

UKVI Skilled Worker Visa & Healthcare Visa Glossary

This document is a useful reference for some of the terms commonly used when discussing the UK visa system for employing overseas skilled workers.

This document was last updated in February 2024.

Please note, significant changes to the Immigration Rules come due to come into force in March & April 2024 which are not reflected in this document.

Skilled Worker Visa: This is a type of UK visa that allows skilled workers from outside the UK to work in the country.

UKVI: The UK Visa and Immigration is the government agency responsible for managing UK visas and immigration.

Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS): This is a document issued by a UK employer to a foreign worker that confirms they are eligible to apply for a Skilled Worker Visa.

Points-based system (PBS): The UK's immigration system uses a points-based system to assess whether a foreign worker is eligible for a Skilled Worker Visa. Points are awarded for factors such as job offer, salary, and English language proficiency.

Immigration Skills Charge (ISC): This is a fee that UK employers must pay when sponsoring a foreign worker for a Skilled Worker Visa – this is payable in advance and varies depending on the size of the organisation and the number of years a worker is sponsored.

Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT): In most cases, UK employers must advertise a job vacancy to UK workers before offering it to a foreign worker. This is known as the Resident Labour Market Test.

Shortage Occupation List (SOL): This is a list of occupations that are in high demand in the UK and therefore exempt from the RLMT requirement.

English Language Requirement: Skilled Worker Visa applicants must demonstrate their proficiency in the English language by passing an approved English language test – this is done with an IELTS Test administered by the British Council.

Maintenance Requirement: Skilled Worker Visa applicants must demonstrate that they can support themselves financially while in the UK. In most cases, the employer will

declare that they will support the worker by paying their wages/salary so that the worker does not have to do this themselves.

Biometric Residence Permit (BRP): A BRP is a secure card that includes the foreign worker's personal and immigration details and must be collected within ten days of arrival in the UK. It is usually collected from a Post Office.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC): The professional regulatory body for nurses and midwives in the UK. The NMC sets standards for education, training, and practice and maintains a register of qualified nurses. The NMC is also responsible for the registration of overseas nurses.

International English Language Testing System (IELTS): A test that measures an individual's proficiency in the English language, which is required for overseas workers wishing to work in the UK.

Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS): A document that UK employers must provide to overseas nurses and carers they wish to sponsor to come to the UK. The CoS confirms that the worker has been offered a job in the UK and meets the requirements for a Tier 2 (General) visa.

Skilled Worker Visa (formerly a Tier 2 Visa): A UK visa that allows skilled workers to work in the UK, including overseas nurses and carers.

Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT): A process that UK employers must complete before recruiting an overseas nurse to demonstrate that there is no suitably qualified resident worker available to fill the role.

English Language Requirement: Overseas nurses and carers must demonstrate their proficiency in the English language by passing an approved English language test.

UKVI: The UK Visa and Immigration is the government agency responsible for managing UK visas and immigration.

Sponsor Management System (SMS): The online system that UK employers use to manage their sponsorship of foreign workers. The SMS allows employers to issue Certificates of Sponsorship, track visa applications, and maintain compliance with UK immigration laws.

Authorised User: A person designated by an employer to access the SMS and perform specific tasks related to managing the employer's sponsorship of foreign workers.

Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS): A document that UK employers must provide to foreign workers they wish to recruit. The CoS confirms that the worker has been offered a job in the UK and meets the requirements for a UK visa.

Sponsor Licence: A licence issued by UKVI that allows an employer to sponsor foreign workers. Employers must apply for and maintain a valid sponsor licence to use the SMS.

Sponsor Rating: A rating assigned by UKVI to an employer based on their compliance with UK immigration laws. Employers can be rated as A (trusted), B (satisfactory), or C (requires improvement). A Sponsor who is not A-rated may struggle to obtain additional COS and therefore take on new overseas workers.

Sponsor Duties: Obligations that UK employers must fulfil to maintain compliance with UK immigration laws, including reporting changes to sponsored workers' circumstances, keeping accurate records, and cooperating with UKVI investigations.

Sponsor Management System Administrator: A person designated by an employer to manage the SMS and authorise access to the system for other users.

Sponsorship Action Plan: A plan created by UKVI in response to non-compliance by an employer with their sponsor duties. The plan outlines specific actions the employer must take to improve their compliance and avoid losing their sponsor licence.

Sponsor Licence Revocation: The process by which UKVI can revoke an employer's sponsor licence if they fail to meet their sponsor duties or breach UK immigration laws. This can result in the employer losing their ability to sponsor foreign workers and significant reputational damage.