



Home Office

**UK Border
Agency**

BUSINESS, SPORTS, ENTERTAINER AND SPECIAL VISITORS

STATEMENT OF INTENT

CONTENTS

Foreword by Phil Woolas MP	4
Introduction	5
Business Visitors	6
Sports Visitors	7
Entertainer Visitors	8
Special Visitors	9
Annex A	10
Annex B	11
Annex C	12

FOREWORD BY PHIL WOOLAS MP

Minister of State for Borders and Immigration (Home Office) and Minister of State with Responsibility for Revenue Protection at the Border (HM Treasury)



Over the course of 2008 we have pressed ahead with making the biggest changes to our immigration and border security system for forty five years. We will deliver a strong border that maximises the use of new technology, a selective Australian-style points system to control migration and a clear expectation that newcomers earn the right to stay.

It is right that as part of this we take the opportunity to review our short-term migration system with a view to modernising it. That is why I am today publishing further details on the first part of our reforms in this area, building further on the work started by my predecessor, the Right Honourable Liam Byrne MP.

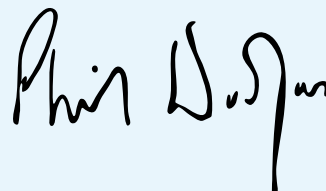
Our visitor consultation, published in December 2007, proposed three principal categories of visitor - tourist, business and sponsored family. The Government set out the results of the consultation and its proposals for reform of the visitor routes in June 2008 - see link below¹.

We will create a specific visa for business and special visitors to make clear the activities that are permitted while in the UK. This Statement of Intent provides further details in advance of the changes. An impact assessment is also provided.

We will:

- Introduce new routes for visiting sportspeople and entertainers, based on current concessions;
- Introduce new routes for academic visitors and visiting professors accompanying students on Study Abroad programmes;
- Make clear that advisers, consultants, trainers and trouble shooters must not actually be conducting work for the UK branch;
- Make clear that entry for training in techniques and work practices used in the UK will only be permitted for a specific one-off purpose;
- Make new provision for religious workers attending a conference as a visitor to undertake some preaching or pastoral activity as long as this does not amount to taking up an office, post or appointment;
- Bring together in a new special visitor category a number of visitor categories that have been introduced into the Immigration Rules for specific groups of visitor, where a need was identified.

We will introduce changes to the Immigration Rules to give effect to this Statement in November 2008.



¹ www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/consultations/closedconsultations/visitorsconsultationpaper/visitorsconsultationrespon.PDF?view=Binary

INTRODUCTION

1. In June 2008 we published our response to the public consultation on visitors setting out our proposals for making changes to our policy for providing for - and policing - short term visits to the United Kingdom, alongside the points system.
2. We are meeting the commitment we made then by publishing in this Statement of Intent today our plans for creating a distinct, clear, category for business and special visitors to make sure we have the details right.
3. It is the basis for new Immigration Rules and supporting guidance for users which will be prepared and brought into effect later this year.

BUSINESS VISITORS

4. We want the UK to continue to be a global business hub. To facilitate this it needs to be clear to the business community what activities business visitors are permitted to do here. We are therefore introducing a new business visitor visa to clarify current Rules and concessions that are unclear.
5. There will be 7 key features in the business visitor visa:
 - Six month maximum period of stay (except for academic visitors who can stay for a maximum of twelve months);
 - Entry clearance requirement for visa nationals only (except for academic visitors who are non-visa nationals and are visiting for more than six months);
 - Availability of multiple entry visas for between 6 months and 10 years;
 - Clarity on the activities that are permissible during a short-term business visit (see Annex A, page 10);
 - Provision for groups of people who are engaging in business visitor-like activities but who are technically providing a service - for example couriers of overseas tour companies coming with tour groups (see Annex B page 11);
 - Provision for people who are carrying out activities other than those that are strictly permissible, but who are treated as business visitors now - for example film crews on location shoots only (see Annex C, page 12);
 - A need to satisfy standard requirements including supporting themselves without recourse to public funds, intention to leave at the end of the visit and ability to meet costs of return/onward journey.
6. This alters the current arrangements in 3 key ways:
 - Brings the currently separate Immigration Rules and concessions together in one coherent visa;
 - Makes the distinction between business visitors and those engaging in longer-term business activities clear;
 - Makes new provision for visiting professors accompanying students on study abroad programmes and visiting religious workers undertaking some preaching or pastoral work in the course of a business visit (for instance while attending a conference).
7. The rationale for these changes is simple:
 - We want to continue to facilitate business activity in the UK;
 - We need to make it clear what business visitors can do here and what they cannot - e.g. those coming for training in techniques can only do so for a specific one-off purpose. On the job training/work experience is provided for in the Points Based System;
 - Stakeholders believe that having a list of permissible activities is a good way of defining this.

SPORTS VISITORS

8. Sportspeople can currently enter the UK in a variety of ways, including under a permit-free concession outside the Immigration Rules. The concession allows them to come here for a short time without a work permit to take part in certain events. We are introducing a new visa to provide for visiting sportspeople to enter.
9. There will be 7 key features of the sportspeople's visitor visa:
 - Six month maximum period of stay;
 - Entry clearance requirement for visa nationals only;
 - Availability of multiple entry visas for between 6 months and 10 years;
 - Permission to take part in events (including charity events), tournaments (e.g. British Open Golf or Wimbledon) or series of events²;
 - Provision for amateur³ and professional sportspeople - individuals and teams - and their support staff (e.g. psychologists, press officers) to enter via this route;
 - Provision for officials (e.g. linespersons and umpires) attending the same event as sportspeople to enter via this route;
 - A need to satisfy standard requirements including supporting themselves without recourse to public funds, intention to leave at the end of the visit and ability to meet costs of return/onward journey.
10. This alters the current arrangements in 4 key ways:
 - Brings the current concession for visiting sportspeople into the Immigration Rules;
 - Provides a separate visa for visiting sportspeople;
 - Makes clear who support staff comprise;
 - Makes clear how a 'series of events' differs from a league season or similar for which entry under the Points Based System would be needed.
11. The rationale for these changes is simple:
 - We want to ensure that the contribution of overseas visiting sportspeople to the UK's sporting traditions continues as now;
 - We need to make clear the circumstances in which sportspeople can come here outside the Points Based System for participation in sport;
 - Stakeholders support the introduction of a separate visa for visiting sportspeople.

