

Update on the Global Talent visa

The [Global Talent visa](#) is now into its second year after replacing the Tier 1 Exceptional Talent visa in February 2020. It enables eligible academics and researchers to work in the UK on a flexible basis with fewer costs and restrictions than the Skilled Worker visa. The following email gives an update and a refresher on the Global Talent criteria including recent changes to the appointments route. If you have any queries, please contact Leonie at the Royal Society via cbrs@royalsociety.org

One visa, four routes

There are four routes for academics and researchers to gain endorsement for the Global Talent visa as shown in the image below

Global Talent one visa, four routes



* Eligibility extends to the principal investigator (PI), co-investigators (Co-Is) and team roles stated in the grant application at graduate level and above – for example, postdoctoral researchers, research assistants, technologists and methodologists. Eligible individuals must spend at least 50% of their work time on fulfilling the grant conditions (PIs and Co-Is holding multiple grants must demonstrate 50% in aggregate). A minimum award threshold of £30,000 applies and the minimum grant duration is 24 months. Individuals must have at least two years left on their employment contract to be eligible. Temporary exemptions apply to researchers working on COVID-19 related projects.

** The British Academy reviews standard 'exceptional talent and promise' applications from the humanities and social sciences, the Royal Academy of Engineering covers engineering, and the Royal Society covers natural and medical sciences. If you do not meet the criteria for standard endorsement you may still be eligible for a Skilled Worker visa. If you are coming to the UK for the purposes of collaboration, training or knowledge exchange, you may apply through the Government Authorised Exchange Worker route.

These routes are administered by four endorsing bodies engaged by the Home Office:

[British Academy](#)
[Royal Academy of Engineering](#)
[Royal Society](#)
[UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\)](#)

Individuals coming to the UK to work in non-academic fields of arts and culture and digital technology can apply to Arts Council England or Tech Nation which follow separate endorsement criteria.

There are two parts to the application process – first the application for [endorsement](#), called Stage 1, (administered by the endorsing bodies on behalf of the Home Office) and then the application for the [visa itself](#), called Stage 2. Stage 1 and 2 can be done at the same time if the applicant wishes.

What are the benefits?

The Global Talent visa allows applicants to work in the UK on a flexible basis without employer sponsorship and other conditions that apply to the Skilled Worker visa. Benefits include being able to change roles and employing organisations without permission from the Home Office and earn additional income from consultancy, spin-outs or other sources which may not relate to the field of research in which the applicant was endorsed.

In addition, the visa comes with considerable advantages for applicants, partners and dependants wishing to establish a long-term connection to the UK including a fast-track to settlement after three years for the main visa holder. Applicants can also undertake research overseas without it counting towards the maximum time period allowed for absences if they choose to apply for settlement.

How has Route 1 (academic and research appointments) changed?

The British Academy, Royal Academy of Engineering and the Royal Society have recently relaxed the criteria for the appointments route so that more applicants can use this fast-track option.

The route is open to individuals who have accepted a position at an [approved UK higher education institution or research institute](#) where they:

- have responsibility for academic, research or innovation leadership and development; or
- direct or lead an individual or team in:
 - a research project or programme of work; or
 - an innovation project or programme of work

To be considered for endorsement, applicants must submit a statement of guarantee signed by the HR director or equivalent at the employing organisation which clarifies:

- a. the job was advertised and an open competition was held, or where it was not, an explanation as to why;
- b. the applicant has accepted the job offer;
- c. the job title and department in which the applicant will be based;
- d. at least 2 references were received;
- e. at least 3 academic representatives from the employing institution were on the interview panel;
- f. at least 1 expert in the applicant's field was on the interview panel OR at least 1 relevant expert independent of the employing institution was consulted before the job offer was made

The appointment does not have to have been made recently as long as the employing institution can confirm that the endorsement criteria were met.

A template statement of guarantee is attached to this email.

Who is eligible for Route 1?

Applicants will only be considered eligible for the appointments route if responsibility for academic, research or innovation leadership and development or for directing or leading an individual or team in a research or innovation project or programme of work is a significant function of the role they have been offered.

The 'directs or leads' category is for individuals whose role requires them to act independently in initiating, planning and managing a research or innovation project or programme of work without supervision. This is likely to make applicants ineligible if their role is an entry level postdoctoral research position.

The 'academic, research or innovation leadership and development' category is for individuals in leadership roles at a departmental, faculty or institutional level. Typical duties may include strategy development and delivery and overseeing the management of staff and resources.

What about Routes 2, 3 and 4?

Information on applying for endorsement under Route 2 (individual fellowships), Route 3 (endorsed funders) and Route 4 (peer review) is available on GOV.UK and the [endorsing body websites](#). You are encouraged to look at all endorsement options before making an application.

How long does it take to apply for a Global Talent visa?

For fast-track applications under Routes 1, 2 and 3, the endorsing bodies usually return a Stage 1 endorsement decision within one week. Under Route 4, Stage 1 can take up to eight weeks from the time the Home Office receives your application. Within these eight weeks, the relevant endorsing body will usually return an endorsement decision within five weeks.

Once you have received endorsement, Stage 2 of the application process will need to be completed. The Home Office advises that Stage 2 can take around three weeks if you apply from outside of the UK, and up to eight weeks if you apply from within the UK. Applications for Stage 2 can be submitted in person at a Premium Service Centre (PSC) in the UK or via priority or super priority services outside the UK where applicable. Please note that PSC submission is not available for Stage 1 and if you submit a Stage 1 application at the PSC it will be rejected.

How much does a Global Talent visa cost?

The cost of endorsement (Stage 1) is £456. The visa application fee (Stage 2) is usually £152. If an applicant is joined by their partner or children, they will each need to pay £608, and the Immigration Health Surcharge is usually £624 per year for each person applying. There are no sponsorship costs.

For more FAQs, please visit the [Royal Society](#) website.