

Recruiting qualified GPs from outside the UK to work in Scotland



GPs originating from outside the UK or Republic of Ireland		
<p>For further information please contact NHS Scotland International Recruitment 0141 278 2713 www.careers.nhs.scot/careers/find-your-career/international-recruitment/</p>		
What is required?		
	Relevant Authority	Useful Links
Right to work in the UK established	UK Home Office	Applying for a visa to come to the UK - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Full registration with the UK GMC	GMC (General Medical Council)	GP Jobs - Non UK Nationals
License to Practice as a GP – License held and renewed through revalidation with the GMC.	Listing on the GMC GP Speciality List	https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/join-the-register https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/information-overseas-doctors
Successful application to join the Scottish GP Performers list	Application through the relevant local Scottish Health Board with support from NHS Education Scotland (NES)	https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/your-development/gp-induction-and-returner-programmes/scotland-enhanced-induction-programme/
Recruitment Policy for countries outside the UK and Republic of Ireland		
<p>Scottish Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Health and Social Care Personnel (Feb 2021) https://www.gov.scot/publications/code-practice-international-recruitment-health-social-care-personnel/</p> <p>NHS Scotland follows the WHO Global code of practice for the international recruitment of healthcare professionals https://www.who.int/hrh/resources/guide/en/ This promotes the best possible standards in international recruitment, and discourages any inappropriate practices that could harm other countries' healthcare systems or the interests of those who apply for posts.</p> <p>Guiding Principles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. International migration of health and social care personnel can make a contribution to the development and strengthening of health and social care systems, if recruitment is managed properly. 2. Opportunities exist for individuals, organisations and health and care systems in relation to 		

training and education and the enhancement of clinical practice.

3. There must be no active international recruitment from Countries on the List, unless there is an explicit government-to-government agreement with the UK to support managed recruitment activities that are undertaken strictly in compliance with the terms of that agreement.
4. Recruitment of international health and social care personnel is closely monitored and reported on to the Cross Whitehall International Recruitment Steering Group.
5. International health and social care personnel will have the same legal rights and responsibilities as domestically trained staff in all terms of employment and conditions of work. They will also have the same access to further education and training and continuing professional development.

There are also best practice benchmarks for recruiters.

The Scottish code of practice follows the WHO Health Workforce Support and Safeguard List (2020) and (at Appendix A) which sets out a list of 46 developing countries that should not actively be recruited from, known as 'Red' status. Most other countries can be recruited from but please check the list.

**Guidance updated by the Scottish Government 25/02/2021*

Please check latest UK and Scottish Government advice it may be updated frequently.

[Sponsorship: guidance for employers and educators - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sponsorship-guidance-for-employers-and-educators)

Please also bear in mind that many websites, from different organisations, may not yet have caught up with the latest information.

Recruitment of GPs

Establishing the right for individuals to work in the UK

From 1 December 2020, a new, points-based immigration system operates as the legal framework for how EU and other overseas nationals may come to live and work in the UK, other than for Irish nationals - who do not require immigration permission to work in the UK.

The points-based system is calibrated to facilitate the entry of skilled workers while making it harder – often impossible – for employers to recruit from abroad for low-skilled or low paid vacancies.

The Brexit Withdrawal Agreement contains provisions to protect the residence and work rights of Europeans residing in the UK before the end of the Brexit transition period at 11pm on 31 December 2021. The UK implemented those commitments through the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), whereby Europeans who are in the UK before the end of transition can apply for settlement status under the scheme [Apply to the EU Settlement Scheme \(settled and pre-settled status\): Apply to the EU Settlement Scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-to-the-eu-settlement-scheme-settled-and-pre-settled-status)

To employ non UK citizen workers from December 2020 (who are neither Irish nationals or covered by EUSS), the right to work in the UK needs to be established and in particular, does the candidate meet the requirements for a Skilled Worker visa?

The Skilled worker category visa is modelled on the previous immigration system Tier 2 skilled worker visa. This category enables NHS organisations to recruit individuals from outside the UK to fill vacancies that cannot be filled by a British worker. The route includes the health and care visa which applies to

qualified doctors, nurses and allied professionals working in either health or social care. The minimum skill level is [RQF level 3](#) (A-level/Scottish Highers equivalent). See NHS Employers support website : [Skilled worker route - NHS Employers](#)

Applications are fast-tracked by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and the aim is to process them within three weeks, providing candidate biometric information has been made available.

