

STAGE 1: ENDORSEMENT · STAGE 2: VISA

# The UK Global Talent Visa

The UK's route for exceptional technology talent — no job offer, no sponsor, no salary threshold, no English test. Your visa belongs to you, not to an employer.

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**Presented by Skill Bridge Consultants**

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# From “am I eligible?” to visa in hand



## What the visa is

Why it is unlike every other UK work route

01



## Are you eligible?

Exceptional Talent or Exceptional Promise

02



## How you are assessed

One mandatory criterion, two of four optional

03



## Your 15 documents

CV, personal statement, letters and evidence

04



## Timeline and costs

What to budget in months and in pounds

05



## Why applications fail

The seven refusal patterns we design out

06

# A visa awarded for who you are, not for who employs you

The Global Talent visa is the UK's immigration route for proven and emerging leaders in digital technology. Rather than an employer sponsoring you, an approved endorsing body reviews your record and confirms that you are or are on course to become a leader in your field.

That endorsement is what unlocks the visa. And because it is attached to you rather than to a job, you can change employer, work for yourself, or found a company without touching your immigration status.



Two categories, one route: Exceptional Talent for established leaders, Exceptional Promise for those early in a leadership trajectory.

**5 years**

MAXIMUM LENGTH OF A SINGLE GRANT



**Zero**

JOB OFFERS OR SPONSORS REQUIRED



**3 years**

TO SETTLEMENT ON EXCEPTIONAL TALENT



# Six freedoms sponsorship cannot give you

Global Talent is granted on your record, not on an employer's sponsorship and that changes what you are allowed to do once you arrive.



## Work for anyone or yourself

Employment, self-employment, freelancing, consulting and directorships all at the same time, if you want.



## No sponsor, no job offer

You are not tied to one employer. Redundancy or resignation does not put your right to remain at risk.



## Bring your family

Your partner and children under 18 join as dependants with unrestricted rights to work and study.



## A fast path to settlement

Indefinite Leave to Remain after three years on Exceptional Talent, five on Exceptional Promise.



## No English or salary test

The route has no minimum salary and no language requirement at application stage, unlike Skilled Worker.



## Build a UK company

Found a business, hold equity and draw a salary from your own venture from the day you arrive.

# Global Talent vs. Skilled Worker

The same job, in the same company, on two different visas and two very different lives.

|                      | Global Talent                    | Skilled Worker                 |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Employer sponsorship | ✓ Not required                   | ✗ Licensed sponsor required    |
| Job offer to apply   | ✓ No                             | ✗ Yes, before you can apply    |
| Minimum salary       | ✓ None                           | ✗ Yes, threshold applies       |
| Changing employer    | ✓ Freely, any time               | ✗ New sponsor, new application |
| Self-employment      | ✓ Permitted                      | ✗ Not permitted                |
| Route to settlement  | ✓ 3 years (Talent) / 5 (Promise) | ✗ 5 years                      |
| If you lose your job | ✓ Status unaffected              | ✗ 60 days to find a sponsor    |

# Who can actually apply

Two tests, and neither one is about who employs you.



## Your work is in digital technology

A technical or a business role, in or around companies that build digital products. Your own record is what is assessed, not your job title.



## You lead, or you are clearly becoming a leader

Recognition that already exists, or a trajectory steep enough to show where you are heading. That choice is the next slide.

### </> Technical roles

Engineering, architecture, data science, AI and machine learning, cyber security, DevOps, UX and UI.



### Business roles

Founders and C-suite, product management, growth marketing, commercial and business development, tech investment.

### WHAT YOU DON'T NEED

- ✗ A job offer
- ✗ A UK sponsor or licensed employer
- ✗ An English language test
- ✗ Savings or a minimum salary
- ✗ A degree, or any set qualification

18 or over · no upper age limit · apply from any country



Research and academic careers are endorsed by the Royal Society, the British Academy, the Royal Academy of Engineering or UKRI, not by Tech Nation. And if you hold a listed prestigious prize, you skip Stage 1 endorsement altogether.

# What counts as digital technology

Two phrases in the guidance decide whether your application gets read at all.

## Digital technology sector

Companies whose core business is building digital products: software, platforms, apps, and hardware with a digital core. This is the route Tech Nation endorses.

