

FACTSHEET: SCALE-UP WORKER

**SMITH
STONE
WALTERS**
Immigration Practice

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

A Scale-up Worker visa allows you to come to the UK to do an eligible job for a fast-growing UK business (sometimes called a 'scale-up business'). This route has been designed to make it easier for high growth businesses to access overseas talent.

UK employers must meet specific eligibility criteria in order to sponsor Scale-up workers. Unlike other sponsored visas, Scale-up Workers only require sponsorship from their employer for the first 6 months of their permission to stay in the UK.

This guide outlines who is eligible for a Scale-up Worker visa and how to apply, plus the criteria businesses must meet in order to qualify as an eligible Scale-up sponsor.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for a Scale-up Worker visa, you must:

- Have a confirmed job offer to work for an approved scale-up business for at least 6 months.
- Have a 'Certificate of Sponsorship' (CoS) from your employer with information about the role you have been offered in the UK.
- Do a job that's on the list of [eligible occupations](#).
- Be paid at least £33,000 per year, £10.10 per hour or the 'going rate' for the occupation, whichever is highest.

You must be able to speak, read, write and understand English. You'll usually need to [prove your knowledge of English](#) when you apply.

HOW LONG YOU CAN STAY

You can stay in the UK with a Scale-up Worker visa for 2 years. You'll need to apply to extend your visa when it expires.

You can extend your visa as many times as you like by 3 years, as long as you still meet the eligibility requirements.

After 5 years, you may be able to apply to settle permanently in the UK (also known as 'indefinite leave to remain'). This gives you the right to live, work and study here for as long as you like, and apply for benefits if you're eligible.

PERMITTED ACTIVITIES

With a Scale-up Worker visa, you are permitted to:

- Work in your sponsored job for at least 6 months.
- Leave your sponsored job after 6 months.
- Study.
- Bring dependant family members with you, if they are eligible.
- Take on additional work, including becoming self-employed.
- Do voluntary work.
- Travel abroad and return to the UK.

You cannot:

- Apply for most benefits (public funds), or the State Pension.
- Work as a professional sportsperson, for example a sports coach.



THE 6-MONTH RULE

During the first 6 months of your stay, you cannot change employer unless you apply to update your visa. After 6 months, you can continue working in the same job or change jobs without telling the Home Office.

HOW TO APPLY

You must apply online for a Scale-up Worker visa. How you apply depends on whether you are:

- [Outside the UK](#) and are coming to the UK
- Inside the UK and you want to [extend your current visa](#)
- Inside the UK and you want to [switch to this visa from another visa type](#).

As part of your application, you will need to prove your identity and provide your supporting documents. To do this, you will need to do one of the following:

- Attend an appointment at a Visa Application Centre (VAC) if you're outside the UK
- Attend an appointment at a UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services (UKVCAS) service point if you're inside the UK
- Use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to scan your identity document, if you are eligible.

HOW MUCH IT COSTS

When you apply for a Scale-up Worker visa, you will need to have enough money to:

- Pay the visa application fee – It costs £715 to apply from outside or inside the UK.
- Pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) – The IHS is currently £624 per year, or £470 per year for under 18s.
- Support yourself in the UK – You will usually need to show that you have at least £1,270 in your bank account (unless you're exempt).

Note: The visa application fee and the IHS must also be paid for any accompanying dependants.

PROCESSING TIMES

You can apply for a Scale-up Worker visa up to 3 months before the day you are due to start work in the UK (this date is listed on your CoS). Once you've applied online, proved your identity and provided your documents, you'll usually get a decision on your visa within 3 weeks if you're outside the UK, or 8 weeks if you're inside the UK.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR SPONSORS

To qualify as a scale-up which can bring workers into the UK, businesses must show the Home Office that they have experienced high growth in the 3-year period immediately before applying to sponsor workers. In this 3-year period, the business must have:

- Grown by 20% on average in each year in either employment or total sales (turnover).
- Had at least 10 employees at the start of the 3-year period.

Please contact Smith Stone Walters for more information on this route.

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