and stress-free, all thanks to their expert guidance. Dealing with visa applications can be confusing and overwhelming, but the team at Migrate UK made it feel completely manageable. They were thorough, professional, and exceptionally responsive to all my questions, often getting back to me within the hour."*

*MK, Skilled Worker visa applicant*

## Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

### Common reasons for refusal or delay include:

- Assigning an incorrect SOC occupation code for the worker's role
- Salary not meeting the correct threshold for the role
- Errors or inconsistencies on the Certificate of Sponsorship
- Incomplete or incorrect supporting documents
- Failure by the employer to meet Sponsor Compliance duties

Some applicants also choose the wrong immigration route where another sponsored category, such as Global Business Mobility, may have been more suitable. Careful upfront assessment is essential to avoid refusals and wasted costs.

### After You're Approved

Once the Skilled Worker visa is granted, the individual can begin working in the sponsored role, subject to the conditions on their visa. Key post-approval considerations include:

- Work only in the sponsored role unless a change of employment is formally approved
- Bring eligible dependants to the UK
- Maintain continuous residence toward the five-year ILR settlement threshold
- Notify UKVI of job changes, salary changes, or early termination

After five years of qualifying residence, many Skilled Workers can apply for settlement under the ILR route.

Sponsors must continue to meet their compliance duties throughout the worker's employment.

For exceptionally high-performing individuals, alternative future progression routes such as Global Talent may also become viable.

# Skilled Worker

“Amazing Team, seamless experience.”

SP, GBM Visa Applicant

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **What responsibilities does my employer have?**

Your employer must hold a valid sponsor licence and comply with strict reporting and record keeping duties throughout your employment. Full details are set out in our Sponsor Compliance guidance.

- **Can I get ILR after a Skilled Worker visa?**

Yes. Most Skilled Workers can apply for ILR after five continuous years in this route, subject to salary, residence, and compliance requirements.

- **Can my family join me in the UK?**

Yes. Eligible dependants can apply to join or remain with you in the UK for the same duration as your visa.

- **What if my role fits a different sponsored route?**

In some cases, another sponsored category such as Global Business Mobility may be more appropriate depending on your circumstances.

- **Is Global Talent a better option for me?**

For applicants who are recognised leaders or emerging leaders in their field, the Global Talent visa may offer greater flexibility without sponsorship and an accelerated pathway to Settlement, although applicants do face a more rigorous application process.

- **How long does the application take?**

Processing times typically range from three to eight weeks, depending on where the application is made and whether priority services are used.

# About us

*"We are a fast-growing SME in the utilities and property tech sector, and we've been delighted to work with Migrate UK to support members of our team transitioning from graduate visas into longer-term roles. From the very beginning, they have been professional, transparent, and an absolute pleasure to work with. Communication has been clear and supportive throughout, which made what could have been a complex process feel seamless."*

Skilled Worker Sponsor

We are very proud of our heritage and our successes. Here are some of our headlines:

22

Years of providing immigration advice, making us one of the longest serving specialist immigration law firms in the UK

9000+

Applications processed

50+

Years of combined immigration experience in our team

5

Star rating on [Google](#) and [Trustist](#)

Read more about us online via our [website](#), [LinkedIn](#), and via [HR Ninjas](#)