## Product-led

The company makes its money from a digital product it owns and builds, rather than from selling its people's time by the hour or the day.

### THE TEST

Does the company **build** the technology, or does it only **use** it?

#### USUALLY IN SCOPE

- ✓ Fintech, SaaS and marketplace platforms
- ✓ AI, machine learning, data and cyber products
- ✓ Games, health tech, ed tech, prop tech
- ✓ Hardware and IoT with a digital core

#### USUALLY OUT OF SCOPE

- ✗ Consultancies and IT outsourcing firms
- ✗ In-house IT and digital transformation teams
- ✗ Marketing, web and design agencies
- ✗ Online shops selling other people's goods



There is no published list of approved companies. Tech Nation judges each one on what it actually builds, so if your employer sits near the line, how you evidence the company matters as much as the company itself.

# Exceptional Talent or Exceptional Promise?



## Exceptional Talent

FOR ESTABLISHED PRACTITIONERS

- Typically 5+ years of senior experience in digital technology
- Recognition that already exists and can be pointed to
- Evidence of influence others in the sector acknowledge
- Settlement after 3 years of continuous residence



## Exceptional Promise

FOR EMERGING LEADERS

- Early career, often under 5 years in the sector
- A trajectory that is clearly steepening
- Evidence of potential, momentum and early recognition
- Settlement after 5 years of continuous residence



You pick one category, and the assessor reads every document against that choice alone. Applying as Talent on Promise-grade evidence or the reverse is one of the most common and most avoidable reasons for refusal.

# Two stages, and only one of them is hard

01



## Stage 1 — Endorsement

UP TO 8 WEEKS

You submit a CV, a personal statement, three letters of recommendation and ten pieces of evidence. An assessor at the endorsing body decides whether you meet the criteria.



02



## Stage 2 — The visa

3 TO 8 WEEKS

With endorsement in hand you apply to the Home Office: identity and biometrics, TB test where required, health surcharge. Largely administrative.



03



## Arrival and settlement

3 TO 5 YEARS

You choose a visa length of one to five years, extend as often as you like, then apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain and, later, citizenship.



**Endorsement is the bottleneck.** Roughly one in two Stage 1 applications is refused, while almost everyone who clears Stage 1 clears Stage 2. This is why the quality of your evidence not the paperwork decides the outcome.

# One criterion you must meet. Two more you get to choose.



 At least 3 pieces of evidence for the mandatory criterion

 Evidence cannot be counted twice across two criteria

 3 to 4 pieces for each optional criterion you select

 Everything must be dated within the last 5 years

 Verify the current endorsing body on GOV.UK before you apply, responsibility for endorsing the digital technology route has changed hands in recent years.

# Where applications are won and lost

You must show leadership skills and qualities in the digital technology sector within the last five years. Assessors now give detailed feedback on this criterion alone treat it as the spine of your application, not a box to tick.



## Thought leadership

Speaking at conferences, publishing, shaping standards, building communities and judging awards.



## Product leadership

Owning the direction of a product or platform others depend on the decisions you made and the outcomes that followed.



## Organisational leadership

Building and directing teams, functions or whole companies, high salary, hiring, structure, P&L and the careers you have shaped.



**Internal and external leadership both count.** Assessors want to see influence inside your organisation and beyond it. A senior title on its own is not leadership; a documented decision, its outcome, and a credible third party willing to attest to both that is leadership.

# Pick the two you can prove hardest

Not the two that sound most impressive. Assessors award depth of evidence over ambition of claim.



## Innovation

01

A proven track record of innovation in digital technology as founder or senior executive of a product-led company, or as an employee working on a genuinely new product, concept or field.



## Recognition beyond your occupation

02

Proof that work outside your paid role advances the sector: mentoring, open source, speaking, judging, standards bodies, press coverage or community leadership.



## Significant contribution

03

Material technical, commercial or entrepreneurial contribution to a product-led digital technology company with your individual role made unmistakable, not your team's.



## Academic contribution

04

Peer-reviewed research, publications, citations or patents in a field relevant to digital technology, attested to by a recognised expert in that field.



