

Working in the UK after studies as an international student

Introduction to the Graduate route and Skilled Worker route

16 May 2024



This webinar will be recorded. You will be able to find the recording and the slides for this presentation on our website after the presentation has finished at: <https://students.leeds.ac.uk/graduatevisa>



Introduction

- We are the Student Visa Advice team
 - Provide international students at University of Leeds with free visa & immigration advice relating to their study at the University
 - Respond to email enquiries
 - Online and in-person appointments
 - Contact us! StudentVisaAdvice@leeds.ac.uk
 - Please include your Student ID number with any queries
 - We do not provide support with applications for work visas
- This presentation is intended for international students who are currently studying at the University of Leeds with a Student visa
- The information provided is an overview and introduction. This is not a complete guide and we do not have the time to talk about every rule and requirement. We have included links to the full requirements for each visa type and places you can find further information.
- The information in this presentation is up-to-date as of 16/05/2024



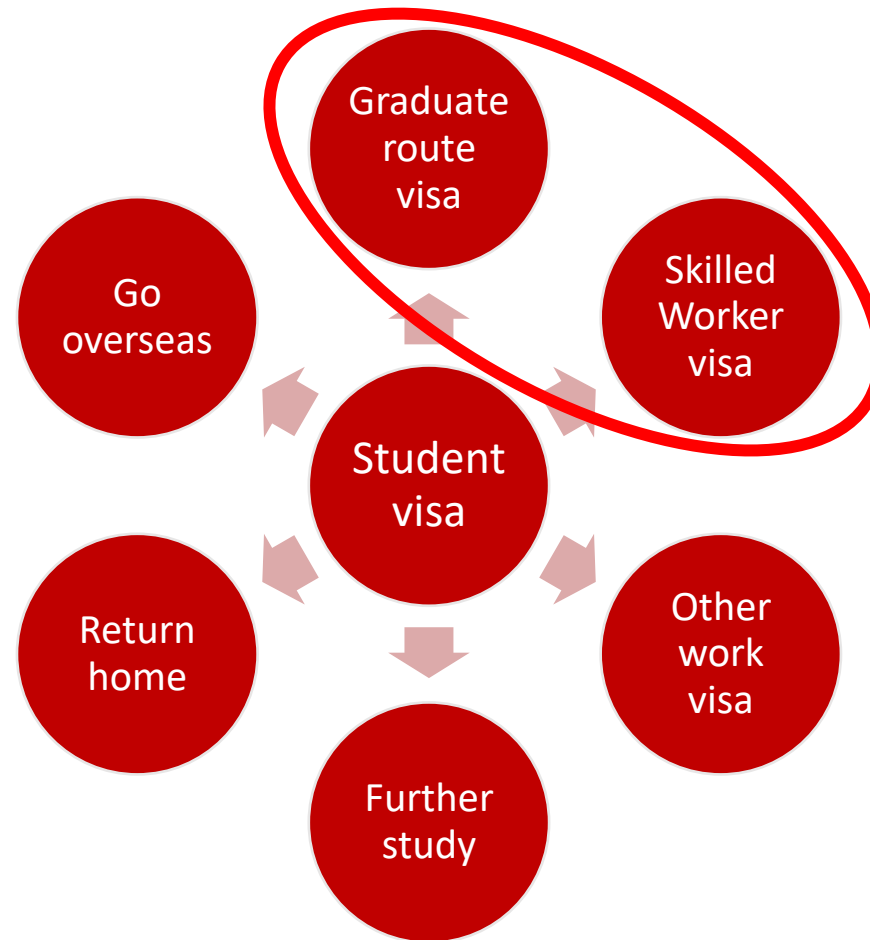
Working with a Student visa

- Your work conditions will be stated on your BRP or eVisa
- If studying full-time at degree level or above, normally restricted to no more than 20 hours work per week during term-time
- Dissertation/writing-up period is still considered 'term-time'
- You can work full-time during the period remaining on your visa after your course is finished (usually 4 months)
- You cannot be self-employed or engage in business activity
- You cannot work as a professional sports person or entertainer
- You cannot fill a full-time permanent vacancy



What will you do next after your studies?

- Do you want to stay in UK?
- Do you want to work in the UK?
- What are your options?



We'll be **introducing** you to these options.

