

ILPA information sheet

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Options for Graduates (I)

Introduction and Tier I

Summary

Since the ending of the 'post-study work' category, graduates have asked what options they have if they want to work in the UK after their studies. The Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules HC1039 relaxed requirements in various "points-based" categories and expanded the options for both UK and overseas graduates. In particular, qualifying as a 'graduate entrepreneur' under Tier I was made a little easier by lifting some of the restrictions on working, although the total number of graduate entrepreneurs has been capped. The options are:

- Tier I (Entrepreneur) and Tier I (Graduate Entrepreneur)
- Tier 2 (post-study exemption from the resident labour market test and switching requirements for graduates)
- Work after study under Tier 4
- Tier 5 including professional training

This information sheet focuses on Tier I. For information on the other categories see the information sheet Options for Graduates (II).

TIER I¹

Entry clearance and leave to remain options for Tier I have been (narrowly) expanded. This information sheet focuses on Entrepreneurs and Graduate Entrepreneurs

Tier I (Entrepreneurs)

This route is not limited to graduates. It is for migrants who wish to establish, join or take over one or more businesses in the UK. The Home Office has produced guidance about this route.

In general terms, graduates may switch into this category with:

- Access to at least **£200,000**.
- **Or**, access to at least **£50,000** from:

¹ There are also Tier 1 (general) and Tier 1 (Investor) categories, which are not set out here.

- One or more regulated venture capital firm/s;
- UK entrepreneurial seed funding competitions listed as endorsed on the UK Trade & Investment website; and/or
- One or more UK government departments or devolved government departments in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, which have made the funds available for the specific purpose of establishing or expanding a UK business.

In all cases, the available funds must be held in one or more regulated financial institutions **and** be disposable (available to spend) in the UK.

Tier I (Graduate Entrepreneurs)

This route is for MBA² and other UK graduates identified by Higher Education Institutions as having developed ***genuine and credible business ideas*** and ***entrepreneurial skills***³ to extend their stay in the UK after graduation to establish one or more businesses in the UK.

This category has been extended to include overseas graduates who have been identified by UK Trade and Investment as ***elite global graduate entrepreneurs*** ('egges'). However, the number of Tier I (Graduate Entrepreneur) endorsements is limited to a total of 2000 as follows:

- 1000 MBA graduates,
- 100 Elite global graduate entrepreneurs ('egge')
- 900 places in any category from UK institutions of higher education.

The requirements for entry clearance or leave to remain in this category are set out at paragraph 245FB of the immigration rules. Those previously granted entry clearance, leave to enter or remain who can apply are set out at 245FB(e) and include Students and Tier 2 (General) Migrants including post-doctoral researchers. Those who cannot are set out at paragraph 245FB(g) and include Tier 1 (Post-Study Work) Migrants. The Home Office has produced guidance about the route.

Points are awarded for 'Attributes' (qualifications), English language and 'Maintenance' (having sufficient funds to support yourself). The changes made by Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules HC 1039 include:

- A change to the points awarded for educational institution endorsement or qualifications;
- Graduate entrepreneurs are no longer restricted to how many hours they can work;
- An application can be made within 12 months of graduation (Bachelors, Masters or PhD (or equivalent)); and
- A maintenance requirement: (for now) set at £1800 for applicants for entry clearance in this category and at £900 for those already in the UK and applying for leave to remain in this category.

² 1000 places for UK MBA graduates and 100 places for international MBA graduates sponsored by UKTI

³ An important change in the required standard, from 'world class', 'innovative'.