



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Embassy of Switzerland in the United Kingdom

Cultural Mobility after Brexit

Engagement and Mobility Options for Creatives

The United Kingdom's departure from the European Union took effect at 11pm on 31 December 2020. Any new arrivals into the UK from the EU after this are subject to standard immigration rules.

Swiss nationals are non-visa nationals – this means that they can usually enter the UK visa-free for short-term visits. However, they are subject to all standard rules and limitations applicable to other migrants. This new position contrasts with that of Swiss nationals resident in the UK before 2021, who may benefit from rights under the UK's [EU Settlement Scheme](#).

Swiss artists and creative workers can no longer arrive in the UK visa-free without restrictions on activity. They may now be subject to limitations such as a prohibition on receiving payment for UK activities. Specific permission may be required for UK entry where Swiss artists will be remunerated or if they directly sell to the public in the UK.

Please read our [legal disclaimer](#).¹

Useful terminology

Visa – also known as *entry clearance*, is a document issued to a person following a successful application for *permission to enter the UK*. It confirms that the person meets the requirements of their immigration route. This visa is reviewed at the border, making it easier for the border officer to assess whether the individual should enter or not.

Visa national – a person who always needs a visa to be issued before arriving at the UK border (this applies to every trip to the UK, no matter how short).

Non-visa national – a person who does not always need a visa before travel to the UK. This includes Swiss nationals. Non-visa nationals who are travelling to the UK as visitors may arrive without a visa and ask for permission to enter at the border instead.

Permission to enter – the approval given at the border by an officer. This is when the individual is physically allowed to enter the UK.

¹ The information provided in this document is presented solely for the general purpose of supporting cultural exchange activities from Switzerland to the United Kingdom. It aims to support Swiss cultural practitioners who wish to travel to the UK to carry out cultural projects in the UK. The information contained within this document is not comprehensive and is not intended to be a substitute for formal legal or commercially available professional advice and should not be relied upon as such. All individuals and organisations who make use of the information in this document are responsible for verifying its accuracy. For more information about the UK's new immigration rules, please click on [this link](#).

Points Based System – the UK's system for business migration. Applicants can apply in one of several categories and must score a set number of points for attributes such as sponsorship and savings.

Sponsorship – this is required for some types of work status in the UK, for example as a temporary creative worker. The UK organization which will be the sponsor requires a *sponsor licence* issued by the Home Office for this purpose.

Certificate of Sponsorship – an electronic certificate issued by the sponsor, this confirms the details of sponsorship including the job descriptions, salary, and details for the worker.

Skilled Worker – a long-term category of business migration, this route requires sponsorship.

1. Permitted activities for visitors

Swiss nationals are non-visa nationals who can travel to the UK as visitors for up to six months without having to apply for a visa.

A visitor may:

- a) attend meetings, conferences, seminars, interviews; and
- b) give a one-off or short series of talks and speeches provided these are not organized as commercial events and will not make a profit for the organizer; and
- c) negotiate and sign deals and contracts; and
- d) attend trade fairs, for promotional work only, provided the visitor is not directly selling; and
- e) carry out site visits and inspections; and
- f) gather information for their employment abroad; and
- g) be briefed on the requirements of a UK-based customer, provided any work for the customer is done outside the UK.

A visitor may not:

Work in the UK, which includes:

- taking employment in the UK; and
- doing work for an organization or business in the UK; and
- establishing or running a business as a self-employed person; and
- providing goods and services,

unless expressly allowed by the permitted activities [*Permitted Activities for Creatives, Permit Free Festivals or Permitted Paid Engagements*] – see below.

1.1 Permitted activities for creatives

An artist, entertainer or musician may:

- a) give performances as an individual or as part of a group; and
- b) take part in competitions or auditions; and
- c) make personal appearances and take part in promotional activities; and
- d) take part in one or more cultural events or festivals on the list of permit free festivals

Personal or technical staff or members of the production team of an artist, entertainer or musician may support the activities provided they are attending the same event as the artist, entertainer or musician, and are employed to work for them outside the UK.

