



# UK Visas & Immigration

## UK Graduate Immigration Route - Factsheet

On 11 September 2019 the UK Government announced the creation of a new graduate immigration route. This document provides a summary of the key points of this announcement for our partners, stakeholders and customers outside the UK.

### Top lines

- In the year ending June 2019, we issued over 250,000 Tier 4 study visas to international students wishing to study at our world class institutions – 13% higher than the preceding 12 months’.
- This new route demonstrates our commitment to attracting the brightest and best talent from around the world to study and work in the UK.
- It is aimed at providing greater opportunities for talented international students who will be able to remain in the UK for two years to work once they have successfully completed their studies.
- This new route demonstrates our global outlook and will ensure that our world-leading higher education sector remains competitive internationally.

### Key information on the route

- The graduate immigration route will be open to international students who have completed a degree **at undergraduate level or above** at an institution with a track record of compliance with the Home Office’s immigration rules.
- Successful applicants on this route will be able to stay and work, or look for work, in the UK for a maximum period of two years. Graduates **will also be able to switch into skilled work** once they have found a suitable job.
- It is expected that students **entering the UK in the 2020-21** academic year intake will be eligible for this route. This route was announced in September 2019 to ensure that universities, stakeholders and customers preparing for the next academic year were aware of this change and could feature this as part of their plans.
- The immigration route will be two years long and will require a **new application** (including payment of a fee) and **payment of the Immigration Health Surcharge**. The exact fee will be set out in due course.
- The route is non-extendable and **does not count towards settlement**. However, graduates who find an appropriate job and meet the requirements will be able to switch into skilled work, which is a route to settlement.
- Those who graduate and **whose leave expires before the route is introduced will not be eligible for it**, however, most of these students will have had no expectation of benefitting from such a route when they applied to study in the UK.

## **Q&A**

### **What is the new Graduate route?**

The Graduate route will provide an opportunity for international students who have been awarded their degree to stay and work in the UK at any skill level for two years. This represents a significant improvement in our offer to international students and will help ensure our world leading higher education sector remains competitive internationally.

### **Who will be eligible for the route?**

Once the route is introduced, those with valid leave as a Tier 4 student, who have successfully completed a course at undergraduate level or above at a Higher Education Provider with a track record of compliance, will be eligible to apply for the Graduate route. The application process will be light touch, and applicants will be subject to criminality, identity and security checks.

### **Why are you introducing this route?**

We have a strong offer to make to international students, and this is demonstrated by the fact that visa applications by university students are at a record high. But we want to ensure we continue to attract the brightest and the best students to the UK. This route will ensure that we continue to be world leaders and remain competitive internationally.

### **Why are you doing this now?**

The Graduate route demonstrates the UK is a globally focused, outward facing nation committed to attracting the best students from around the world. Announcing the intention to introduce this route now will allow universities to promote the route when recruiting prospective students. It will also enable students to decide where to study, knowing they have the option of staying in the UK to work after completing their studies.

### **What are you trying to achieve with this change?**

Introducing this new Graduate immigration route will send a global signal that the UK is open to international students and support our education sector to continue to attract talented students from around the world.

### **Does the Government welcome international students?**

Yes. The Government welcomes international students and places no limit on their numbers. There are more international students applying to come to UK universities than ever before. The introduction of the Graduate route further demonstrates we greatly value international students.

### **When will the route be introduced?**

We will set out plans for the route's introduction in due course. Universities will be able to recruit on the basis that students starting in the 2020/21 academic year will benefit.

### **Why can't it be implemented sooner?**

We are working on a timetable for developing and implementing the route with the Higher Education sector to ensure that it is implemented at the most appropriate time.

### **Will you cap the number of visas available under this route?**

All graduates who meet the requirements will be eligible for the route.

### **What happens after the two-year period?**

Those on the route will be able to switch onto the skilled work route if they find a job which meets the skill requirement of the route.

### **Will it be possible to extend beyond two years? What would someone do after the time is up?**

The Graduate route will provide a non-extendable two-year period of leave. Graduates will be able to switch into skilled work if they find a job which meets the requirements of the skilled work route.

### **How much will the route cost?**

There will be a fee for this route, which will be set out in due course.

### **Will graduates have to pay the immigration health surcharge?**

Yes. As with other categories of migrants, those on the Graduate route will need to pay the immigration health surcharge.

### **What are the key features of the route?**

The application process to apply for the Graduate route will be simple, although we intend that all applications will need to be made **in-country** and a **fee** will be applied. They will also be subject to identify, criminality and security checks.

All students accepted for the Graduate route will receive **two years non-extendable leave**. During that time, they will be able to work, or look for work, at **any skill level**, but won't be able to access public funds and settlement rights will not be accrued. Graduates will also be able to switch into skilled work once they have found a suitable job.

### **How are you defining 'reputable' Higher Education providers?**

The status of each institution will be shown in the register of licensed sponsors, which is publicly available on the GOV.UK website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-students>.

Institutions with the required track record have the status 'Tier 4 Sponsor – Track record' in the register.

It will be easy for students to check the status of institutions before making an application.

### **Digital Assets**

There is also a supporting video asset for use on social media. This can be accessed here:

<http://homeoffice.brandworkz.com/BMS/albums/?album=1676>

