Following the introduction of the Points-Based Immigration System, foreign workers must generally have a visa, sponsored by an employer, in order to work in the UK. This does not include ‘settled workers’, including Irish citizens, who can work in the UK without restrictions. Most foreign workers in construction are likely to be ‘skilled workers’ and will require a Skilled Worker visa to work in an eligible occupation. Applying for a Skilled Worker visa can be a complex process and Build UK has summarised the key steps to help individuals understand what is involved. Individuals should ensure they set aside sufficient time to review all the information before submitting an application.

Overview

1. Confirm eligibility for Skilled Worker visa
2. Collate the required documents
3. Apply online
4. Prove identity
5. Receive decision on application
6. Update Skilled Worker visa (if required)

To apply for a Skilled Worker visa, an individual must:

1. Have a confirmed job offer in an eligible occupation which meets the minimum salary requirements for the role
2. Work for an employer that has the appropriate sponsor licence
3. Prove they have the correct knowledge of English
4. Have sufficient funds to apply and support themselves in the UK.
Collate the required documents

As part of the online application process, an applicant must provide certain information and documentation. Some documents are mandatory for all applicants whilst others depend on the applicant’s circumstances. If the documents listed below are not in English or Welsh, the applicant must provide a certified translation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandatory</th>
<th>Additional (depending on circumstances)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of sponsorship reference number, name of employer and their sponsor licence number</td>
<td>Evidence that they have enough personal savings to support themselves in the UK (unless their certificate of sponsorship shows their employer can support them)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof of correct knowledge of English</td>
<td>A blank page in their passport if they are: • from outside the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein • from the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein but do not have a biometric passport with a chip in it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A valid passport or other document which shows identity and nationality</td>
<td>Tuberculosis test results if they are from a listed country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The job’s title, annual salary and occupation code</td>
<td>Criminal record certificate if working in certain jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proof of their relationship with their partner or children if they are applying with them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valid ATAS certificate if the job involves researching a sensitive subject at PhD level or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UK PhD certificate, or unique Ecctis reference number if the qualification is from outside the UK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apply online

The applicant should have all the documents required before applying online and the process will depend on whether the applicant is:

- outside the UK
- inside the UK and extending a current visa
- inside the UK and switching from a different visa.

Applicants must complete the application form in English, upload the required documentation, pay both the visa fee and health surcharge, and book an appointment at a visa application centre if required.
Prove identity

Once an applicant has applied online, they will be required to prove their identity. How they do this will depend on whether they are applying from outside or inside the UK and the process will be confirmed once they have applied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outside the UK</th>
<th>Inside the UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Have their fingerprints and photograph taken at a <a href="#">visa application centre</a> to obtain a <a href="#">biometric residence permit</a>, or</td>
<td>• Provide their fingerprints and a photograph (biometric information) at a <a href="#">UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services (UKVCAS)</a> service point to obtain a <a href="#">biometric residence permit</a>, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use the ‘<a href="#">UK Immigration: ID Check</a>’ app to create a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account to scan their identity document.</td>
<td>• Use the ‘<a href="#">UK Immigration: ID Check</a>’ app to create a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account in order to scan their identity document.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Receive decision on application

The applicant will receive a letter or email from UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) with the result of their application which will explain what they need to do next. The timeframe will depend on whether the applicant applied outside or inside the UK:

- **Outside the UK** - A decision is usually made within three weeks. If they applied through a visa application centre, they may be able to pay an additional fee to get a faster decision.
- **Inside the UK** - A decision is usually made within eight weeks. They may be able to pay an additional fee to get a faster decision and this will be confirmed when they apply.

If the **application is successful**, the applicant will receive one of the following which will detail the type of visa, any conditions that apply, and the start and end dates:

- A vignette (sticker) if they gave their biometric information at a visa application centre. This must be exchanged for a **biometric residence permit (BRP)** before it expires or within 10 days of arriving in the UK, whichever is later.
- Access to their [immigration status online](#) if they used the smartphone app to prove their identity.

If an **application is refused**, the applicant will have the right to an [administrative review](#) or [immigration decision appeal](#).
Update Skilled Worker visa

An individual will need to update their Skilled Worker visa if any of the following apply:

- They change their job and the new job is with a different employer
- Their job changes to a different occupation code and they are not part of a graduate training programme
- They leave a job on the shortage occupations list for a job that is not on the list.

An individual can apply to update their visa up to three months before the start date of a new job which must meet the eligibility requirements. They will need a new certificate of sponsorship but would only need to provide other documents again if they have been in the UK for less than one year.

Applicants can either continue working in their current job while their new application is being considered, or work out their notice period, as long as they have a current visa. They must not start a new job until they have received confirmation that their visa has been successfully updated.

Further Information

- Build UK’s Employing a Foreign Worker flowchart
- Points-Based Immigration System
- Skilled Worker visa guidance
- Build UK guidance on how to get a Sponsor Licence