

# Imminent changes to UK economic migration routes

7 APRIL 2022

**For what comes next**  
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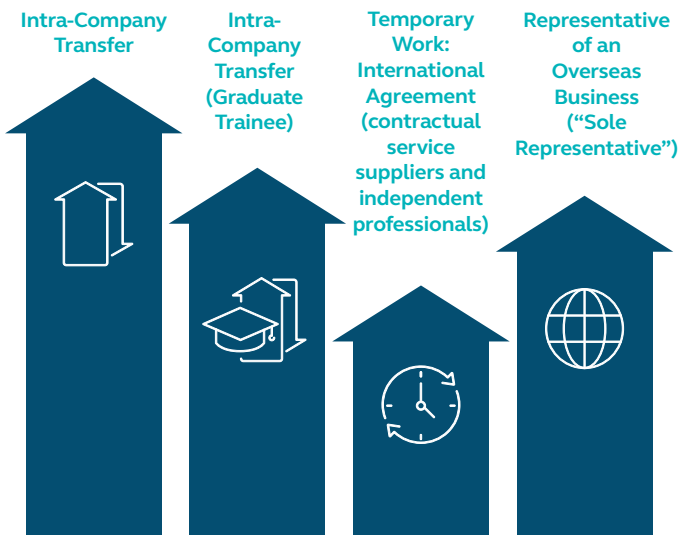


# What's changing?

A number of Points Based System (“PBS”) immigration routes are changing and some new routes are being introduced. The majority of the changes take effect on 11 April 2022, with others in May and August 2022.

The biggest change is the introduction of “Global Business Mobility Routes”, an umbrella category comprising five-subcategories aimed at migrants seeking to come to the UK for temporary assignments. The changes largely consolidate and re-brand existing PBS routes (with some tweaks to eligibility criteria) but three new routes are being introduced alongside this. We have set out below how the current system will change.

## Current routes



# Who are the changes relevant to?



## UK businesses

whether currently licensed or not should take note of these changes. Six out of the seven routes require a UK sponsor licence.



## Those licensed for intra-company transfers

in particular, should take note of the changes which will affect their future sponsorships.



## Overseas businesses

looking to:

- expand into the UK; or
- provide services / secondees to the UK;

may wish to explore the new routes.



## International graduates

of top global universities looking to work in the UK.

# Key points to note on current routes that are changing

## Current route



**Intra-Company  
Transfer**

## New route



**Global Business  
Mobility: (1) Senior  
or Specialist Worker**

## Comments

- Current ICT sponsors will retain their licences and current Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) allocations will be updated from 11 April to reflect the new route names.
- Current licences will automatically be amended to add these routes where applicable.

**Date effective: 11 April 2022**

## Highlights

- Largely unchanged from ICT route it replaces.
- For overseas senior managers or specialist employees assigned to UK group company.
- UK sponsor licence required, as is currently the case.
- Minimum salary increasing from £41,500 to £42,400 p/a.
- Remains not a route to settlement.
- Some artistic and creative occupations no longer eligible for new sponsorships in this route.

# Key points to note on current routes that are changing

## Current route



**Intra-Company  
Transfer  
(Graduate Trainee)**

## New route



**Global Business  
Mobility: (2)  
Graduate Trainee**

## Comments

- Current ICT sponsors will retain their licences and current Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) allocations will be updated from 11 April to reflect the new route names.
- Current licences will automatically be amended to add these routes where applicable.

**Date effective: 11 April 2022**

## Highlights

- Largely unchanged from ICT route it replaces.
- For those employed in group overseas on a graduate training course leading to senior management/specialist position.
- UK sponsor licence required, as is currently the case.
- Minimum salary increasing from £23,000 to £23,100 p/a.
- Remains not a route to settlement.

# Key points to note on current routes that are changing

## Current route



**Representative of an Overseas Business (“Sole Representative”)**

## New route



**Global Business Mobility: (3) UK Expansion Worker**

**Date effective: 11 April 2022**

## Highlights

- Aimed at replacing the sole representative route, which will only be open to eligible media representatives or existing sole representatives looking to extend their stay in the UK.
- For senior managers/specialist employees coming to UK to work on a business’ expansion to the UK.
- Unlike the sole representative route, this route requires a UK business with sponsor licence (which must be a subsidiary of the overseas business expanding into the UK).
- The UK sponsor business must not yet be trading in the UK (if it is the Senior or Specialist Worker route must be used).
- Must be existing employee of overseas business and meet minimum service requirements.

