

Expanding your company abroad and into the United Kingdom requires a team of skilled employees. Whether you already have a trusted team at your parent company ready to move and work in the UK or you're opening up positions to people around the world, you need to know about the United Kingdom's work permits and visas.

Many companies already handling a global expansion don't have time to learn about work visas, permits, and how to obtain them.

## **Types of Work Visas in the United Kingdom**

The United Kingdom's main immigration route is through the Points Based System (PBS). First, migrants outside the European Economic Area (EEA) apply to one of five tiers based on their desire to work, study, invest, or train in the country. They must pass a points-based assessment focused on the conditions, entitlements, and entry requirements for each tier. Applicants have to get a sufficient number of points based on age, qualifications, language, earnings, and funds to get entry clearance or remain in the United Kingdom.

All five tiers encompass certain visas:

- Tier one: These visas are meant for highly skilled workers, entrepreneurs, investors, and graduate students living outside the European Union (EU) and EEA. These candidates do not need a job offer to apply.
- Tier two: Skilled workers, professional sportspeople, and clergy members outside the EEA can apply for a visa within tier two when they have a job offer and can fill gaps within the country's labor force.
- Tier three: Tier three visas were meant for low-skilled workers providing temporary labor. However, the government decided not to accept immigrants from outside the EU for tier three positions and have since removed these visas.
- Tier four: Students over age 16 from outside the EEA should apply for a tier four visa if they want to study at a school, college, or university in the country.
- Tier five: This category has six sub-tiers of temporary workers related to creative and sporting positions, charity, religious workers, and young people who work in the UK on working holidays.

## Requirements to Obtain UK Work Visas

The requirements for a United Kingdom working visa vary based on which tier and visa your employees need. Tier two encompasses most long-term visas except for the special talent mentioned in tier one. The tier two general UK work visa is the most common for companies expanding, as it's for people outside the EEA and Switzerland who have a job offer in the UK.

All general work visa applicants must have an employer or a licensed sponsor. Although the requirements vary by type of work permit, the most common include:

- An application form
- Two color photographs taken within the past six months
- A valid passport
- Proof of financial means to cover UK living costs
- Proof of accommodation
- Detailed travel itinerary
- Tuberculosis test results
- Biometric information
- A visa invitation letter if the individual is staying with a friend or family member
- Paid UK visa fees
- Certified translations of any document that's not in English or Welsh

## Application Process

Your employees should apply for a UK visa three months before they want to begin working for you. Visa application processing can take up to three weeks, so it's important to apply early at an application center or online through the [UK Home Office Visas and Immigration Services](#) website. The PBS system means the requirements and evaluations change for each tier, and some categories may have additional requirements, so make sure your employees know what they need to apply.

## Other Important Considerations

There are other ways for people to work in the UK besides the traditional work permit and

visa routes. For example, Commonwealth citizens with a British grandparent can apply for an ancestry visa to work in the country if they meet other eligibility criteria. These citizens may also have a right of abode to live in the UK. If your company has an employee that left the UK for more than two years through indefinite leave to remain (ILR), they may need only a returning resident visa to come back and work.

### **Partner With Globalization Partners**

Globalization Partners has experience helping companies expand to the UK and around the globe. [Reach out to us](#) today for more information about our comprehensive solution.