

Whether you choose to recruit for your business domestically or hire abroad in the United Kingdom, the process of growing your team can be a complex one. Before you begin expanding your company, you need to learn about the recruitment process and employment laws in the UK to make sure you remain compliant every step of the way.

Recruiting in the United Kingdom

After Brexit, the UK is experiencing a [shortage of skills among workers](#), which can make it hard to find the right talent for open positions.

You can handle staffing your United Kingdom business by yourself or work with a recruitment agency. If you use an agency that finds staff and pays those individuals, they are known as employment businesses. In those instances, your employment business must make sure workers meet the appropriate working time and minimum wage laws.

If you're in the agriculture, food processing, horticultural, or shellfish-gathering industries, you can work with an agency known as a "gangmaster." However, make sure the agency is licensed to handle the United Kingdom's staffing and recruiting tasks.

Laws Against Discrimination in the UK

This country has robust recruiting laws, especially related to direct and indirect discrimination. You cannot make hiring decisions based on a candidate's sex, race, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, or disability.

Some of the common laws related to discrimination and recruitment follow:

- Use phrases such as "recent graduate" or "highly experienced" only when they are true job requirements.
- Don't ask about "protected characteristics" such as relationship status or children.
- Ask for someone's date of birth only if they must be a certain age to work, such as in positions that involve selling alcohol.

- Don't use membership in a trade union as a deciding factor in whether to hire someone.
- Treat people with disabilities more favorably only when both a person with disabilities and a person without disabilities meet the job requirements.

Legal & Background Checks

One of your priorities during the recruitment process is ensuring that your candidate has the legal right to work in the country. Since Brexit, European Union (EU) citizens and their families must apply for settled status to work in the country. You are legally allowed to and should check this status before offering someone a position. Businesses can face fines up to £20,000 if they do not have proof that they verified an employee's right to work in the UK.

You are allowed to request a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for an applicant, and some roles, like health care and child care, may allow for more detailed checks. However, make sure you're eligible to request a criminal record, and remember that you can't refuse employment because of a prior conviction.

Finally, you can ask candidates for a health check only if it's a legal requirement for the job, such as an eye test for a commercial vehicle driver. In some cases, the job itself may require this check if an insurer asks for it.

How to Hire Employees in the UK

Embarking on the hiring process without additional support means you must find time to seek out talented new employees and onboard them as official employees of your company. Once you find the perfect candidate, you need to provide a principal statement of employment on the employee's first day and a wider written statement within two months of their start date that outlines key terms of the arrangement. This contract should focus on compensation, job title, work hours, holidays, sick days, pension plans, and a notice period for termination.

You also need to ensure compliance with UK employment laws through the [right payroll and taxation systems](#). The hiring process involves complying with the Real Time Information (RTI) system and reporting all relevant payroll information to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

(HMRC). Additional requirements include registering as an employer with HMRC and obtaining employers' liability insurance.

UK Employment Laws

As mentioned above, drafting an employment contract is legally required when you hire UK employees. You should also remain aware of other employment laws, including EU data protection — the legal requirement to keep your employees' personal data secure. This directive plays a role in how you can transfer information about your employee between the U.S. and the UK.

You can mitigate many UK employment compliance concerns by drafting a strong employment contract. Ideally, this contract will cover the days employees will work, time off work, sick leave, and termination of employment.

Onboarding in the United Kingdom

The hiring process doesn't end when the employment contract is signed. You also need a streamlined process to onboard your new employees while staying within UK employment compliance.

One of the most important onboarding processes involves setting up an employee payroll system. You'll need certain pieces of information from your employees, including their national insurance number and tax code. You'll then need to register every new employee with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

Benefits of Hiring Outsourcing in the UK

When you're considering how to hire UK employees, it pays — in both time and money — to work with a UK hiring outsourcing company such as Globalization Partners. If you choose to work without a [global PEO](#), you will need to [establish a subsidiary](#) before you can even begin the hiring process. This can take months, causing you to potentially lose valuable talent.

Work With Globalization Partners To Expand Globally

We take the stress out of meeting UK employment compliance by placing the burden on our shoulders. We hire employees on your behalf through our subsidiary that works in accordance with UK employment law. [Contact us](#) today to learn more.