- Minimum salary of £42,400 p/a.
- Stays in UK of up to 1 year, with ability to extend to 2 years.
- Unlike the sole representative route:
  - this is not a route to settlement in UK;
  - multiple employees can be sponsored in route at same time; and
  - majority shareholders of overseas business now eligible.

## Comments

- Questions remain over the criteria for securing a sponsor licence when the business is not yet trading in the UK and what limitations may apply on the group’s existing presence in the UK.
- A sponsor licence typically require certain UK-based personnel to fill mandatory roles on the licence – it remains to be seen how this will operate under this route.
- The requirement for sponsorship and inability to settle in the UK may make this a less attractive option for employees and overseas businesses.

# Key points to note on current routes that are changing

## Current route



**Temporary Work:  
International  
Agreement  
(contractual  
service suppliers  
and independent  
professionals)**

## New route



**Global Business  
Mobility: (4)  
Service Supplier**

- UK recipient of services must be licensed sponsor.
- Relevant contract must be registered with Home Office.
- Work must meet applicable skill threshold or individual must meet required qualification level.
- Prior service requirements apply.
- Maximum stay of 6 months in UK, 12 months if covered by the Swiss or EU trade agreements.
- Not a route to settlement.

**Date effective: 11 April 2022**

## Highlights

- For:
  - contractual service suppliers employed by overseas service provider without a UK presence; or
  - self-employed independent professionals based overseas who are coming to UK to provide services covered by UK international trade commitments.

## Comments

- Contract registration requirements to be confirmed.

# Key points to note on current routes that are changing

## New route



### Global Business Mobility: (5) Secondment Worker

#### Comments

- It remains unclear which contracts will qualify and be registered for this route, with no definition of “high value contract or investment”.

**Date effective: 11 April 2022**

## Highlights

- For businesses without a UK presence.
- For temporary secondments to UK as part of high value contract or investment by overseas employer.
- UK recipient business must have sponsor licence and contract with overseas business (which must be registered with Home Office).
- Skills threshold will apply.
- 12 months' service overseas required.
- Stays in UK of up to 1 year, with ability to extend up to 2 years.
- Not a route to settlement.

# Key points to note on current routes that are changing

## New route



### High Potential Individual

**Date effective: 30 May 2022**

## Highlights

- For recent graduates of top global universities (specifically defined).
- Must have completed eligible course outside UK in last 5 years.
- May work in UK (employed or self-employed) and bring dependants.
- No UK business sponsorship or job offer required and no skills threshold.
- English language criteria applies.
- Not a route to settlement in UK.
- Stays of up to 2 years (3 for those with PhD level qualification).

## Comments

- This is similar to the graduate route but aimed at overseas graduates. It remains to be seen whether this will attract the brightest and best to the UK when it does not count towards settlement in the UK and only certain overseas universities will qualify.

# Key points to note on current routes that are changing

## New route



### Scale-up visa

**Date effective: 22 August 2022**

## Highlights

- For those with high-skilled job offer from qualifying UK scale-up business as they have skills required to help scale-up business growth.
- Intended to offer a fast-track visa.
- Scale-up businesses will apply to use route (looking at revenue/employee growth rates).
- Sponsorship required for first 6 months only (then transitions to unsponsored route when worker free to undertake any work with limited exceptions).
- Minimum salary of £33,000 p/a.
- No immigration skills charge payable by sponsor.

- English language and skills requirements apply.
- Stays of up to 5 years in UK in total and dependants permitted.
- Route to settlement.

## Comments

- It remains unclear what criteria will apply to scale-up businesses looking to secure a sponsor licence for this route or extend an existing licence. It is likely this will focus on annualised growth in turnover or staffing over the previous 3 years and minimum staffing thresholds. Clarification on this is unlikely to be released until later in the summer.

## Contact

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