Each criterion needs its own 3 to 4 documents, and a document may only be used once. Choose your two criteria before you start writing the choice determines everything you gather.

# Fifteen documents. Not one of them filler.

1



CV

Maximum 3 pages

1



Personal statement

Maximum 1,000 words

3



Letters of  
recommendation

From recognised experts

10



Evidence documents

Maximum 3 pages each

## How the ten evidence documents split

Label every file so the assessor never has to guess which criterion it serves.

3/4

Mandatory: Leadership

3/4

First optional criterion

3/4

Second optional criterion

# Your CV and your personal statement

One proves the record. The other explains what it means and where it is going.



## The CV

MAXIMUM 3 PAGES

- Must match your LinkedIn; assessors do check
- Name the city and country for every role
- Lead each line with a verb: Developed, Led, Scaled
- Include internal awards, industry awards and speaking
- Add mentoring and volunteering as they count
- Separate what you did from what your team did



## The personal statement

MAXIMUM 1,000 WORDS

- Your professional story, achievements and outcomes
- Be specific on your plans for years 1–3 and 3–5 in the UK
- Cover work inside and outside your paid role
- Name your recognition explicitly, do not imply it
- Cross-reference every claim to a numbered document
- Every sentence must earn its place in the word count



The statement is the only place you speak directly to the assessor. Use it to join your fifteen documents into a single argument rather than restating your CV in prose.

# Three letters. Choose your experts carefully.

A letter is only as strong as the person signing it. Approach your experts early the ones worth having are the ones with no spare time.

## Who your experts can be



Senior managers, current or former



Mentors and co-founders



Community leaders in tech



Professors and researchers



Recognised voices with a public profile

## Test every expert against this

**At least 12 months.** They must have known you and your work that long, and the letter should say so.

- Are they genuinely senior in their organisation?
- Do they have a public-facing profile?
- What comes up when you search their name?
- What have they achieved outside their own job?
- Are they an expert in your specific field?



A UK-based expert helps but is not required. Credentials and relevance matter far more than geography – and a specific, detailed letter from a mid-profile expert beats a generic one from a famous name.

# The ten pieces of evidence

Three pages maximum each. Labelled. Dated. Unmistakably about you.



## What works

- Letters from customers, partners or global executives
- Named press coverage and bylined articles
- Product metrics, revenue and growth data
- Patents, publications and citation records
- Conference programmes listing you as a speaker
- Award notifications and shortlists
- Open-source contribution and maintainer records



## What gets ignored

- Screenshots with no context or date
- Anything that does not name you personally
- Documents describing your team's achievement
- Evidence recycled across two criteria
- Unlabelled files the assessor must decode
- Marketing material about your employer
- Testimonials from peers with no standing



**Sit in the assessor's chair.** They have never met you, they have limited time, and they read your file in the order you present it. Make your own role obvious on every single page.

# From endorsement to settlement



## Apply within 3 months

Your endorsement letter has a shelf life. Submit the visa application before it expires.



## Choose your visa length

One to five years, in whole years. You pay the health surcharge for the length you pick, so choose deliberately.



## Add your dependants

Partner and children under 18 apply alongside you or join later. Each pays their own fee and surcharge.



## Identity and biometrics

Biometric enrolment, plus a TB test if you are applying from a listed country.

### ROUTE TO SETTLEMENT

## 3 years

Indefinite Leave to Remain — Exceptional Talent

## 5 years

Indefinite Leave to Remain — Exceptional Promise

## +12 months

Eligible to apply for British citizenship

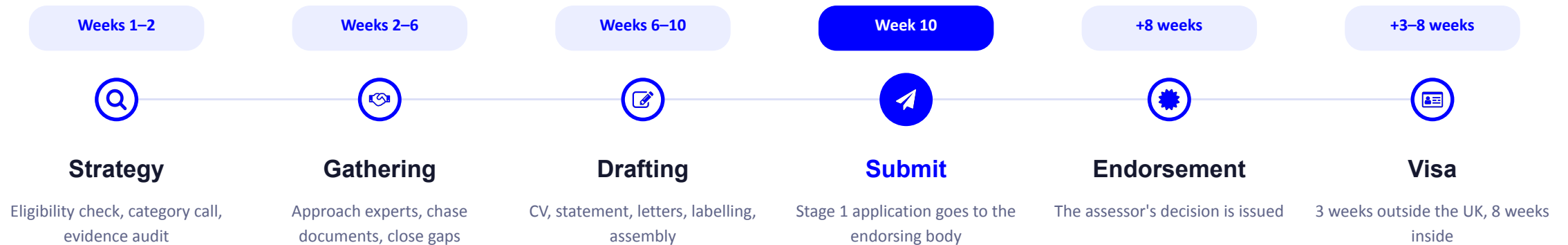
Settlement adds its own tests: English at B1 and Life in the UK.



