



The United Kingdom Set to Adopt Points-Based Immigration System

The United Kingdom (UK) government is set to adopt a new immigration system, which will take effect from January 1st 2021, for applications to live, study and work in the UK. An Immigration Bill will be introduced and will come into force after the end of the transition period between the United Kingdom and European Union (EU), in December 2020. The new system would be a points-based immigration system that would treat EU and non-EU migrants equally. Therefore, in order to be eligible for a visa to work, study or live in the UK, applicants would be required to earn 70 points. This is aimed at attracting people capable of contributing to the economy of the UK.

Work Visa

The points-based system is structured to take factors such as skills, language and salary into consideration for the grant of work visas to applicants. To obtain a visa to work in the UK, the applicant must:

- have a job offer from an approved employer sponsor at an appropriate skill level;
- speak English language; and
- be paid the relevant salary threshold of at least £25,600 per annum.

If an applicant's pay is less than the salary threshold, but not less than £20,480, such applicant may still be able to apply by 'tradeable' points, using factors such as having a PhD that is relevant to the job.

Study Visa

For applicants looking to study in the UK, they would achieve the required points and be eligible for a study visa if they can demonstrate that:

- they can speak, read, write and understand English language,
- they have an offer from an approved educational institution to study a course, and
- they have enough means to support themselves and pay for the course.

These requirements would be applicable to both EU and non-EU students/applicants.

Graduate Visa

A new Graduate Visa will be available to international students who have completed a degree in the UK from summer 2021. This visa is an unsponsored route and would allow foreign graduates to remain in the UK, to work or seek/secure skilled jobs, for up to 2 years after completing their studies, or 3 years for those who have completed a PhD.

Conclusion

One of the major points for exiting the EU is to allow the UK set its own immigration policy. The aim of the government is to establish a system, that provides flexibility for employers; hence, the minimum salary threshold starting at just over £20,000. This significant change to the UK immigration policy is intended to attract skilled workers that would contribute to the economy, communities and public services in the UK.