The future of the Graduate Route

- On 14 May 2024 the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) published their Rapid Review of the Graduate Route which had been commissioned by the Home Office in March
- They were asked to investigate if the route is being abused, and if it is working as the government intended to bring the 'best and brightest' to the UK
- **They have recommended keeping the Graduate route**
- They did not find any evidence of abuse or undermining the quality of UK higher education
- They found that international graduates are using the Graduate route to find work in the UK and contribute to the UK economy
- The Government has not yet made any announcements regarding any changes to the Graduate route, and we are waiting for their response to the MAC review.
- Despite the MAC's positive findings and recommendation to keep the route, there is political pressure on UK Government to impose further immigration restrictions
- The future uncertain – we still do not know what will happen



Graduate route – Overview

- Sometimes called the ‘Post-Study Work’ (PSW) visa – but you don’t *need* to use it to work
- Introduced in July 2021
- A Graduate visa gives you permission to stay in the UK after successfully completing an eligible course in the UK with a Tier 4/Student visa
- Lasts for 2 years (3 years if PhD or other doctoral qualification)
- Must apply in UK before your Tier 4/Student visa expires
- Cannot be extended
- Can only get it once
- Does not lead to settlement



Graduate route – Conditions

What you can do

- ✓ Look for work
- ✓ Work in most jobs at any skill level/salary
- ✓ Be self-employed
- ✓ Do voluntary work
- ✓ Travel abroad and return to UK
- ✓ Study courses that would not be eligible for a Student visa
- ✓ Continue to live with any dependants that were previously granted permission as a dependant of a Student, and any children born inside UK

What you cannot do

- ⊘ Access public funds
- ⊘ Work as a professional sports person
- ⊘ Any study that could be studied under the Student visa route
- ⊘ Bring new dependants to live with you in the UK



Graduate route – Requirements



Validation requirements

- You must be in the UK
- Your current visa is a Student visa or Tier 4 visa
- You must not have had a Graduate or DES visa previously
- If in the last 12 months you have received financial sponsorship from a Government or international scholarship agency covering both fees and living costs, you need their permission to apply



Successful completion requirement

- Must have successfully completed course of study undertaken during last grant of permission
- University must have told UKVI that you have successfully completed your course



Qualification requirement

- Must have been awarded a UK bachelor's degree, a UK postgraduate degree, or another relevant qualification
- The qualification must have been gained during your current visa (exception for SU officers)
- Must be for the course listed on your most recent CAS, unless changed course without needing a new visa
- Leaving an integrated master's programme with the lower level qualification counts



Study in the UK requirement

- Must have studied in the UK with a T4/Student visa for a minimum period (apart from permitted study abroad)
- Course 12 months or less = must have studied in UK for full duration of course
- Course longer than 12 months = must have studied in UK for at least 12 months

No financial or language requirements



Graduate route – Timeline



- You must not apply until after you receive email from the University confirming report
- You must apply **before** your Student visa expires
- Application usually processed within 8 weeks
- Your permission to stay in the UK is extended while you wait for your decision
- You should not travel outside Common Travel Area while your application is pending
- Your Graduate visa will start on the date your application is granted



Your final results will be released on the following dates during the 2023/24 session:

- Undergraduate end-of-session results: Monday 8 July 2024
- August resit results (mostly Undergraduate) – Classifications: Friday 13 September 2024
- Postgraduate end-of-session results (including resits): Thursday 21 November 2024



Graduate route – Application Process

- Complete online application form: www.gov.uk/graduate-visa/apply
- Most applicants can apply via ID Check App (scan BRP, no appointment)
- Can apply via in-person UKVCAS appointment as an alternative if you cannot use the app (mix of free and paid appointment slots).
- Provide the CAS number for your most recent Student visa (don't need a new CAS)
- Your dependants must apply at same time as you
- **Visa application fee:** £822 per applicant
- **Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS):** £1,035 per year for adults, £776 for children
- Identity and security checks
- If successful, will get digital eVisa *and/or* a new BRP

Total fees:
2 years: **£2,892**
3 years (PhD): **£3,927**



Graduate route – when can you start work?

- The conditions of your Student visa continue to apply until your new visa is granted, including right to work full-time after course is finished
- You can only start employment in a full-time permanent vacancy while your Graduate visa application is pending **IF** you applied for your most recent Student visa on or after 6 April 2022
- Cannot be self-employed, engage in business activity, or work as entertainer until you receive your Graduate visa



Graduate route – Potential problems

- If your final results are not confirmed before your Student visa expires you will lose the opportunity to apply for Graduate visa
- Reasons why results may be delayed: **Re-sits, repeats, deadline extensions, academic appeals**
- If you fail your course and are awarded a fallback award (e.g. PG Diploma) you will not be eligible to apply for Graduate visa
- We will not confirm your course completion if you have **overdue debts** to the University
- We cannot confirm your successful course completion on the basis of provisional results
- If you do not complete your course at the usual time, it is possible to **run out of time** to apply for the Graduate visa
- If you are concerned about potential issues that may stop you from successfully completing in time – discuss these with your school early
- The University can only issue new CAS to allow you to extend your Student visa in very limited circumstances - if you will be an internal student and there is academic need for you to be on campus



