

If you are coming to the end of your studies, you may be looking for ways of spending some extra time in the UK to gain some work experience. There are a variety of schemes available to graduates.

The type of employment you will be entitled to take, and how long you can remain in the UK, may vary according to when you completed your degree and in what subject. You might have more options available to you if you want to do certain types of work.

The International Graduates Scheme (IGS) gives many graduates at bachelors level and beyond the opportunity to remain in the UK for 12 months after they graduate to take up employment. After this time, if your employer wishes to continue employing you, they must apply for a work permit.

As well as schemes specifically targeted at students, there are others that apply to the general population. Check you fulfil the criteria before you apply under a particular category, as your fee will not be refunded if your application is rejected.

There are some visas for which you cannot apply from the UK so it is worth researching your options in advance so that you can make necessary travel plans. Some applications will take longer than others ([www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk) tells you current processing times for some types of application), so you need to plan when you are going to make an application.

This booklet does not explain every category under which you can apply for leave to remain to work. We focus on the visas that as a graduate you are most likely to be eligible to apply for. To find out about all the work visas available, go to [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk).

## **International Graduates Scheme (IGS)**

*We are expecting that some time in 2008, a new Post Study Work visa will be introduced to replace the International Graduate Scheme. Under the new system, graduates will be able to apply for up to two years leave to remain in the UK rather than one.*

*If when the Post Study Work visa is introduced, you have already been granted twelve months' leave to remain under IGS/SEGS you will be able to apply for an extension to your stay under the new system.*

Currently, if you have completed your course on or after 1st May 2007, then you may be able to apply for 12 months' leave to remain under the International Graduates' Scheme (IGS).

To be eligible to apply you must:

- have successfully completed a bachelor's degree, Master's degree, PhD or Post-graduate certificate or diploma
- have completed this course within the last 12 months (date of completion is the date your visa for that course expired)
- be able to maintain and support yourself and dependants without recourse to public funds
- intend to take up paid employment during your stay (though you do not need to have secured employment before you apply for the scheme and despite the form asking for evidence of your job seeking, it is sufficient for you to say that your intention is to find work, without including evidence that you have started looking.)
- intend to leave at the end of your stay unless you are granted leave to remain under another permitted category.

See [www.workingintheuk.gov.uk](http://www.workingintheuk.gov.uk) for further information about the scheme.

You are able to switch into other work permit categories from an IGS visa. This means that should you find permanent employment whilst in the UK on this visa, your employer can apply for a work permit to employ you. (See section on work permits later in this booklet). You may also apply for leave to remain as a Tier 1 (General) Highly Skilled Worker, details of which are also included in this booklet.

You must have completed the eligible course within the previous 12 months before you make your application. The end date of your course is deemed to be the date your visa for studying that course expires, i.e. if you complete your degree in the summer but your visa does not expire until October, you will have until the following October to apply to IGS.

For further information about IGS, please go to [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk)

## Science and Engineering Graduates Scheme (SEGS)

If you completed your course before 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007 then you cannot apply to IGS but you can apply to a similar scheme, the Science and Engineering Graduates Scheme.

Unlike IGS, to qualify for SEGS, students must have studied an eligible course, a list of which can be found at [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk)

The courses are listed as JACS codes rather than title of course so you will need to ask the International office for your JACS code.

You will also have to fulfil the following conditions:

- have completed this course within the last 12 months (date of completion is the date your visa for that course expired)
- be able to maintain and support yourself and dependants without recourse to public funds
- intend to take up paid employment during your stay (though you do not need to have secured employment before you apply for the scheme and despite the form asking for evidence of your job seeking, it is sufficient for you to say that your intention is to find work, without including evidence that you have started looking.)
- intend to leave at the end of your stay unless you are granted leave to remain under another permitted category.

Like with IGS, you are able to switch into other work permit categories from an SEGS visa. This means that should you find permanent employment whilst in the UK on this visa, your employer can apply for a work permit to employ you. (See section on work permits later in this booklet).

