

Step by Step guide for health professionals applying to U.K

1) To be aware before starting:

- a. Bank statements: for your visa application you need to ensure you have enough funds in your bank (\$10,000) for at least 6 months prior to your Visa registration date with VFS. (See step 3.b.)

2) General Medical Council (GMC) registration

- a. Set up a GMC online account and get a reference number
 - Type of registration: full registration with a license to practice
 - Application form: if qualifications are
 - < 3 years old: can submit online form
 - > 3 years old: you may not be eligible to submit the online form and will probably need to make an email/phone query and answer some questions before getting a paper form which needs to be physically mailed to UK when completed with the supporting documentation
 - Requirements for GMC online registration: requirements vary between countries
 - Primary medical qualification - international qualifications will need to be independently verified by US site called ECFMG (Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates).
 - Create an account and provide a photo, a copy of your passport, your medical qualification, and medical license.
 - Download and fill up the form, and you have to get it certified online by a notary through a webcam (while showing your original passport)
 - Then you can upload your qualifications for verification
 - English ability - IELTS, OET, primary medical qualification, references from employer, letters from universities and royal college stating all exams conducted are in English (check what you need to provide)
 - Knowledge and skills - postgraduate qualifications etc.
 - Fitness to practice - work history for at least 5 years
 - Certificate of good standing from every medical regulatory body/hospital you have worked with
- b. GMC meeting in UK
 - After the application is processed you are required to present yourself with the original documents (including university degrees) to GMC in person
 - You have 3 months to physically present yourself to the office from the time the application is processed
 - GMC have limited appointments and get booked out fast. Suggest book early
 - Make sure you have a consistent signature! Administrators will make you practice your signature to ensure they look identical on ID & GMC application

3) VISA

- a. Choose visa that best suits you. Commonly used: Tier 2 Visa or Youth Mobility visa
Tier 2 Visa is (most commonly used) by Australia doctors entering U.K.
 - POPS is aware of the process and complies with the requirements

- POPS advertises online in at least 2 places for a minimum of 28 days (meets the 'Resident Labour Market Test' requirements)
- If no suitable 'settled person', the position can then be awarded to a non UK/EU person
- Employer (GSTT) must then apply to the UK Visa Immigration (UKVI) for a certificate of sponsorship
- The certificate of sponsorship must be issued within 6 months of the first day of advertising
- To get the certificate of sponsorship the Trust must make the application and include proposed start date and salary
- The UKVI committee meet monthly (approx. the 10th/11th of each month); they only allocate a certain number of visas per month
- If the Trust is successful in obtaining the certificate of sponsorship they can then provide the sponsorship number to the candidate who can use it to apply for a Tier 2 visa through UKVI
- The candidate then has 3 months to apply for the Visa, and the visa application can't be made more than 3 months from the start date of the job

Spousal Tier 2 Visa

- Previous POPS fellows have also successfully worked in this role on a Spousal Tier 2 Visa
- In general this process is less arduous for the spousal visa applicant (certificate of sponsorship etc. is specific to the Tier 2 visa applicant)
- Be aware of clause which states Spousal Tier 2 visa holders must not work in 'doctors in training' positions; GSTT HR have previously confirmed that the POPS senior clinical fellow role is not considered a 'doctor in training' position (please note this is not the case for fellow roles at other Trusts)

Youth mobility Visa

- For people aged 18-30 and from certain countries only, including Australia

b. Visa documents:

- Register with VFS (private company used for processing visas in Australia) online and commence your online visa application process
- Start preparing your visa documents before receiving the certificate of sponsorship
- Suggest to take all original documents to appointment – letter of employment, certificate of sponsorship, GMC letter, passport, bank statements, licence etc.
- You will pay fees to VFS for processing the visa + UKVI for the visa and national insurance (gives you access to NHS)
 - a. In 2018 fees were AUD \$350 for VFS, £1000 for visa and £1000 for national insurance
- VFS have limited appointments, so suggest to book early (and be prepared for security, metal detectors and fingerprint copies)

- c. If visa application is successful you can only arrive 14 days prior to the commencement of your work. Those two weeks are crucial, especially if limited family or friends in London.
- d. FYI to contact the UKVI with questions is tricky, suggest avoid trying if possible – from experience they charged £5 to send them a question via email (reply unhelpful) and helpline was £1.50 per minute (also unhelpful with long on hold times)

4) Prior to Leaving home country:

- a. Letter from employer: Request medical recruitment to have letter for bank, detailing: starting date, salary and address (can use any address – friends or family). The address can be changed once you have your rental property organised.

5) Arrival to U.K.

- a. Visa:
 - collect your biometric resident permit from your nominated post office
 - suggest London Bridge if you plan to visit Guy's Hospital
- b. U.K. Bank account: Documents required
 - Letter from employer stating start date, your salary and address (step 4a)
 - Proof of address is essential
- c. Accommodation:
 - Online apps for shared accommodation: SpareRoom
 - Real estate agents: rightmove is the easiest way. It combines all rental properties from various real estate agencies within London in one app. Can start this process before arriving.
 - Documents required from own country to hasten the process:
 - evidence of home address with name (utility letters)
 - if renting: bring good references (landlord or real estate agent)
 - bank statements indicating your savings
- d. Utilities/Services:
 - Council tax
 - Water
 - Electricity/heating
 - Phone – you can purchase a Vodafone sim card cheaply (£1 at Sainsbury's) and top up monthly for a reasonable price
 - +/- TV license if applicable (costs £150 per year if you watch free to air TV on a TV or stream BBC etc.)
- e. NHS/GP access:
 - Go to your local GP and register. You will be sent a NHS number
- f. National Insurance Number (NIN):
 - Required for UK tax system
 - Will be sent to your nominated address
- g. Medical indemnity (MI):
 - Check with your current MI before leaving.
 - Avant: covers overseas for up to 12 months
 - MDU: Medical Defence Union, UK. Cost £700/12months

h. Childcare:

- St Thomas' Nursery offers a wonderful service for babies – pre-schoolers
- You can salary sacrifice nursery fees
- Opening hours 7am – 7pm
- Note approx. monthly early closing hours 4.45pm and 3 monthly closure days for meetings
- Enquire online – availability is generally reasonable

6) Leaving the U.K.

- To leave the GMC in good standing:
 - Apply within your GMC online account
 - Have your supervisor complete a 'medical services statement' (UD8 form) and submit to GMC
 - Apply for repeat 'certificate of good standing' from your home country medical board (APHRA in Australia) and submit to GMC