Plan your time outside the UK from day one. Settlement carries continuous-residence requirements, and absences you did not track are difficult to argue away three years later.

# What the timeline actually looks like

Most people underestimate the evidence-gathering, not the writing. Experts are slow to reply and documents you assumed existed often do not.



## 4–6 months

SERIOUS START TO VISA IN HAND

Add three months if you need to build recognition you do not yet have. A talk to give, an article to publish, an award to enter. Applying early with thin evidence costs more time than waiting.

 If you hold a UK visa that is expiring, calculate backwards from its end date and start today.

# What it costs

Two government fees, plus the health surcharge which is the part that surprises people.

## £561

### Endorsement fee

Stage 1, paid to the endorsing body

## £205

### Visa fee

Stage 2, paid to the Home Office

## £1,035

### Health surcharge

Per adult, per year of visa granted

## £776

### Health surcharge

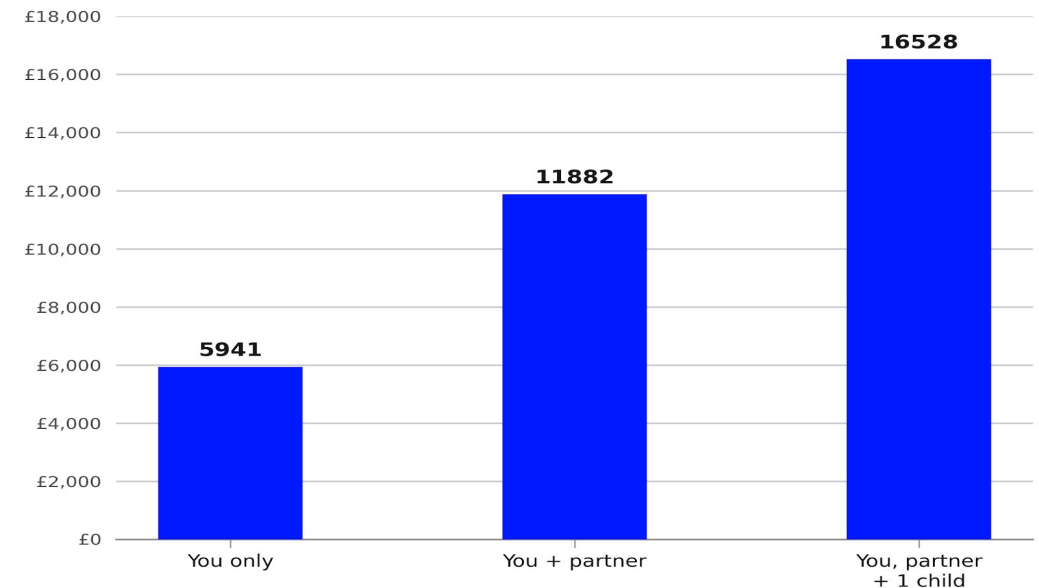
Per child under 18, per year

#### WORKED EXAMPLE

Single applicant, 5-year visa:  $£766 + £5,175 = £5,941$

You can also apply for as little as 1 year and extend the visa later, which cuts the surcharge you pay up front.

