



The following message was received for our website on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2015

A package of measures designed to tighten up remaining abuse of the immigration system and ensure the brightest and best migrants continue to come to the UK was published last week, as part of the Immigration Rules. The majority will come into effect on 6 April 2015.

The introduction of the following changes will bring greater flexibility for businesses and support growth:

- **Waive the Tier 2 'cooling-off period' for short-term grants of 3 months or less.** This will give firms the ability to sponsor interns and bring them back to the UK for a permanent job within a year. This change will also help global firms who need to send some staff to the UK for short periods each year.
- **Streamline the existing 15 visitor routes down to four.** The changes will help simplify the visitor routes for businesses and leisure travellers, whilst the rebranding of the student visitor route into a short-term student route will make it clearer for people who want to study on short term courses. The new style of Immigration Rules and Guidance for visitors will be shorter, more user-friendly and easier for people to understand. These changes will take effect from 24 April 2015. For further information see paragraphs 7.3 - 7.23 of the EM [<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-rules-statement-of-changes>].

Other changes being made will further strengthen the Points Based System against potential abuse. These include:

- **Closing Tier 1 General route for extension applications, as announced in March last year.** The route closed to initial applications in April 2011.
- **Removing the ability of Tier 1 General migrants to switch into the Tier 1 Entrepreneur route,** unless they have already established a UK business before the date of the changes (6 April) and they have the required funding.
- **Expanding the use of 'genuineness' tests in the Tier 1 Entrepreneur route to those applying for extensions or indefinite leave to remain.** This will protect the route against abuse without having a detrimental effect on genuine applicants. This is similar to the 'genuine entrepreneur' test introduced for initial applications in January 2013.
- **Requiring prospective Tier 1 Investor applicants to open a UK-regulated investment account before making an initial application,** to ensure UK banks carry out due diligence checks before they apply.

Further changes include:

- **Updating annual minimum salary thresholds for Tier 2 and appropriate salary rates for individual occupations.** This is part of salary updates that we make on an annual basis.
- **Amending the Shortage Occupation List following a partial review by the independent Migration Advisory Committee.** Paramedics, and overhead linesworkers

(in the energy industry) will now be included on the list, while special neonatal nurses have been removed.

- **Changing the names of the ratings which sponsors can hold in Tier 4.** 'Highly Trusted Sponsor status' will be replaced by 'Tier 4 Sponsor status' and 'A-rated sponsor status' will be replaced by 'Probationary Sponsor status'. This change in terminology better reflects the nature of the ratings held by different Tier 4 sponsors.
- **Updating the list of approved Secure English Language Test (SELT) centres and ensuring language tests are only taken at these approved centres.** The new providers are Trinity College London (UK only) and IELTS SELT Consortia (UK and rest of world). Please visit [SELT pages of GOV.UK](#) for more information.

For full details of all the changes please see the Statement of Changes to the Immigration rules (HC1025) and the Explanatory Memorandum at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-rules-statement-of-changes>