

# Mobility: Immigration alert

August 2022



## United Kingdom

### The UK launches new Scale-Up (Work) Visa Route

#### Executive summary

The UK launched its new Scale-Up Visa Route on 22 August 2022. The Scale-Up Visa is a new work visa for non-UK nationals who possess specific skills needed to grow Scale-up businesses ("Scale-Ups"). Scale-Up Visa holders can sponsor dependent family members and may be eligible to settle (i.e., obtain indefinite leave to remain) after five consecutive years of residence in the UK.

#### Background

The Scale-Up Route is a new visa category which follows [EY's work on the Kalifa Review of UK Fintech](#) and supports UK Scale-Ups (in all sectors) by allowing talented individuals with a high skilled job offer from a qualifying Scale-Up at the required salary level to enter and work in the UK. The term "Scale-Up" refers to a distinct phase of a company's growth. Scale-Ups are start-ups that achieved early commercial success and are currently poised to experience rapid growth.

#### Overview

The Scale-Up Visa Route:

- ▶ Establishes a cost-effective and fast-track alternative to the Skilled Worker Visa Route
- ▶ Requires applicants to have a sponsored job offer from an authorized UK Scale-Up
- ▶ Allows individuals with job offers at the required skills levels from recognized UK Scale-Ups to qualify for a fast-track Scale-Up Visa
- ▶ Grants Scale-Up Visa holders authorization to work in the UK for up to two years initially, and to switch roles and employers during this period

- ▶ Allows visa holders to sponsor qualifying dependent family members (i.e., married same-sex and opposite-sex spouses and partners, and children under the age of 18), as with other UK work visa Routes
- ▶ Enables visa holders to extend their Scale-Up Visa for up to three years if they earn at least £33,000 per year for at least 50% of the period spent in the UK under this Route
- ▶ Allows visa holders (and qualifying dependents) who remain in the UK under this Route for five consecutive years to settle in the UK, provided they meet all other [requirements](#)

#### Eligibility criteria

In order to obtain a Scale-Up Visa, applicants must:

- ▶ Meet the English language proficiency requirements
- ▶ Have a high-skilled job offer with a minimum annual salary package of at least £33,000 or the going rate for the occupation, whichever is higher
- ▶ Receive a job offer from an eligible Scale-Up, i.e., a UK company that can demonstrate that: (1) their headcount grew by at least 20% in each of the three years prior to their application to register as sponsor license holders under this Route, and (2) they had at least 10 full-time employees at the start of the three-year period.

#### Impact on employers

The Scale-Up Route offers employers several advantages:

- ▶ Scale-Ups can register as sponsors through a fast-track verification process.
- ▶ Scale-Up Visa applications are not subject to Immigration Skills Charges, unlike the Skilled Worker Route.

- ▶ Employers' sponsorship duties end after six months of visa holders' employment in the UK, reducing administrative burdens for UK employers.
- ▶ Scale-Up Visa holders are required to work full-time for their sponsor for only their first six months in the UK. Thereafter, they may work for other employers via an unsponsored Route.

### Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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