

Webinar Q&A:

1. **I think I've read that schools were exempt from one of the payments if the applicant was a new entrant i.e. coming directly from their student visa onto the sponsored visa - could you talk more about this?**

Response:

If you're sponsoring someone to switch to a work visa from a visa that allows them to study, you will not have to pay the immigration skills charge if they switch to a Skilled Worker visa and then extend their stay on the new visa.

For more information about the immigration skills charge, please see: [UK visa sponsorship for employers: Immigration skills charge - GOV.UK](#)

2. **If a skilled worker visa is for a member of support staff under 26 who is currently on a graduate visa what is the process?**

Response:

Whilst there can be a reduction to 70% of the skilled worker visa salary requirements based on age or being a recent graduate, this only applies to jobs where the salary requirements are not based on national pay scales.

There are different salary rules if an individual work in some healthcare or education jobs, including teachers. In education, individuals would need to be paid at least £25,000, or in line with the relevant national pay scale, whichever is higher. There is no reduction in these cases.

3. **What role does the appointed person in school have to undertake to manage the skilled worker visa?**

Response:

You need to appoint people (known as 'key personnel') within your business to manage the sponsorship process when you apply for a licence.

The main tool they'll use is the [sponsorship management system \(SMS\)](#).

The roles are:

- authorising officer – a senior and competent person responsible for the actions of staff and representatives who use the SMS
- key contact – your main point of contact with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)
- level 1 user – responsible for all day-to-day management of your licence using the SMS

These roles can be filled by the same person or different people.

You can also appoint an optional level 2 user once you have your licence. This is an SMS user with more restricted access than a level 1 user, for example they cannot withdraw a certificate of sponsorship.

For more information, please see: [UK visa sponsorship for employers: Sponsorship management roles - GOV.UK](#)

4. **Our currently employee who has Graduate Visa states they need a 5 year sponsorship visa. If we were to give a sponsorship visa for a shorter period of time, what happens if we renew say in 2 years time. Would she be covered under existing agreements or agreements at the time ie they would be over 26.**

Response:

If they rely on the reduced salary requirements (see above), these are only available for a maximum of 4 years, including any time spent in the Graduate route. They would not be able to be sponsored for longer than this unless they met the full salary requirements.

If relying on the under 26 provision in an extension application, the person would need to still be under 26 at the time they applied for that extension.

Please see the above answer regarding the occupations this reduction applies to.

5. **Are there any pitfalls or liabilities to be aware of as the employer?**

Response:

For further information about your responsibilities as a worker sponsor, please see this guidance: [UK visa sponsorship for employers: Your responsibilities - GOV.UK](#)

6. **Is there a Home office department / colleague that deals specifically with education?**

Response:

Sponsors can get advice from the sponsorship, employer and education helpline:

Sponsorship, employer and education helpline

Telephone: 0300 123 4699

Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm

UK businesses can also get help from the Business Helpdesk:

Business Helpdesk

businesshelpdesk@homeoffice.gov.uk

7. **Is there a minimum/maximum amount of years needed for the certificate of sponsorship period and if the employee leaves whilst still valid would we get a refund?**

Response:

Certificates of sponsorship can be issued for up to five years. There is no minimum period.

The certificate of sponsorship fee is a one-off payment for each teacher sponsored and is only paid again if the visa needs to be renewed. A certificate of sponsorship should be assigned to each international worker you employ.

You may be entitled to a partial refund of the Immigration Skills Charge if a worker leaves your employment: [UK visa sponsorship for employers: Immigration skills charge - GOV.UK](#)