## Work Permits

**You can switch into work permit employment without leaving the UK as long as your student/IGS or SEGS visa has not expired. There are other types of visa that can switch into work permit employment from the UK and these are listed on the [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk) website.**

In order for an employer to employ you on a permanent basis, they will have to make an application for a work permit. If the job is a 'shortage occupation' as defined by the Government then your employer should not have difficulty obtaining a work permit. You can view the list of shortage occupations in the Advice and Support

Centre or at [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/workpermits](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/workpermits) where you should find the list after clicking on "Business and Commercial".

If the job you wish to take is not on the list of shortage occupations then it might be quite difficult for an employer to obtain permission to employ you. They must satisfy the Home Office that the job is at a certain level and that your skills are appropriate to the role. They must also demonstrate that they have tried to fill the vacancy with a worker from the European Economic Area but have been unable to find a suitable candidate. They will have to provide information about their business and there is an extensive list of documentary evidence that they must supply.

Once the Home Office has given your employer permission to employ you, and **before your current visa expires**, you will be able to make an application for leave to remain on the form FLR(IED). Then your immigration status will be altered in line with the work permit. **The work permit alone is not sufficient for you to remain in the UK. You must obtain your own visa.**

### **Training and Work Experience Scheme (TWES)**

An employer can apply for this if they wish to offer you training or work experience for a limited period. You must be additional to the normal staffing needs of the employer and strictly be there for experience rather than doing a job that a resident worker could be employed and paid to do. For work experience the usual maximum length of permit is 12 months but if your employer informs the Home Office at the time of application that the work experience will last longer than this, 24 months can be granted. For work based training towards a professional or specialist qualification, a maximum of five years can be granted.

There are restrictions associated with the TWES permit, and those granted leave to remain under it are expected to leave the UK at the end of their work experience or training. **You will not be able to switch into a different work permit category from within the UK.** If your permit was for 12 months, you will have to leave the UK for at least 12 months before you may return under a different work permit. If your permit was for more than 12 months then the period for which you must be away is 24 months. The idea behind this is that you take the skills and experience you have learned here and apply them in your country of origin.

There are certain criteria that you and the job must fulfil in order to be eligible for a TWES permit. These include a certain level of English and a minimum of 30 hours training or work experience per

week. Pay and conditions must be the same for you as for a resident worker undertaking the same work experience or training. The full criteria is available on [www.workingintheuk.gov.uk](http://www.workingintheuk.gov.uk)

Once your employer has obtained a TWES work permit for you, and **before your current leave to remain expires**, you can apply on the form FLR(IED) for leave to remain under this category. **The TWES work permit alone is not sufficient for you to remain in the UK. You must obtain your own visa.**

## **Tier 1 (General) Highly Skilled Workers**

On 29<sup>th</sup> February 2008, the first part of Tier 1 of the new Points Based System for people wishing to remain in the UK in Highly Skilled categories, was introduced. Tier 1 encompasses several previously existing types of working visa though only the General sub category which replaces the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme has so far been introduced and it is only in place for applications in the UK at the moment. Applicants from abroad will still apply under the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme until later in the year when the new system will be rolled out to overseas posts.

The system is points based and you will need to score 75 points over categories including, qualification, previous earnings, and whether your previous earnings or qualifications were gained in the UK. You will also need to demonstrate a certain level of English.

Tier 1 (General) Highly Skilled Worker category gives you permission to work in the UK in your own right. Unlike with a Work Permit, where it is the employer who obtains the permit and you are granted leave to remain to work in that particular job, with this visa, you are entitled to remain in the UK to find employment or take up self employment, regardless of whether you have a job offer. A (General) Highly Skilled Worker visa will be initially granted for three years but as long as you are economically active, you can apply for an extension of two years at a time.

If you currently have a valid student/IGS or SEGS visa, you can make an application from within the UK to remain here as a Tier 1 (General) Highly Skilled Worker. There are other categories of visa, such as student, from which you can switch into Tier 1. If you are unsure whether you can switch into this category from the UK, please ask the International Adviser in the Advice and Support Centre or check the Government website [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk).