Graduate route – Pros and Cons

Pros

- ⊕ Flexible – can leave and switch jobs
- ⊕ No job offer required
- ⊕ No sponsor required
- ⊕ Can travel
- ⊕ Allows self-employment
- ⊕ Can switch into Skilled Worker route

Cons

- ⊖ Must apply in UK & before Student visa expires
- ⊖ Very expensive
- ⊖ Can only get once
- ⊖ Doesn't lead to settlement
- ⊖ Cannot be extended
- ⊖ Limits on studying
- ⊖ Cannot bring new dependants to UK



Graduate route – further information

- **Gov.uk guide:** <https://www.gov.uk/graduate-visa>
- Guide to using the ‘UK Immigration: ID Check’ app:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/using-the-uk-immigration-id-check-app>
- Our webpage: <https://students.leeds.ac.uk/graduatevisa>
- UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA):
<https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Graduate-route>
 - Case studies: <https://ukcisa.org.uk/Research--Policy/Resource-bank/Experiencing-the-UK-Graduate-route>



Skilled Worker – Overview

- Replaced the Tier 2 visa route in December 2020
- Requires sponsorship by a UK-based employer with a sponsor licence
- Work in specific job stated on Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)
- Visa can be granted for up to 5 years, extendable
- Changes of employment require a new visa
- Sponsored workers subject to monitoring and UKVI reporting
- Can switch to SW from Graduate visa or Student visa (after completing course), or apply for SW visa from overseas
- Can lead to settlement in the UK after 5 years
- Dependant partner and children can join you (unless working as care worker or senior care worker)



Skilled Worker – Switching requirements

- You can switch to a SW visa inside the UK from most other types of visas, including Graduate route
- You cannot switch from a Visitor or Short-term student visa
- If you currently have a Student visa, you can **only** apply to switch to the Skilled Worker visa if you meet one of the following conditions:
 - **A:** you have completed the course of study for which your CAS was issued (unless you were permitted to change course without needing to apply for a new visa)
 - **B:** you are studying a full-time course at degree level or above, and your CoS has a start date no earlier than your course completion date
 - **C:** you are studying a full-time PhD course and have completed at least 24 months of this course
- You **cannot** switch from a Student visa to a SW visa inside the UK if you do not meet one of the above conditions



Skilled Worker – Requirements

- ☑ **Valid Certificate of Sponsorship** from a licenced sponsor
- ☑ **Job at appropriate skill level** - job must be in an eligible occupation code listed in Appendix Skilled Occupations or Appendix Immigration Salary List
- ☑ **English language skills** – evidence not needed if met in previous visa application, or if have degree-level qualification
- ☑ **Minimum salary**
 - General minimum salary threshold of £38,700 per year (previously £26,200) or the going rate specific to the occupation (whichever is highest)
 - Minimum salary requirement reduced if certain conditions met, e.g.
 - PhD in subject relevant to job - £34,830 or 90% of going rate, or £30,960/80% if in STEM subject
 - Job on Immigration Salary List - £30,960/going rate
 - You are a '**new entrant**' – salary requirement is reduced to £30,960/70% of going rate
 - Lower salary requirements for NHS staff and education workers based on national pay scales
 - Lower salary for social care workers - £23,200



Skilled Worker – ‘New entrant’ requirements

- Multiple ways to qualify as a ‘new entrant to the labour market’, including:
 - you are under 26 when you apply, or
 - your last visa was a Student visa or Graduate visa
 - you will be working towards a recognised professional qualification or moving directly into a postdoctoral position
- Lower minimum salary requirement - £30,960/70% of occupation's going rate (whichever highest)
- Can apply as new entrant up to 3 months before expected course end date (or after 12 months of PhD study)
- New entrant eligibility lasts for 2 years after Student/Graduate visa expiry, and can be used when applying for visa from overseas as well
- You cannot apply as a new entrant to stay in the UK for more than 4 years. This includes any time you've already spent in the UK on a Graduate or Skilled Worker visa. If your visa would take you over this limit, you will need to meet one of the other minimum salary rates



