

The UK's points-based immigration system: **Information for EU visitors**



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Please note that 'EU citizens' referred to in this guidance should be read to include EU, EEA and Swiss citizens. Those resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 should apply to the **EU Settlement Scheme** and have until 30 June 2021 to make an application.

The UK left the European Union on 31 January 2020. Free movement between the UK and the European Union ended on 31 December 2020 and on the 1 January 2021, the UK implemented a points-based immigration system that prioritises skills and talent over where a person comes from.

The UK welcomes millions of visitors every year from all around the world. Under the new system, you, as an EU citizen, can continue to visit the UK without applying for a visa and in most cases, can stay for up to six months. You may participate in a wide range of activities, including tourism, visiting family and friends, short-term study and business-related activities, such as events and conferences. You may enter the UK multiple times during that period, but you may not live in the UK by means of frequent or successive visits.

Irish citizens' status continues to be protected as part of **Common Travel Area arrangements**. Therefore, Irish citizens do not require permission to come to the UK (except in a very limited number of circumstances), and as a result, are not eligible to apply under the new points-based immigration system.

As an EU citizen who is not Irish, if you enter the UK from Ireland there are different immigration restrictions for visiting the UK. You are only able to visit the UK for up to six months on your first visit. If you return to Ireland and from there wish to visit the UK again, you will only be able to stay in the UK for up to two months. However, if you leave the **Common Travel Area**, you will still be able to visit the UK for up to six months on your next visit including if it's via Ireland.





Visiting the UK

You can continue to visit the UK without applying for visa, to:

- come on holiday or visit family and friends for up to six months
- do a short course of study
- do business-related activities, such as attending meetings, events and conferences
- to negotiate and sign business contracts
- take part in sporting or cultural events
- if you're a leading academic, you can present your latest research; or if you're a scientist, you can share your knowledge with colleagues on international projects
- if you're employed overseas, you can come and support companies who have bought goods from your company or collaborate with a UK business which is supplying your employer overseas
- take part in some permitted paid activities, such as performing at cultural events.

The full list of permitted activities for all visitors is available on GOV.UK

You cannot come to the UK without a visa, to:

- work
- live in the UK for long periods of time through frequent visits
- get **public funds**.

You will need to apply for a **visa** if you want to work in the UK or study in the UK for longer than six months.

If you've been invited to the UK as an expert in your profession and will be paid in the UK, you may be able to come to the UK as a Permitted Paid Engagement visitor. Use the '**check if need a visa tool**' to find out more information.

If you are coming via Ireland from 1 January 2021 as a Permitted Paid Engagement visitor, you can come for up to one month on your first visit, but only seven days on any further visits if you have not left the Common Travel Area in the meantime.

If you are visiting the UK to marry or form a civil partnership, or give notice of this, after 1 July 2021 you will need to apply for a **Marriage/Civil Partnership Visa**.

If you want to visit for longer than six months for private medical treatment or as an academic visitor, you will need to apply for a **Standard Visitor Visa**.

If you are visiting the UK for business purposes, you can read more about **importing and exporting goods to the UK**.



Short-term study

As an EU citizen, you may participate in short-term study. All nonrecreational study must be undertaken at an accredited institution. Recreational courses undertaken for leisure, that last no longer than 30 days and which do not lead to any formal qualifications, do not need to be undertaken at an accredited institution.

The six to eleven month **short-term study route** is distinct from the main student route and requires applicants of all nationalities to obtain a visa before travelling to the UK. This route is specifically for people taking English language courses, and it does not require sponsorship and does not permit work.

If you're looking to study in the UK for over six months, find out more about the **Student route** on [GOV.UK](#)



Travelling to the UK

From 1 October 2021, you will not be able to use your EU, EEA or Swiss national ID card to enter the UK. You will need to travel with a valid passport.

You can continue to use your national ID card to enter the UK until at least 31 December 2025 if you:

- have settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme
- have a frontier worker permit
- are an S2 Healthcare Visitor
- are a Swiss Service Provider

Find out more about **travelling to the UK** on [GOV.UK](#)



EU Settlement Scheme

If you were resident in the UK by 31 December 2020, you should not apply for a visa under the points-based immigration system. You and your family should instead **apply to the EU Settlement Scheme**. Applications are free and the deadline for applying is 30 June 2021.

For more information on the **points-based immigration system** visit [GOV.UK](#)