As a creative visitor, payment is not permitted from a UK source except for the following:

- a) reasonable expenses to cover the cost of travel and subsistence
- b) prize money; or
- c) billing a UK client for their time in the UK, where the applicant's overseas employer is contracted to provide services to a UK company, and the majority of the contract work is carried out overseas (payment must be lower than the amount of the applicant's salary); or
- d) *paid performances at a Permit Free Festival (PFF); or***
- e) *Permitted Paid Engagements (PPE).***

2. Permit Free Festivals (PFF)

If you are an artist, entertainer or musician visiting the UK to perform at a permit free festival (PFF) you may receive payment. **Performing at a PFF is an exception to the usual rule against payment of UK visitors.**

To see which festivals are on the UK's PFF list, visit the Home Office website by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/-immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-permit-free-festival-list>

Non-visa nationals can skip the visa application and apply for entry at the border. For visa nationals an application is always required.

3. Permitted Paid Engagements (PPE)

Professional artists, entertainers, musicians and other professionals active in the creative field can enter the UK to carry out activities directly relating to their profession if they have been invited by a creative (arts or entertainment) organization, agent or broadcaster based in the UK. The applicant must be aged 18 or over on the date of the application.

A PPE must be:

- a) arranged before the applicant travels to the UK; and
- b) declared as part of the application for entry clearance or permission to enter the UK; and
- c) evidenced by a formal invitation; and
- d) related to the applicant's area of expertise and occupation in their home country.

The PPE exception is not open to amateur artists, performers and musicians but to people who are seeking to derive a living from the activity. The activity they receive payment for must be directly related to their profession. An invitation is required from a creative organization, agent or broadcaster.

Entry under the PPE route is limited to one month only

As non-visa nationals, Swiss citizens do not have to apply for the PPE visa, however they have to declare their reason for entering the UK at the border with the documents mentioned above. For visa nationals an application is always required.

Note: *The Immigration Rules only prohibit payment from a UK source [UK] bank account. If a performer or artist is receiving remuneration that is genuinely from a non-UK source, and they will carry out an activity that is permitted for standard visitors, they may enter as a standard visitor.*

4. Creative Sponsorships

4.1 Temporary Work for Creative Workers

A Creative Worker is someone who can make a unique contribution to the UK's rich cultural life, for example, as an artist, dancer, musician or entertainer, or as a model contributing to the UK's fashion industry.

A Creative Worker can be granted permission for up to 12 months with the possibility of applying to extend their stay up to a maximum of two years if they still work for the same sponsor.

- Technical or support staff can also be sponsored to accompany Creative Workers if their employment is directly related to the work that the Creative Worker will be doing in the UK.
- Dependents may apply.
- A **Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)** is required from a licensed UK-based organization.

A sponsor must be able and willing to take responsibility for the sponsored worker and meet all the duties associated with being their sponsor.

4.2 Certificates of Sponsorship

Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS) are electronic records of who will be sponsored and what they will do. The CoS confirms specific details relevant to the worker's application for UK entry, such as their occupation code and salary.

As a temporary creative worker one usually requires a formal visa application unless the following concession applies:

- a) the applicant is a non-visa national; and
- b) holds a valid CoS from an approved sponsor; and
- c) the total length of all the periods of engagement, together with any gap between those engagements, is three months or less; OR the total length of period of engagement, or engagements, is three months or less; and otherwise meets the requirements to be granted permission as a creative worker.

If the above requirements are fulfilled, the visa application can be skipped, however entry for work purposes still needs to be declared at the border.

The CoS should be assigned no earlier than three months before engagements begin and there must be no more than 14 days between each individual engagement.

If the applicant has consecutive engagements with different sponsors, each sponsor must assign its own CoS to the applicant. However, the sponsor does not need to be the employer; for multiple engagements across a number of venues an agent or promotor could act as sponsor.

4.3 Multiple or consecutive engagements

Assigning a CoS for multiple or consecutive engagements: guidance for sponsors:

CRW5.15 Due to the nature of the creative sector, Creative Workers are sometimes needed to undertake a number of engagements at different venues. If you will be the worker's only sponsor in the UK and there is no more than a maximum of 14 days between each engagement (excluding time spent outside the UK), you can assign a single CoS to cover the whole period. This is known as assigning a CoS for 'multiple engagements'.

CRW5.16. If the worker will have more than one sponsor while in the UK – for example, a number of venues, producers or promoters – then each one of those sponsors must assign a CoS to cover its own engagement. Where this is the case, none of the CoS can overlap and there must not be a gap of more than 14 days (excluding time spent outside the UK) between each CoS assigned. This is known as having 'consecutive engagements'.