² A series of events is two or more linked events, such as a tour, or rounds of a competition, which do not add up to a league or a season. Sportspeople coming to play for a whole season or in matches or games which are part of the UK domestic season would enter under Tier 2 or Tier 5.

³ An amateur is someone who engages in the sport solely for personal enjoyment and who is not seeking to derive a living from the activity. No financial reward (including cash prizes, appearance money, fees and sponsorship) can be received.

ENTERTAINER VISITORS

12. Entertainers can currently enter the UK in a variety of ways, including under a permit-free concession outside the Immigration Rules. The concession allows them to come here for a short time without a work permit to take part in certain major arts festivals, music competitions and charity events. We are introducing a new visa to provide for visiting entertainers to enter.
13. There will be 7 key features in the entertainer visitor visa:
- Six month maximum period of stay;
 - Entry clearance requirement for visa nationals only;
 - Availability of multiple entry visas for between 6 months and 10 years;
 - Provision for amateur and professional entertainers and their entourages (e.g. press officers, dieticians) to take part in certain events;
 - Retention for the present of the permit-free festivals approach, with removal of two criteria;
 - Provision for officials (e.g. producers, stage assistants) attending the same event as the entertainers to enter via this route;
 - A need to satisfy standard requirements including supporting themselves without recourse to public funds, intention to leave at the end of the visit and ability to meet costs of return/onward journey.
14. This alters the current arrangements in 7 key ways:
- Brings the current concession for visiting entertainers into the Immigration Rules;
 - Provides a separate visa for visiting entertainers;
 - Makes clear who entourages comprise;
 - Makes clear the circumstances in which entertainers may enter the UK outside the Points Based System;
 - Removes the criterion that a festival must make a significant contribution to cultural life in the UK in order to be included in the permit-free festivals list as this is difficult to measure;
 - Reduces from 5 to 3 years the period for which a festival must have been operating before it can be considered for inclusion in the permit-free festivals list;
 - Removes Sikh religious entertainers from the concession. They will enter in future under the religious worker sub-category of Tier 5 of the Points Based System.
15. The rationale for these changes is simple:
- We want to ensure that the contribution of overseas entertainers to the UK's cultural life continues as now;
 - We want to make it clear which visiting entertainers can come here to participate in cultural events outside the Points Based System;
 - Stakeholders support the introduction of a separate visa for visiting entertainers.

SPECIAL VISITORS

16. There are currently a number of groups of visitor for which specific Immigration Rules have been introduced as a need was identified or for which concessions existed outside the Rules. We are introducing a new special visitor visa that will bring these together, although the specific criteria that currently apply to each of these categories will be retained.
17. There will be 4 key features in the special visitor visa:
 - Six month maximum period of stay (with exceptions for visitors in transit who may stay for a maximum of 48 hours, and parents of children at school who may stay for a maximum period of 12 months);
 - Entry clearance requirement for visa nationals only (except in the cases of marriage visitors and prospective students who will all require entry clearance, and those parents of children at school visiting for more than six months);
 - Retention of the specific criteria that currently apply individually to the categories that will be special visitors;
 - A need to satisfy standard requirements including supporting themselves without recourse to public funds, intention to leave at the end of the visit and ability to meet costs of return/onward journey.
18. This alters the current arrangements in 1 way:
 - Brings the currently separate Immigration Rules together in one coherent visa.
19. The rationale for these changes is:
 - To make it clear that these groups, for which Rules have been introduced piecemeal over time, are visitors.

ANNEX A

PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- attending meetings or conferences;
- arranging deals, negotiating or signing trade agreements or contracts;
- undertaking fact finding missions provided the information is of benefit to a branch abroad only, checking details or goods;
- conducting site visits and promotional activities.

ANNEX B

BUSINESS-LIKE ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Doctors taking the Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB) test;
- Film crews on location shoots only - including actors, producers, directors and technicians, provided they are employed or paid by an overseas company;
- Representatives of overseas news media - journalists, correspondents and other representatives including producers and cameramen provided they are employed or paid by an overseas company and are gathering information for an overseas publication;
- Persons undertaking a clinical attachment or dental observer post (may be granted entry for 6 weeks at a time up to a maximum of 6 months);
- Academic Visitors (may be granted up to a maximum of 12 months);
- Visiting professors accompanying students undertaking study abroad programmes;
- Secondees from overseas companies who have a contract with a UK company, provided they are being paid by the overseas company.

ANNEX C

OTHER PERSONS PERMITTED ENTRY AS BUSINESS VISITORS INCLUDE:

- Persons delivering goods and passengers from abroad provided they are genuinely working an international route;
- Couriers accompanying a tour group provided they are contracted to a firm outside the UK and intend to leave with the tour group;
- Speakers at conferences, provided they are a 'one-off' and the event is not run as a money-making concern;
- Representatives of computer software companies coming to enhance, install or debug their products;
- Representatives of foreign manufacturers coming to service or repair their companies products;
- Representatives of foreign machine manufacturers coming to install and erect machinery;
- Monteurs - working on development of foreign made machinery;
- Board-level Directors attending board meetings in the United Kingdom.

