

A blurred background image showing two people in an office environment. On the left, a woman is sitting at a desk, looking down at something. On the right, a man is sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop screen. There are papers, a mug, and a small potted plant on the desks. The overall atmosphere is professional and focused.

Immigration Specialists for Every Journey

Guidance Document: Internships

Internships



"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

Internships (Government Authorised Exchange Route)

The Government Authorised Exchange route allows overseas students and recent graduates to undertake structured internships in the UK with approved sponsors.

It is designed for short-term professional training that complements an intern's academic studies or early career development.

What Is the Government Authorised Exchange Route?

The Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) route is a sponsored UK immigration pathway that enables eligible overseas students or graduates to complete internships with licensed UK organisations. The criterion for the internship is set by each licenced scheme provider.

This route is intended for temporary, structured work experience, rather than long-term employment. Unlike permanent work visas such as the Skilled Worker Visa, the GAE route focuses on skills development, exposure to UK working practices, and academic or professional progression.

Where internships form part of a wider corporate or international placement programme, organisations may want to consider alternative mobility options under Global Business Mobility route.

Who Can Apply for the Government Authorised Exchange Route?

Applicants must meet several eligibility requirements to qualify for the GAE route.

Key requirements include:

- Sponsorship by a UK organisation which is on an approved GAE scheme
- A genuine internship that is supernumerary to the employing entity
- Compliance with skill level, salary requirements, and working time requirements
- Meeting financial, and general immigration requirements

Internships



"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 the Government Authorised Exchange Route

Step 1: Confirm Internship Eligibility & Sponsor Requirements

First step is to confirm that the sponsor is an approved sponsor under a qualifying GAE scheme. The employing entity must also confirm that the role is supernumerary to the organisation i.e. the role is additional to normal staffing needs.

The role should be at the appropriate skill level (RQF 3+) and the salary and hours must comply with minimum wage and working time regulation requirements

Sponsors must have suitable HR systems in place to meet Sponsor Compliance obligations.

Step 2: Receive Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)

Once eligibility is confirmed, the sponsor assigns a CoS to the intern. This document contains key details about the internship, sponsor, and duration of stay.

Step 3: Prepare Supporting Documents

The applicant gathers all required documents, including proof of studies, financial evidence, and identity documents.

Step 4: Submit Application & Biometrics

The visa application is submitted online, followed by biometric enrolment. Decisions are made once the Home Office has reviewed the application and supporting evidence.

Internships



"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 compliance issues include:

- Sponsorship by an organisation not approved to sponsor under a qualifying GAE scheme
- Incorrect or incomplete Certificates of Sponsorship
- Missing or inconsistent supporting documents such as medical evidence
- Misunderstanding progression or switching options after the internship

Early planning, clear documentation, and professional guidance can significantly reduce these risks.

After You're Approved

Once approved, interns can undertake the internship described in their Certificate of Sponsorship for the permitted duration. The maximum duration permitted under this visa is 12 months and it does not provide a direct path to Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR).

Interns must:

- Work only in the sponsored internship role
- Comply with visa conditions and time limits
- Notify their sponsor of relevant changes

In some cases, interns may be able to switch into the Skilled Worker Visa if they secure a qualifying job with a licensed sponsor.

Internships

Frequently Asked Questions:

What responsibilities does the sponsor have?

Sponsors must meet strict reporting, monitoring, and record-keeping duties throughout the internship.

Can I switch from Intern to Skilled Worker after the internship?

In some cases, yes. If you secure a qualifying role and meet the requirements, you may be able to switch into the Skilled Worker Visa.

Does the Government Authorised Exchange route lead to settlement?

No. This route does not provide a direct path to ILR.

How long can I stay in the UK as an intern?

This depends on the duration of your internship, the maximum duration on a GAE visa is 12 months.

Do interns need to meet salary requirements?

Interns must be paid as per the National Minimum Wage regulations.

Is Global Business Mobility more appropriate for corporate placements?

In some multinational or intra-company contexts, Global Business Mobility routes may be a better fit than the Intern route.

What happens if my internship ends early?

Your sponsor must report the change, and your visa may be curtailed.

“Amazing Team, seamless experience.”

SP, GBM Visa Applicant

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:

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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](#)