Eligibility

There is strict set of eligibility criteria that must be met by candidates in order to apply for a Skilled Worker visa;

1. They must have a job offer from a [sponsoring organisation](#).
2. Their job must be listed on the list of [eligible occupations](#).
3. Their English language skills must be at least [Level B1](#) (intermediate).
4. They must meet at least one of the following attributes:
 - Gross annual salary of at least £25,600.
 - Your job is listed as a [Shortage Occupation](#).
 - Listed as an eligible [healthcare and education job](#), and attracts a salary of at least £20,480
 - You hold a PhD in a STEM subject relevant to the job.

Qualified doctors, nurses, health professionals and adult social care professionals can also follow an expedited application route when obtaining their Skilled Worker visa, known as the Health and Care Worker Visa. They will still need to meet the above Skilled Worker visa eligibility criteria however; applicants will receive a quicker response time and reduced application fees.

NHS organisations may also be able to recruit workers on a Tier 5: temporary workers visa. The temporary worker category of tier 5 allows NHS organisations to employ if the applicant is from outside the UK for up to 24 months as part of a government-authorised exchange programme.

Proven Knowledge of English

The GP candidate needs to prove knowledge of the English language on application however, there are exemptions for Australia, Canada, New Zealand and USA applicants and those from other (mostly UK commonwealth) countries.

The applicant can prove knowledge of English by either:

- passing an approved English language test with at least CEFR level B1 in reading, writing, speaking and listening
- having an academic qualification that was taught in English and is recognised by UK NARIC as being equivalent to a UK bachelor's degree, master's degree or PhD
- The applicant may be able to meet the English language requirement in other ways or need a higher level of English in some circumstances. Check the full visa guidance for detailed information.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

CEFR is an international standard for describing language ability. It describes language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. It also means that employers and educational institutions can easily compare our qualifications to other exams in their country. Although level B1 is adequate for immigration admission to the UK it is not necessarily

adequate for GMC registration criteria where the applicant would need to undertake the IELTS, OET or PLAB qualification (see GMC registration section).

NHS Employers Sponsorship License

All workers coming to the UK under the Skilled worker visa category must be sponsored by their employer. A sponsorship licence runs for a period of four years, during this time the employing NHS organisation must meet certain duties around record keeping, reporting, compliance and cooperating with UKVI in order to retain your licence. It is essential that these duties are not overlooked as failure to comply, could lead to the licence being downgraded or withdrawn. Sponsoring status in the NHS is apparently straightforward to achieve but possibly burdensome for small practices. More information about sponsorship responsibilities can be found on the [UKVI website](#).

NHS Education Scotland (NES) <https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/trainee-information/gp-specialty-training/gp-trainees-as-nes-employees/>) have a dispensation enabling them to sponsor international medical professionals and this will generally cover, for example, a GP who is working through the Scottish GP Enhanced Induction Programme – the stage to get them up to speed with Scottish General practice and enable them to be able to register on the Scottish GP Performers list. However, if the GP is successful and wishes to become employed by a Scottish health board or general practice, that organisation will need to be an acknowledged sponsoring organisation and will need to apply for a sponsors licence from the UK Government, see guidance from the NHS Employers website [Sponsorship licence system - NHS Employers](#)

Securing full GMC (UK General Medical Council) registration as a GP (from GMC guidance March 2021) [join the register - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](#)