Tier 1 (General) Highly Skilled Worker may be very appealing to a lot of graduates but some recent graduates may struggle to score highly enough to qualify. The International Graduate Scheme or Post Study Work visa when it is introduced may be an appropriate route for such students to gain work experience and improve their score.

**As this system is very new, further information about it may become available and the information in this booklet may be subject to changes. We will endeavour to update this booklet and our website as soon as possible. Always check the Government website below for the most up to date information before you make an application.**

Please see [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk) or the UKCISA guidance notes in the Advice and support Centre or at [www.UKCISA.org.uk](http://www.UKCISA.org.uk) for further information.

## **Students' Union Sabbatical Officer**

A 12-month visa that can be extended to two years can be obtained to take up paid employment as a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer. You can become a Sabbatical Officer at the end of your course or take a year out from your studies.

At the end of your time as a Sabbatical Officer you must intend returning to your studies either to continue your course or begin a new one for which you have been offered a place that you have deferred, or you must intend to leave the UK.

You must be able to support yourself on your earnings as a Sabbatical Officer and not need assistance from public funds.

If you are sponsored by your Government or an international scholarship agency, then the Home Office will need to see evidence that this sponsorship has ended or paused and that your Government does not mind if you remain in the UK. Some sponsorships are on the proviso that you return to your country and use the skills you have learned here as soon as you complete your degree.

## **Voluntary Worker**

If you are working for a registered charity or an organisation recognised by the Home Office (check [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk) for a list of these), you can obtain a visa of up to 12 months. The work you do must be unpaid (although you can receive reasonable

expenses) and you must be able to support yourself without recourse to public funds. You must intend leaving the UK at the end of your stay and you cannot extend your leave to remain beyond 12 months on a voluntary worker visa.

## **Working Holiday Maker**

You cannot switch into this category from the UK and must return to your home country to obtain entry clearance as a Working Holiday Maker. You must be a citizen of a Commonwealth country and you must not intend working for more than 12 months of your stay in the UK (which can be up to two years).

There are a number of other criteria that you must fulfil and further details of this can be found at

[www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk)

## **Other types of visa**

There are other types of visa under which you can work in the UK but those above are the most common ones that you would apply for as a recent graduate. See

[www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk) for a full list and explanations of the visas available.

If you need further advice then please contact the International Adviser at the Advice and Support Centre or an Immigration solicitor.

## **Useful contacts**

### **Internal**

#### **Advice and Support Centre**

Students' Union

MD Block

City Campus

Tel: 01902 322038

Email: [advice@wolvesunion.org](mailto:advice@wolvesunion.org)

[www.wolvesunion.org](http://www.wolvesunion.org)

#### **The Workplace**

MD Block

City Campus

Tel: 01902 323400

[www.wlv.ac.uk/careers](http://www.wlv.ac.uk/careers)

**Careers Development Service**

Student Gateway

MB Building

City Campus

Tel: 01902 321414

[www.wlv.ac.uk/careers](http://www.wlv.ac.uk/careers)

**International Office**

MB Building

City Campus

Tel: 01902 322735

[international@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:international@wlv.ac.uk)

**External**

**Borders and Immigration Agency**

General Enquiries: 0870 606 7766

[www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk)

**United Kingdom Council for International Student Affairs  
(UKCISA)**

Tel: 020 7107 9922 Mon-Fri 1pm-4pm.

Email: [enquiries@UKCISA.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@UKCISA.org.uk)

**Public Enquiry Office**

HM Immigration Office

Dominion Court

41 Station Road

Solihull

Birmingham

Tel: 0870 606 7766 (to make appointment to apply for a visa in person)

**Immigration Advisory Service**

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

King Edward House

135a New Street

Birmingham

B2 4QJ

Tel: 0121 616 3540

[www.workingintheuk.gov.uk](http://www.workingintheuk.gov.uk)