

Reforming Tier 2 of the points-based immigration system – at a glance factsheet

Changes to the Tier 2 (General) immigration route will happen in November 2016 and April 2017. The government wants to reduce migration to the UK and these changes will have implications for non-EEA recruitment activity.

Salary thresholds – current vs change

Tier 2 (General) – overall minimum thresholds	Current salary threshold	New salary threshold	What does this mean in practice?
Experienced workers	£20,800	£30,000	This change will be phased – £25,000 from 24 November 2016 to £30,000 from April 2017. Nurses, medical radiographers and paramedics will be exempt from the increased threshold until July 2019.
New entrants	£20,800	£20,800	A separate minimum salary threshold will apply for new entrants into Tier 2 (General) from 24 November 2016. A 'new entrant' is a student switching from Tier 4 to Tier 2, new graduate recruits where the resident labour market test (RLMT) has been met through university "milkround" recruitment, and a person aged 25 or under.

New minimum salary thresholds apply only to those making an application under Tier 2 (General) for the first time from 24 November 2016. Applications for Tier 2 (General) extensions or to change employer for those already in Tier 2 before 24 November 2016 will not be subject to the new salary threshold. Thresholds are based on guaranteed pay, excluding overtime.

Immigration skills charge

- The immigration skills charge (ISC) will be applied to employers of non-EEA migrants under Tier 2 from April 2017.
- A flat charge of £1,000 per person annually will be payable upfront when the employer assigns the certificate of sponsorship to the individual.
- This means an additional upfront cost to employers of £5,000 for a migrant entering the UK on a five-year visa.
- ISC will not apply to Tier 4 students switching to Tier 2 or PhD level occupations.
- Funding will be used to train resident workers – further detail to be published.

Tier 2 (General) prioritisation

- Restricted certificates of sponsorship (RCoS) limit will remain at 20,700 places per year.
- Prioritisation of RCoS will continue on the basis of salary, after priority is given first to national shortage occupations and then PhD level occupations.
- Nurses will remain on the national shortage occupation list, but employers will need to carry out a RLMT before recruiting a non-EEA nurse from 24 November 2016.
- When the RCoS limit is reached, nurses, medical radiographers and paramedics will be given extra points in the allocation process from 24 November 2016. This extra weighting will remain in place until July 2019.
- New graduate recruits where the RLMT has been met through university “milkround” recruitment will also be given additional points in the allocation process from 24 November 2016.
- Graduates of UK universities switching from Tier 4 within the UK will continue to be exempt from the 20,700 annual limit on Tier 2 places.

Restrictions to Tier 2 (General)

- Eligibility continues to be through two categories; those coming to fill jobs that have been advertised under the RLMT, and those coming to take up jobs on the shortage occupation list (SOL).
- The RLMT criteria remain the same – advertising for 28 days, in two sources, one of which must be Universal Jobmatch.
- Students switching from Tier 4 to Tier 2 will not be subject to the RLMT or the 20,700 annual limit on Tier 2 places.
- Occupations on the SOL will be reviewed regularly by the Migration Advisory Committee which will recommend addition and removal of occupations from the list.

Restrictions to Tier 2 dependants

- Tier 2 dependants will continue to be free to seek employment in the UK without restriction on the type of work they can do (other than the existing restrictions on working as a doctor or dentist in training).

For more information as it becomes available, visit www.nhsemployers.org/immigration