<p>To practice as a GP in Scotland requires full registration for the GP Speciality register.</p> <p><u>GMC Register</u> The medical register is an online list of doctors in the UK. It shows the type of registration a doctor holds their training and other useful information.</p> <p>The register is there to give confidence that doctors practising medicine in the UK have the training, skills and experience needed to meet the standards that patients expect.</p> <p>To practice in the UK the</p>	<p>Doctors are eligible to apply if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are a national from outside the UK or Switzerland - graduated from a medical school outside the UK - hold an acceptable primary UK or EU medical qualification - hold an acceptable UK or international postgraduate qualification - completed an acceptable internship of at least 12 months' continuous medical practice in an approved training post in a public hospital. 	<p><u>Checklist of GMC Requirements</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence of Qualifications 2. Demonstration of knowledge of English language. 3. Passport and Identification Documentation 4. Certificate of Good Standing from home regulatory authority 5. Five Years of Experience both medical and non-medical. Any non-medical experience will require employee references for evidence 6. Fitness to Practice declaration
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applicant also needs to secure a license to practice as a GP which is also secured through the GMC application process.		
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Examples of checks and verification required		
Nature of the check or verification	GMC Requirements	Notes
<p><u>Qualification Check</u> As part of the application GMC need to check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That GMC will accept the primary medical qualification (Per GMC EEA qualification evidence guide). - Will require a copy of applicant's primary medical qualification certificate. - Undertake an identity check at GMC premises in the UK. 	<p>Evidence of Primary Medical Qualification needs to be verified with the GMC.</p>	<p>The original certificates must be brought to the identity check and must show the exact date the applicant passed their final exam or assessment. The documents will also need to be translated to English if necessary and by an accredited translation organisation.</p>
<p><u>Competency in English</u> For patient safety, the GMC need to be confident that the applicant can communicate effectively in English. This includes speaking, reading, writing and listening.</p> <p>Evidence of English Language Skills is required to secure a license to practice.</p> <p>Doctors may pass the IELTS or OETS tests; they can also meet standards by passing the PLAB (Professional and Linguistics Board) test which is relevant for health professionals and foundation level doctors. It is necessary to pass the IELTS or OETS tests to sit the PLAB tests.</p>	<p>Evidence of knowledge of English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check that knowledge of English meets GMC requirements this may be different for UK work visa requirements. 	<p><u>Standards</u> International English Language Test System (IELTS) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - took the academic version of the test - score of at least 7.0 in each testing area and an overall score of 7.5 - scores in the same test <p>or ; Occupational English Test (OET)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - medicine version of the test - at least a grade 'B' in each testing area (speaking, listening, reading and writing) - same test

<p>However this does not apply if the applicant is a national of a country where English is the first and native language and they were awarded their primary medical degree from a country where English is the first and native language.</p>		
<p>Verification of Identity</p>	<p>Evidence of Nationality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passport or national identity card 	<p><u>GMC Identity Check</u> Identity check has to take place at GMC offices in London or Manchester (currently trialling in Edinburgh for roll out in 2020)</p> <p>During the identity check, GMC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - take photograph and keep it on account - take signature and keep it on your account - take details from passport or national identity card - take copies of any original documents
<p>Verification of good standing within previous regulatory areas</p>	<p>Certificate of Good Standing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From each medical regulatory authority where the applicant has been registered or licensed with in the last five years (even if not worked under that authority). 	<p>GMC hold links to a database of authorities who can provide a CGS in most countries.</p>
<p>Verification of medical, employment and other experience over the last 5 years.</p>	<p>Details of all medical and non-medical experience across the last five years.</p>	<p>Examples of other activities are:</p> <p>clinical attachments unemployment maternity leave study leave vacation career breaks.</p> <p>If there have been non-medical appointments, employers references should be provided.</p>
<p>Satisfying the GMC of Fitness to practice as a doctor in the UK.</p>	<p>Declaration of Fit to Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is GMC guidance on the definitions of Fit to Practice, it also involves a health 	<p>Detailed guidance is provided by the GMC as part of the application process.</p>

<p>Declaration of any aspect of the applicants conduct and/or capability that might raise a question about fitness to practise as a doctor in the UK.</p> <p>These include areas such as criminal convictions, reprimand by medical authorities, disciplinary action, ongoing actions, own health.</p>	<p>declaration and may require more evidence to be provided.</p>	
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License to practice as a Doctor - professional tests for the UK

The Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) Test
 The tests helps the GMC to make sure doctors who qualified abroad, have the right knowledge and skills to practise medicine in the UK. If the candidate graduated from a medical school outside of the UK, European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, they will probably need to take the PLAB test. The test will check that they know and can do the same as a doctor starting the second year of their Foundation Programme training in the UK. There are two parts to the PLAB test (1) An Online Paper and (2) Objective structured clinical exam at a clinical assessment centre.

Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA) (from 2023)
[Medical Licensing Assessment - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](https://www.gmc-uk.org/medical-licensing-assessment)

UK students will take the MLA as part of their medical degree from 2023 onwards. From 2024, international medical graduates who would have sat the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) test will start to take the MLA, if they're applying for registration with a licence to practise in the UK. The MLA will replace the [PLAB test](#). At the moment, EU law doesn't allow the GMC to assess doctors from the European Economic Area and Switzerland. The MLA is a two-part assessment made up of an applied knowledge test (AKT) and a clinical and professional skills assessment (CPSA).The MLA won't change the English language requirements for registration.

