

## **United Kingdom :**

The United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA) has introduced a number of new UK immigration categories in the past few years. The points based skilled immigration category **Tier 1 (General)**, part of the UK's new **five-tier points based system**.

**Tier-1 General Visa** (Formerly HSMP-Highly Skilled Migration Permits) If you are highly qualified and skilled you can apply under this category. The chances of success are very bright. This is a points based immigration scheme. You must score 95 points to be eligible and points are awarded according to the following categories:

- 10 points for English language and;
  - 10 points for available maintenance (funds). You will be required to have available funds of at least £800.00 and to have had £2,800 during the first 3 months preceding your application and a further £1,600 for every dependant accompanying you and;
  - 75 points for your attributes i.e. age, qualifications, UK experience, previous earnings. See clarification below.
1. **Age** - younger applicants are awarded more points.
  2. **Qualifications** - A Bachelors degree or higher is required and all qualifications are based on equivalency to UK qualifications. Since 1 April 2009 a Masters degree qualification is now required. All qualifications are based on equivalency to UK qualifications.
  3. **UK Experience** - Additional points are awarded if you studied and graduated at a Bachelor's degree or higher in full time education in the UK or at a UK based educational institution for at least 1 academic year and if you have work experience in the UK.
  4. **Previous earnings** - Earning power is linked to your country of residence and points increase depending on your level of income. Additional points are awarded if past earnings were in the United Kingdom. Since 1 April 2009 a Masters degree qualification is now required.

If you are approved under this category you are able to stay in the United Kingdom for up to 24 months to seek work or self employment opportunities. Following this, you can then apply to have your stay be extended for up to a further three years.

After 5 years of continuously living in the United Kingdom as a highly skilled migrant you may apply for permanent residency.

For a **FREE** initial assessment of your eligibility [click here to download form](#)

[Evaluation form UK Tier-1pdf](#)

**Tier 2 (General)** replaces the work permit and is also a points based immigration scheme. You must score 70 points to be eligible and points are awarded according to the following categories:

- 10 points for English language; and
- 10 points for available maintenance. You will be required to have available funds of £800: and
- 50 points for attributes (sponsorship, qualifications, prospective earnings)

1. **Sponsorship** - You will require a valid certificate of sponsorship issued by a licensed sponsor. (Employers will need to apply for a sponsor license in order to be able to employ migrants). You can score up to 50 points for your certificate of sponsorship.

2. **Qualifications** - 0-15 points are awarded depending on your level of qualifications; and

3. **Prospective earnings** - 0-20 points are awarded according to the amount of your prospective earnings.

## **Family**

### **Marriage Visa.**

Spouses of UK citizens or permanent residents may come to the UK under the marriage visa category and are able to work as soon as the visa is granted. The criteria are:

- If you have been together for less than two years your visa is probationary for two years and at the end of the two years ILR will usually be granted.
- If you have been together for more than four years outside the UK you will be granted ILR without having to live together in the UK for two years
- The UK citizen must have met their non UK spouse
- You must intend to live together permanently

- You must have suitable accommodation and possess sufficient funds to pay you and your spouses living expenses and those of any dependants without claiming public funds. (Dependants are children of the marriage who are under 18 years of age)

### **Unmarried partner**

If you are unmarried you need to show you have been together for two years and that it is a permanent relationship. The criteria are:

- You need to show any previous relationship whether married or unmarried has ended
- You must have been living together for at least two years in a relationship similar to marriage and documentary evidence will be required to confirm this.
- If you have been together for less than four years the visa will be probationary for two years and at the end of that two years if you are still together ILR will usually be granted
- If you have been together for four or more years outside the UK and have documentary evidence to prove this you will be granted ILR without having to live in the UK for two years
- You must intend to live permanently with your partner
- You must have suitable accommodation and possess sufficient funds to pay you and your partners living expenses and those of any dependants without claiming public funds. (Dependants are children of the relationship who are under 18 years of age)
- The overseas unmarried partner must be over 16 years of age and the UK partner must be over 18 years.

### **Ancestry**

If you are a commonwealth citizen with a UK born grandparent you should be entitled to an Ancestry visa as long as you are over 17 and able to support yourself. You will be required to provide documentation such as birth certificates and marriage certificates to support your application. The visa is granted for five years after which you may apply for ILR.

### **Business Visas**

#### **Tier 1 (Investor)**

Investors now apply under **Tier 1 (Investor)** category which is a points based system with points awarded according to your ability to invest £1,000,000 according to the following criteria:

- 75 points - you have at least £1,000,000 held in a regulated financial institution and disposable in the UK or;
- 75 points - you have at least £1,000,000 held in a regulated financial institution and disposable in the UK loaned to you by a financial institution regulated by the Financial Services Authority.
- You will not need to meet the separate English and maintenance requirement required for the other categories.

You are initially issued with a 24 month visa which can then be extended for a further three years provided you are eligible for 75 points according to the following criteria:

- 30 points - You have at least £1,000,000 held in a regulated financial institution and disposable in the UK; or
  - You have at least £1,000,000 under your control held in a financial institution and disposable in the UK loaned to you by a financial institution regulated by the Financial Services Authority;
  - or
  - Your personal assets excluding liabilities are over £2,000,000.
- 30 points - You have invested at least £750,000 into UK government bonds, share capital or loan capital in active and trading UK companies (not including those involved principally involved in property investment).
- 15 points - Your investment was made within three months of being granted entry clearance and has been maintained for the whole of the remaining period of leave granted.

After 5 years in the UK you may apply for permanent residency.

## **Entrepreneur**

People wishing to come to the UK to run their own business now apply under the Tier 1 (Entrepreneur category) which is also now a points based system. Applicants must score at least 95 points according to the following categories:

- **10 points** for English language and;
- **10 points** for available maintenance (funds). You will be required to have available funds of £800 and;

- **75 points** for attributes according to the following requirements:
  - **25 points** - You must have access to not less than £200,000;
  - **25 points** - Your money must be held in one or more regulated financial institutions.
  - **25 points** - Your money must be disposable in the UK in cash directly into one or more businesses in the UK
  - **20 points** - You must have either registered with HM Revenue & Customs as self employed or registered a new business of which you are the Director, or registered as the Director of an existing business.
  - **15 points** - You must be engaged in a business activity at the time you apply for Indefinite leave to remain.

If you were granted entry clearance under the Tier 1 (Entrepreneur) category you will initially be granted a visa for two years after which you may apply for an extension of stay as long as you are eligible for **75 points** according to the following categories:

- **20 points** - You must have invested or had invested on your behalf not less than £200,000 in cash directly into one or more businesses in the UK
- **20 points** - Within three months of being granted entry clearance you must have either registered with HM Revenue & Customs as self employed or, registered a new business of which you are the Director, or registered as the Director of an existing business.
- **15 points** - You must be engaged in a business activity at the time you apply for an extension of stay.
- **20 points** - If you have established a new business or businesses they must have created the equivalent of at least two full time paid jobs in the UK and those jobs must have existed for at least 12 months; or
  - If you have taken over an existing business the resulting services and investments must have resulted in the equivalent of two extra paid fulltime jobs that have existed for at least 12 months.

After a period of 5 years you may apply for permanent residency.