Skilled Worker – Application Process

- If applying in UK, must apply before current visa expires
- Can apply from overseas (in your home country) up to 3 months before job start date
- Application fees vary depending on type of job, length of visa, where you are applying
 - Application fee: ranges from £551 to £1,500
 - Plus £1,035 Immigration Health Surcharge per year of the visa
- Employer may assist with costs
- May need to prove you have enough money to support yourself in the UK (£1,270)
- Dependants can also apply and will also need to pay fees
- Once you've applied online, proved your identity and provided your documents, you'll usually get a decision within 3 weeks if you're outside the UK and within 8 weeks if you're inside the UK



Skilled Worker – Pros and Cons

Pros

- ⊕ Valid for up to 5 years
- ⊕ Can be extended
- ⊕ Can lead to settlement
- ⊕ Can apply inside or outside UK
- ⊕ Can bring dependants

Cons

- ⊖ Requires job offer
- ⊖ Requires employer sponsorship
- ⊖ Job needs to meet specific requirements, including salary
- ⊖ Employer needs sponsor licence, or be willing to apply for one
- ⊖ Tied to specific job/employer



Skilled Worker – further information

- **Gov.uk guide:** www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa
- Register of licensed sponsors: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-workers>
- Appendix Skilled Occupations: www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-skilled-occupations
- Appendix Immigration Salary List: www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-immigration-salary-list

The Student Visa Advice team cannot provide advice regarding work visas. For further advice, please consult your employer or a regulated immigration lawyer.



Summary – GR vs SW

- **Skilled Worker visa** is best *if* you can get an eligible job offer from an employer that is willing and able to sponsor you
- If you already know who you want to work for and what you want to do
- Can apply for Skilled Worker visa from overseas
- Skilled Worker visa is path to permanent residence in UK
- Unfortunately, the April 2024 changes to the salary requirements for Skilled Worker route have made it more difficult to get a Skilled Worker visa than before
- **Graduate route visa** is best if you need time to job search, explore your options, build work experience
- Graduate visa is flexible – you can more easily switch jobs and do whatever type of work you want to do
- Graduate visa allows you to be self-employed
- Can use the time on the Graduate route to find and secure Skilled Worker sponsorship
- There are other work visas ...



Other UK work visas

Health and Care Worker visa

- A type of SW visa with different requirements, for medical professionals to work with NHS or in adult social care – but care workers and senior care works cannot bring dependants

Innovator Founder visa

- For entrepreneurs with innovative business ideas
- Replaced the 'Innovator' and 'Start Up' routes

Global Talent visa

- For leaders/potential leaders in academia, research, arts and culture, or technology
- Requires eligible award or endorsement from approved endorsing body

Government Authorised Exchange visa (Temporary Work)

- Work experience, training, fellowship, internship schemes

Youth Mobility Scheme

- 2-year 'working holiday' visa for 18-30 year olds from certain countries

India Young Professionals Scheme

- 2-year visa for Indian citizens between 18-30 years old with a degree

Full list: www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/work-visas



Further information and support

University of Leeds

- Our website: <https://students.leeds.ac.uk/visa>
 - <https://students.leeds.ac.uk/graduatevisa>
 - https://students.leeds.ac.uk/info/21505/working_in_the_uk
- Student Visa Advice: StudentVisaAdvice@leeds.ac.uk
- Careers Service: <https://students.leeds.ac.uk/#Careers>

- **External sources**
- Gov.uk: www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration
- UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)
 - Website: <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Working-after-studies>
 - Case studies: <https://ukcisa.org.uk/Research--Policy/Resource-bank/Experiencing-the-UK-Graduate-route>
 - Helpline: <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/About-UKCISA/Contact-us>
- British Council: <https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/after-your-studies>
- Immigration advisers & lawyers
 - Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) regulated immigration advisers: <https://www.gov.uk/find-an-immigration-adviser>
 - Immigration solicitors: <http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/find-a-solicitor/>

Be careful when looking online (Youtube, TikTok, Facebook, Reddit, forums, etc.) – there is a lot of false and out-of-date information! Check these trusted sources first.



eVisas and the new digital immigration system

- BRPs have been short dated to 31/12/2024, this is separate to visa expiry
- Transition from physical documents to digital immigration status ('eVisa')
- eVisa will be linked to your passport (must update if Passport changes)
- View and Prove immigration status online
- Airlines and carriers will be able to check status electronically

- Summer 2024 – people with BRPs expiring 31/12/2024 will be able to register for a UKVI account to get access to their eVisa

- **Find out more and sign up for updates on UKVI website: [GOV.UK/eVisa](https://www.gov.uk/evisa)**



Q&A

StudentVisaAdvice@leeds.ac.uk