Scottish GP Performers List - Scottish GP Enhanced Induction Programme

[GP Induction and Returner Programmes | Scotland Deanery \(nhs.scot\)](https://www.nhs.uk/scotland/induction-programmes)

Once a GP has secured entry to the GMC GP speciality register, they will need to gain entry to the performers list for the relevant part of the UK in which they choose to work. The Scotland GP Enhanced Induction Programme supports the safe introduction of GPs who have qualified outside the UK and have no previous NHS GP experience. These doctors require a Certificate of Eligibility for GP Registration (CEGPR) as well as a licence to practise from the GMC (see above) before they can legally enter UK general practice. Entry to the programme requires passing the UK MCQ and Simulated Surgery Assessments.

For the Scottish performers list, the application needs to be considered by the relevant director for the chosen health board. The health board can consider putting the GP directly onto the performers

register or, with the support of NHS Education Scotland (NES), can refer the GP for the NES Enhanced Induction scheme (EI). This would be quite usual for GPs who have not worked in the NHS before.

This programme is funded by Scottish Government and operated by NES, providing applicants with a salary to support them whilst on the programme.

Eligibility:

To be eligible for the programme applicants must:

- Hold a Certificate Confirming Eligibility for GP Registration (CEGPR) to UK General Practice
- Be on the GMC register (without [conditions or undertakings](#) except those relating solely to health matters) and on the [GMC GP Specialty Register](#) with a licence to practise.
- Be committed to working in Scottish NHS General Practice
- Have the right to work in the UK
- If they are a member of an EEA state, evidence that they have knowledge of English which, in the interests of the doctor and patients who they may provide medical services to, is necessary for performing primary medical services
- If they come from out with the EEA, evidence of proficiency in English to the level of IELTS 7.5
- Not have been previously unsuccessful or failed to complete an equivalent programme elsewhere in the UK.

CEGPR

The Certificate of Eligibility for GP Registration (CEGPR) is an alternative route to the GP Register if the applicant is not eligible for a CCT (Certificate of Completion of UK GP Training) but believes their training, qualifications and experience are equivalent. This may be relevant if the applicant has trained and worked as a general practitioner outside the UK.

CEGPR is obtained through application to the GMC who require detailed evidence of the candidate's education and GP work experience; they will refer for an evaluation to the RCGP (Royal College of General Practitioners) who make a recommendation report back to the GMC. The GMC considers the College report, makes a final decision and writes to the applicant with details of the outcome. Applicants who are not successful are either;

Recommended to undertake a period of 'top up' training in general practice which should ideally be completed in the UK (eg NES Enhanced GP Induction) or advised to submit more evidence in specific areas.

NES National MCQ (Multiple Choice Question) / (SJT) Situational Judgement Test

Doctors must successfully sit the national MCQ/SJT and Simulated Surgery. Anyone who scores band 4 or 5 of the MCQ with a pass in professional dilemmas will be exempted from the Simulated Surgery but will be expected to submit a video of their consultations during their time on the programme and will not be signed off until that meets a satisfactory standard. Those scoring a band 3 MCQ with a pass in professional dilemmas will require to sit the Simulated surgery. Those with a band 1 or 2 in the MCQ or a fail in professional dilemmas will require to re-sit the MCQ.

The NES Enhanced Induction Programme

This programme provides an induction to working in NHS General Practice in a supported way. The programme will be tailored around the doctor following an individual learning needs assessment. They will be allocated a practice-based supervisor who will provide feedback to support integration as an independent general medical practitioner in the NHS in Scotland.

An interview with a GP Advisor from NHS Education Scotland (NES) will establish eligibility and

suitability for the programme. A suitable placement in an approved GP practice for an attachment of up to six months will be identified.

At the end of the programme, the supervisor will make a summative recommendation to the Medical Director of the Health Board in relation to suitability for independent practice and inclusion on the Health Board's Performers' List.

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Disclaimer – The above guide has been prepared from available published NHS, Scottish Government and UK Government Sources and is meant as a guide however, the situation is currently very fluid, complex and SRMC/ NHS Highland / NHS Scotland shall have no liability for the accuracy of the information and cannot be held liable for any third party claims or losses of any damages. Version: 25/03/2021