

GOVERNMENT CHANGES TO IMMIGRATION RULES

Further to the government's Immigration White Paper, they have made an announcement that there will be changes to the Immigration Rules effective from 22.07.2025. We understand some of our colleagues may have concerns or questions about what this could mean for them.

We have reviewed the statement of changes and have given our thoughts on what we believe may be the potential impact of these changes to colleagues. Please be aware that there is limited information available around these changes and the advice below has been prepared in accordance with what is available to us (as of 7 July 2025).

There will be further detail around the proposals in the Immigration White Paper in due course and as they are released, we will issue an updated version of this document to reflect them.

There are FAQ's available on StaffNet which we are updating regularly and can be found [here](#).

Higher Salary Thresholds for UK Skilled Worker visa

Salary Thresholds increasing from 22 July 2025:

	Current	From 22.07.2025
General threshold	£38,700	£41,700
Minimum general threshold where discount applies	£30,960	£33,400

The minimum salary thresholds will increase from £38,700 per year to £41,700 per year, with an absolute minimum threshold of £33,400 per year where a reduction in salary is permissible under the rules.

Going rates for occupations are also being increased, and to be eligible for sponsorship an individual must meet either the 'general threshold' or the 'going rate' whichever of the two is highest.

Raising Occupation-specific Thresholds for Standard Occupational Codes (SOC):

An occupation-specific threshold is the minimum amount of money an individual must earn to be eligible for sponsorship as a Skilled Worker. This can sometimes be higher than the general threshold:

- *SOC 2311: Higher Education Teaching Professionals **will have** a salary requirement of £52,600 pa, this is currently the minimum we must pay someone for them to be eligible for sponsorship if they are not eligible for any other reduction/discount*

They are raising a significant number of occupational specific thresholds for SOC and in some instances in the region of £5,000. The table below highlights more significant changes for SOC that we use at the University:

SOC Code	Current Going Rate (pre 22.07.2025)	New Going Rate (from 22.07.2025)
2114 Physical scientists	£47,300	£54,600
2115 Social and humanities scientists	£36,400	£40,400
2133 IT business analysts, architects and systems designers	£51,700	£54,900
2134 Programmers & software development professionals	£49,400	£54,700
2135 Cyber security professionals	£45,300	£48,500
2137 IT network professionals	£42,800	£45,600
2161 Research and development (R&D) managers	£49,200	£54,400

2311 Higher education teaching professionals	£47,700	£52,600
2440 Business & financial project management professionals	£52,900	£56,500

Discounts to Salary Rates:

The government has retained the discount for new entrants (those under 26 or recently graduated from a qualifying course) and PhD's points. This allows up to a 30% discount on the occupation-specific threshold, but the salary must be at least £33,400 or the occupational threshold, whichever of the two is higher.

Transitional Arrangements:

The government has indicated that anyone already in the UK on a Skilled Worker visa or has a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) issued **before** the changes on 22.07.2025 will **not** be subject to the new £41,700 salary threshold (or new going rates) when they change employment, extend their visa, or settle in the UK.

What this could mean (as of 7 July 2025):

- *It is very unlikely that the University will be able to sponsor a Skilled Worker (new starters or switching immigration category) whose salary is below £41,700 per year unless there is a reduction in place for the individual depending on their role*
- *We can continue to use tradable points for an individual who has a PhD relevant to their role or are a new entrant where the going rate is not achieved (subject to specific minimums)*

For employees at the University of Manchester:

- If you are sponsored by the University on **a Skilled Worker visa** or have had a CoS issued to you before the changes take place (prior to 22 July 2025), you *should* have some protection by transitional arrangements. This means if/when you extend your visa in the future the new higher salary thresholds *should not* apply to you.
- If you are working for the University and have **a Graduate visa**, then you *may not be eligible* for sponsorship as a Skilled Worker after the changes take place if your salary is not at least £41,700 or £33,400 a year (depending on your role and circumstances). If you are in this position, the Global Mobility Team should have already contacted you directly, however, if you haven't been contacted please get in touch with the team at people.globalmobility@manchester.ac.uk

Changes to Shortage Occupations:

Currently roles on the immigration salary list (ISL) can be paid at 80% of the usual going rate to qualify for a Skilled Worker visa. The Government is removing the ISL for new Skilled Workers from 22 July 2025 and replacing it with a Temporary Shortage List (TSL).

The new TSL will allow roles that are not at RQF level 6 to be temporarily sponsorable but will not allow a discount on the occupational going rate or general threshold.

What this could mean (as of 22 July 2025):

- *We have used the ISL previously to enable us to sponsor individuals for some of our technician type jobs primarily at Grade 4 or 5. Without the reduction, moving forward they would need to meet the general threshold of £41,700 unless a specific reduction applies e.g. new entrant for £33,400, but this is time limited.*
- *They are reducing the number of jobs where it is possible to sponsor an individual for a Skilled Worker visa on less than the usual minimum salary threshold.*
- *Roles on the TSL will not be there permanently, it will only be for a time limited period.*

Increase Skill Level Requirements

The minimum skill level for sponsorship as a Skilled Worker is being raised to RQF Level 6 (degree level).

This means that 100-180 occupations are being removed from general sponsorship eligibility. We know at this stage that this will definitely affect the roles below:

- **Removed from eligibility for sponsorship:**
 - 3119 Science, engineering and production technicians not elsewhere classified
 - 3543 Project support officers
- **Removed from eligibility, but placed on the TSL:**
 - 3111 Laboratory technicians
 - 3544 Data analysts
 - 3549 Business associate professionals not elsewhere classified

What this could mean (as of 22 July 2025):

- *We will no longer be able to sponsor individuals (from 22.07.2025) in those occupations that have been removed unless they are already in the UK on a Skilled Worker visa and have transitional protection.*
- *It will become more difficult to sponsor individuals in occupations where they are now on the TSL because there are no reductions and these are generally in roles that will not earn enough to meet the thresholds without discount. If an individual qualifies for new entrant, then this is time limited to 4 years and it will be likely that we will not be able to continue sponsoring them.*

What is the Global Mobility Team doing?

We have been identifying colleagues who will be directly affected by the changes and working with them to see how we can support them between now and the rule changes. We are also working in dialogue as a HE sector with the government to give our thoughts and views on the proposed changes.

You can find answers to many of the FAQ's here: [Immigration Updates](#) | [People Directorate](#) | [StaffNet](#) | [The University of Manchester](#)

Please contact the Global Mobility Team: people.globalmobility@manchester.ac.uk directly with specific queries you may have. Due to the volume of individuals who are potentially impacted by these changes please be aware that there may be a delay in our response time. However, please be assured we are working to ensure we are supporting the individuals most effected during the next two weeks before the changes take place.