

UK Home Office Issues Spring ‘Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules’

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The UK Home Office’s Spring 2023 “[Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules.](#)” published on March 9, 2023, includes updates on salary thresholds for several immigration routes and the UK’s new Electronic Travel Authorisation scheme.

Salary Thresholds Increase

The general salary thresholds will increase on a number of routes, as set out in the below table. These thresholds are effective from 12 April 2023. If an application for permission to stay or clearance was made with a Certificate of Sponsorship issued before this date, such application will be decided in accordance with the current rules.

Immigration Route		Existing Threshold	Incoming Threshold
Skilled Worker	Option A	£25,600	£26,200
	Option B (PhD)	£23,040	£23,580
	Option C-F (PhD in STEM, shortage occupation, new entrant to education or health sectors)	£20,480	£20,960
Global Business Mobility	Senior or Specialist Worker	£42,400	£45,800
	Graduate Trainee	£23,100	£24,220
	UK Expansion Worker	£42,400	£45,800
Scale-Up		£33,000 per year / £10.10 per hour	£34,600 per year / £10.75 per hour
Seasonal Worker		£25,600 per year /	£26,200 per year /

	£10.10 per hour	£10.42 per hour
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‘Going Rates’ and Irregular Working Hours

The salary thresholds are not the only changes affecting the Skilled Worker and Global Business Mobility routes, as the Home Office has also updated the “going rates” listed in the “Appendix Skilled Occupations” (APP SO1). Under the new rules, the going rates will be calculated based on a 37.5-hour working week, as opposed to a 39-hour working week. This overall update is in accordance with the most recent salary data in the UK.

There is also a new provision to account for irregular working patterns. Previously, salary calculations for individuals would be capped at 48 hours per week, so any hours worked in excess of this time would not count towards the salary thresholds. This could lead to uneven pay calculations under the Skilled Worker and Senior or Specialist Worker routes. In recognition of the increasing flexibility in the labour market, the changes permit a more representative calculation by allowing working patterns to accumulate.

Phasing in an Electronic Visa Waiver

A new [Electronic Travel Authorisation \(ETA\) scheme](#) will be introduced in October 2023. The ETA scheme is designed to document permitted entrants to the UK who do not require a visa, and it will apply to all non-British and non-Irish nationals who are visiting or transiting through the UK.

Much like the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) in the United States or the New Zealand Electronic Travel Authority (NZeTA), applicants will be required to upload their passport information and answer a set of suitability questions. Unsuccessful applicants will then need to make the appropriate visa application, which could delay the intended travel time.

A three-phase rollout is planned, with the scheme initially applying only to Qatari nationals. It will then extend in February 2024 to those from Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. It is anticipated that the ETA will be fully implemented by the end of 2024.

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