

UK announces new points-based immigration system

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel will today launch a new points-based immigration system, ensuring that the UK continues to attract the brightest and the best from around the world, including India.

The new Points-Based Immigration System will award points for specific skills, professions, salaries or qualifications/attributes, and visas will be awarded to those who gain sufficient points. The system will provide simple, effective, and flexible arrangements for skilled workers to come to the UK.

The new single global system will treat EU and non-EU citizens equally, giving top priority to those with the highest skills and the greatest talents, including scientists, innovators and academics.

The minimum general salary threshold will be reduced to £25,600 (approximately ₹23.8 lakh), down from the previously proposed £30,000.

The Home Secretary will also announce a reformed Global Talent route. This will include a new fast-track scheme for world-leading scientists, top researchers and mathematicians to come to the UK. This will run alongside the Points-Based Immigration System and will allow a small number of highly skilled workers to come to the UK without a job offer.

Acting British High Commissioner to India, Jan Thompson, said:

The new Points-Based Immigration System is great news for Indian nationals looking to work in the UK. It puts Indian applicants on a level playing field, and prioritises those with the greatest skills and talent – something which India has in abundance.

This news is just the latest example of the UK's continuing global outlook following our departure from the EU, and further evidence of our commitment to strengthening the UK-India Living Bridge.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Today is a historic moment for the whole country. We will attract the brightest and the best from around the globe, boosting the economy and our communities, and unleash this country's full potential.

These developments come on the back of the UK's Graduate route announcement, which will allow eligible international students – including those from India

– to stay in the UK for two years after completing their studies to work or look for work. The new Graduate route will be introduced from the summer of 2021. There continues to be no limit on the number of international students who can come to the UK to study.

Indian nationals continue to receive more skilled work visas than the rest of the world combined, accounting for 52% of all Tier 2 visas granted globally last year. Over half a million UK visit visas were issued to Indians in 2019, up almost 10% from the previous year. Tier 4 student visa numbers also increased by 63% last year – almost four times faster than the percentage increase globally.

Further Information

- The new Points-Based Immigration System will award points for an appropriate job offer, English language skills, and a salary threshold. The education threshold will be reduced to A-level (Higher Secondary School Certificate or equivalent) from degree level, and the general salary threshold is being reduced to £25,600 (approximately ₹23.8 lakh) from £30,000. Applicants will be able to 'trade' characteristics if they do not meet all the requirements. Tradeable points will be given for salary, a job offer in a specific shortage occupation, and educational qualifications.
- The UK Home Office will publish further details on the Points-Based Immigration System in due course, including detailed guidance regarding the points tables, shortage occupations and qualifications.
- These new arrangements will take effect from 1 January 2021, once freedom of movement with the European Union has ended.
- The announcement will also formalise a new fast-track NHS Visa for certain medical professionals with NHS job offers, reducing their visa fees and providing support to come to the UK with their families. Applicants will need to have a job offer from the NHS, be trained to a recognised standard and have good working English language skills. Indians are already the largest non-British group of staff in the NHS with more than 21,000 healthcare professionals, including more than 7,500 nurses.

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