4.4 Duration of entry as a temporary creative worker

If the worker is entering the UK visa-free relying on the concession, entry will be restricted to three months. Otherwise entry can be for up to 12 months (including period before and after first and last engagement, both of which should not exceed 14 days).

5. Long-Term Skilled Worker Sponsorship

This route covers long-term assignments or roles from across different areas of professional expertise. The employer must be licensed specifically for this route.

This route is accessible to specified roles and requires a minimum skill level and minimum salary.

To see the minimum skill level and salary required for your occupations, you can look at the skilled occupations appendix by clicking on the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-skilled-occupations>

6. Youth Mobility Route

This option does not require a sponsor.

Numbers for this route are capped for each nation which is part of the Youth Mobility Scheme. For the list of countries and territories which are part of this scheme, click on the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/youth-mobility/eligibility>

This route allows people aged between 18 and 30 to stay in the UK for two years without restrictions on activities (exception: self-employed activities are only allowed under certain conditions i.e. work is carried out from their home, value of equipment used in the business does not exceed £5000 and the person has no employees).

7. Global Talent Route

This route is for people aged 18 and over in the field of science, engineering, humanities, medicine, digital technology or arts and culture who can show they have exceptional talent or exceptional promise.

Applicants have to go through a two-part application process.

The first is an application for endorsement. For the areas of art and culture, the endorsing body is the Arts Council England (or its associated bodies).

The second part is an application for entry clearance or permission to stay.

Winners of a list of prestigious prizes are exempt from the requirement to apply for endorsement.

Partners and dependents can apply under this route. This route is a route to settlement.

For more information on the UK's new immigration rules, please visit the Home Office website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules>

8. Customs

8.1 Bringing goods into the UK

Goods must be declared at customs if:

- you exceed your personal allowance for [Great Britain](#) or [Northern Ireland](#)
- they are [banned or restricted](#)
- ***you plan to sell them or use them in business***

You must declare all commercial goods. There is no duty-free allowance for goods you are bringing to the UK to sell or use in your business.

Note: You must also declare goods if you pass through UK border controls when transiting through UK airports on the way to another country.

If you bring **commercial goods** into the UK you must make either:

- a full import declaration
- a simple online declaration
- an oral declaration at the 'goods to declare' channel or the red point phone in the customs area at the port

You can declare goods online from 5 days (120 hours) before you're due to arrive in the UK. You can calculate and pay any tax and duty you owe when you declare your goods. The customs and excise duty you pay online are calculated using simplified rates.

For more information on how to declare commercial goods brought in one's baggage to the UK read the [UK government's HM Revenue & Customs guidance](#).

8.2 ATA Carnets

If you are a touring artist who travels with professional equipment and you do not wish to fill in customs forms at each border, getting an ATA Carnet might be a good solution.

The ATA Carnet is an international customs document. It is used for the temporary importation, exportation and transit of goods. The customs formalities of Switzerland and foreign countries can be completed with this customs document. When crossing the border, you do not need to request a national customs document, nor do you need to provide the customs authorities with a surety.

You can use this document if you are moving professional equipment such as musical instruments, backline, video/photographic equipment, exhibition goods etc. between the UK and Switzerland on a temporary basis. The document enables you to import and re-export goods without payment of duty or VAT.

ATA Carnets can be obtained from chambers of commerce and industry. Security for the applicable import duties is provided to the issuing body. A Carnet is valid for one year. In Switzerland, the [Chambers of Commerce](#) and Industry provide information on the conditions for receiving a Carnet.

An ATA Carnet can be used for multiple border crossings in countries which are listed as [ATA Carnet Countries and Territories](#).

You can use the ATA Carnet primarily for:

- Goods you wish to present at an official exhibition
- Commercial samples for display purposes or taking orders (watches, jewellery, clothes, shoes etc.)
- Professional equipment under the 'Convention on Temporary Admission' (also known as the [Istanbul Convention](#)).

Note: There are exceptions on goods for which an ATA Carnet can be used. If an exception applies, a Customs declaration for temporary admission [ZAVV](#) must be used.

The Carnet consists of a booklet of vouchers and counterfoils which is presented to Customs at each border, enabling you to declare your goods for duty-free and VAT-free entry and exit. After use, the Carnet must be returned for discharge by the Chamber of Commerce by which it was issued.
