

Recruiting International graduates – a guide for employers on hiring options under the Graduate and Skilled Worker routes:

How could hiring an international graduates help my business?

- **Employers with a diverse workforce benefit from higher profits, increased innovation, creativity and enhanced brand appeal.**
- **International graduates can help you fill skills gaps in areas such as engineering, IT, and biological science.**
- **Grow your exports by harnessing international graduates' home country knowledge, and languages such as Mandarin and Arabic.**

According to figures in January 2023 by The Confederation of British Industry's annual 'Employment Trends Survey' found that three-quarters of UK companies have been hit by labour shortages in the last 12 months.

Last year the UK hosted around 679,970 international students from all over the world. Many of these were studying higher-level qualifications such as master's and PhDs, predominantly in business and STEM subjects. These students are an **important source of high-skilled workers** and eligible to work full time, when they graduate, in the UK using the following visa routes:

Graduate route visa (introduced 2021) – this visa allows international students to stay and work for up to 2 years after their studies (or 3 years if they have completed a PhD). Employers are not required to sponsor the student under this route and there are no fees you'd need to pay (the graduate would need to pay 2 fees – a visa fee and Health Surcharge). The 2 or 3-year visa gives employers an opportunity to decide if you'd like your employee to work for longer and for this you could apply for sponsorship, such as in the form of a Skilled Worker route visa which can last up to 5 years before needing to extend it. The graduate route visa has no minimum salary requirement. *For further information click here:* <https://www.gov.uk/graduate-visa>

Skilled Worker route visa – this visa (formerly a Tier 2 visa) offers more benefits to employers such as a greater amount of time that the employee can stay and work in the UK. Salary information can be found here: [Skilled Worker visa: When you can be paid less - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa). Employees need to be provided with a Certificate of Sponsorship by their employer, the role must start after the student has completed their university course, and the work they're in would need to be deemed to be 'eligible'. *For further information click here:* <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa>

Please note the above information was accurate and correct as of April 2024.