Total cost of a 5-year visa



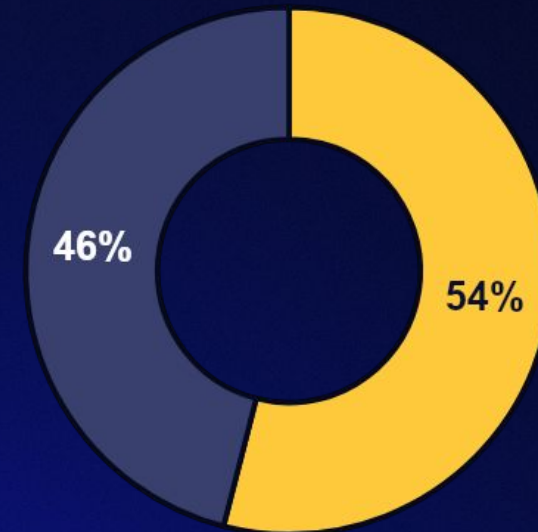
Government fees £766–£2,298 · health surcharge £5,175–£14,230  
Every partner or child included in the application pays the full £766 fee too.

 Verified against GOV.UK. Government fees and the health surcharge are subject to policy updates. Confirm current amounts on GOV.UK before budgeting. Priority processing is available at extra cost.

# Why applications are refused

Roughly one in two Stage 1 applications fails and the reasons repeat with striking consistency.

- Leadership treated as an afterthought rather than the spine
- Team achievements presented where personal ones were needed
- The wrong category is Talent evidence filed under Promise
- Experts with no public standing or no relevance to the field
- The same document counted against two different criteria
- Future plans in the UK left vague, generic or absent
- Unlabelled files that make the assessor hunt for the point



54% endorsed 46% refused

STAGE 1 ENDORSEMENT RATE



**None of these are about merit.** They are about presentation which is precisely the part you can control.

# Refused? You have two routes, and the feedback decides which



## Appeal the decision

ONE REVIEW, BY A NEW ASSESSOR

- A different assessor re-reads your file
- You may only point to evidence already submitted
- No new documents are permitted at this stage
- Best when the assessor misread or overlooked something
- There is a window, check your timing immediately



## Submit a fresh application

A FULL RESET, WITH NEW EVIDENCE

- You may submit entirely new evidence
- Best when the feedback reveals a genuine gap
- Use the feedback as a specification of what was missing
- Take the time to close gaps properly first
- Many successful applicants are second-time applicants



**Read the feedback before you decide anything.** It is the most valuable document you will receive in this whole process, and it is the only thing that tells you which of these two routes is genuinely open to you.

# How Skill Bridge supports your endorsement

A UK Global Talent Visa consultancy specialising in Stage 1 endorsement — evidence architecture, narrative clarity and expert review. Evidence-driven strategy, not volume processing.



## Help to meet the strict criteria

**1**

Choose the right Exceptional Talent or Promise criteria and fulfil them with evidence that stands up to review.



## Help to structure your application

**2**

Evidence architecture and narrative clarity, so your pack reads the way an endorsement panel assesses it.



## Coach and guide you to success

**3**

Criteria mapping, a written pathway plan and a pace that keeps your submission date realistic.



## Review and sense-check

**4**

Expert review of your statement, evidence structure and letters gaps found and fixed before you submit.



## Answer your questions

**5**

Straight answers on pathways, timing and profile strength. Every query replied to within 5 working days.



## Dedicated support calls

**6**

Weekly coaching calls through the endorsement stage, with priority turnaround on bespoke engagements.

**100+**

CLIENTS SUPPORTED

**95%**

GUIDED STAGE 1 SUCCESS RATE

**54%**

INDUSTRY ENDORSEMENT AVERAGE\*

**5 days**

REPLY TO EVERY ENQUIRY

\*Industry-reported endorsement averages vary by year and pathway. The 95% figure reflects Skill Bridge's guided Stage 1 engagements.

## NEXT STEPS

# Let's find out whether you are eligible.

### 01 Complete the free assessment questionnaire

A short questionnaire about your profile, your evidence and your goals. [Click Here](#)

### 02 Take your free 15-minute discovery call

We talk through your assessment and where you stand against the criteria.

### 03 Start with the right package

From a Strategy Session to Full Review or Bespoke 1-to-1 coaching.

## PACKAGES

Leadership Enhancement £500 · DIY Membership £700 · Review Only £1,000 · Strategy Session £1,500 · Full Review £3,500 (most popular) · Bespoke 1-to-1 £5,000 · Installment plans available on every package.

## GET IN TOUCH



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