

# Factsheet - Start-up visa

## Purpose and length of stay

The Start-up route is open to applicants who:

- Are looking to establish a business in the UK for the first time
- Are the founder of their business, relying on their own business plans
- Have an innovative, viable and scalable business idea Are supported by an endorsing body
- Are 18 years old or over
- Will not be employed as a doctor or dentist in training, or a professional sports person

This route offers leave for a maximum of two years and does not lead directly to settlement in the UK, but applicants may progress into the Innovator category. There is no minimum investment funding requirement and the applicant does not need to be the sole founder of the business.

## Endorsing bodies

Applicants must have an appropriately issued endorsement from an endorsing body approved by the Home Office for this category.

The endorsing body must:

- Stay in contact with those they have endorsed at checkpoints 6 and 12 months after the application was granted
- Inform the Home Office if, at these checkpoints, the applicant has not made reasonable progress with their original business venture and is not pursuing a new business venture that also meets the endorsement criteria
- Withdraw its endorsement if checkpoint requirements are not complied with, unless it is aware of exceptional and compelling reasons not to do so. The Home Office must be made aware of these reasons.
- Inform the Home Office if it has any reason to believe that the endorsed individual breaches any of their conditions of stay

Applicants should be aware that immigration permission under the Start-up visa category will be cut short (curtailed) if an endorsing body withdraws its endorsement of an individual migrant or if it loses its status as an endorsing body for this category.

## Endorsement criteria

Applicants must demonstrate support from an endorsing body listed on the government website through a letter containing:

- The name of the endorsing body
- The endorsement reference number
- The date of issue (no earlier than three months before the application date)

- The applicant's name, date of birth, nationality and passport number
- Confirmation that they have not previously established a business in the UK, unless they were previously in the UK under the Start-up, Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) or Tier 4 (General) (doctorate extension scheme) categories
- A short description of the applicant's business and the main products or services it will provide to customers
- Confirmation that they meet the 'innovation, viability and scalability' requirements

**Innovation:** A genuine, original business plan that meets new or existing market needs and/or creates a competitive advantage.

**Viability:** The applicant has, or is actively developing, the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and market awareness to successfully run the business. This criterion will only be met if the business is realistic and achievable based on the applicant's available resources.

**Scalability:** There is evidence of structured planning and potential for job creation and growth into national markets.

NB applicants whose previous grant of leave was under the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa, and whose endorsement is from the same endorsing body as that which led to the grant of that leave, must instead confirm that their venture is genuine and credible.

- The name and contact details (telephone number, email and workplace address) of an individual at the endorsing body who will verify the contents of the letter to the Home Office if requested
- The endorsing body must also be reasonably satisfied that the applicant will spend the majority of their working time in the UK on developing business ventures

The endorsing body must not have withdrawn support by the time the application is considered by the Home Office. Successful applicants can change their business venture during their leave with approval from the endorsing body. This will not require a fresh endorsement or a new visa application. In a future immigration application to the Innovator category, those who change businesses will only need to meet the 'same business' criteria for extension and will not need to show the £50,000 in funding that is required for 'new business' applications. Please refer to our Innovator factsheet for more information on this visa category.

## Genuineness and other considerations

In addition to the requirement for endorsement, the Home Office will make its own assessments in relation to an applicant's:

- Ability and intention to establish a business in the UK
- Intention to comply with their immigration conditions
- Intention to use any relevant investment funds for the purposes set out in their application, and to those funds being available as claimed

The Home Office can ask for further information or evidence from the applicant or the endorsing body, and may refuse the application if it is not satisfied that the endorsement was issued appropriately.

Applicants in the Start-up category must also meet an English language requirement, which is set at level B2 of the Council of Europe's common European framework for language and learning, as well as a cash funds maintenance requirement of £945 and £630 for any dependants.

## For more information



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