



Coronavirus (COVID19) factsheet – guidance for sponsors

Thursday 02 April

Guidance on immigration provisions made by the Home Office for individuals affected by travel restrictions associated with coronavirus (COVID-19).

Key lines

- The Home Office has [published guidance on GOV.UK](#) on immigration provisions for individuals affected by travel restrictions associated with coronavirus (COVID-19).
- No individual who is in the UK legally, but whose visa is due to, or has already expired, and who cannot leave because of travel restrictions related to COVID-19, will be regarded as an overstayer, or suffer any detriment in the future.
- A visa will be extended to 31 May 2020 if an individual cannot leave the UK because of travel restrictions or self-isolation related to coronavirus (COVID-19). **Individuals must contact the Coronavirus Immigration Team email** to advise of their situation.
- The Coronavirus Immigration Team contact details are:

Email: CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk

Individuals should include the following in their email:

- Full name (include any middle names)
- DOB (dd/mm/yyyy)
- Nationality
- Existing visa details
- Reason that has required them to extend their stay (for example, the suspension of all flight to their place of permanent residence)

The email must be in English.

- The Coronavirus Immigration Team will update relevant details on UKVI databases. Individuals will be advised that UKVI have noted their details; they will not be subject to enforcement action; and this period will not be held against them in future applications.
- This requirement to contact Coronavirus Immigration Team applies to individuals of any nationality whose leave expires between 24 January 2020 and 30 May 2020.



Home Office

Absence reporting

We will not take enforcement action against sponsors who continue to sponsor students or employees despite absences due to coronavirus.

You do not need to report student or employee absences related to coronavirus.

This can include absences due to illness, their need to isolate or inability to travel due to travel restrictions.

You do not need to withdraw sponsorship if because of coronavirus:

- a student is unable to attend for more than 60 days
- an employee is absent from work without pay for more than 4 weeks

We will keep this under review.

Tier 4 - Distance learning

You can continue to sponsor existing Tier 4 students who are continuing their studies through distance learning, whether they are in the UK or another country.

If a student has permanently withdrawn from their studies or deferred their studies for reasons unrelated to coronavirus, you must report this as usual.

You do not need to withdraw sponsorship for new students who have been issued a Tier 4 visa but are distance learning because they have been unable to travel to the UK.

New international students who have not yet applied for a visa but want to start a course by distance learning do not require sponsorship under Tier 4. This is because they do not need to travel to the UK.

You do not need to tell the Home Office when students have moved to distance learning.

These arrangements will apply until 31 May 2020, when they will be reviewed.

Home working

You do not have to notify us if you're sponsoring employees who are working from home due to coronavirus.

Other changes to their working arrangements must still be reported as usual.



Additional Information

What guidance does Home Office have for those who have a valid visa but haven't travelled to the UK yet?

Applicants who hold a valid visa should check initially with their own government websites to ensure that they are up to date on latest travel restrictions from their current locations. In addition, applicants should check the Gov.UK website which is updated regularly.

How do foreign nationals get a status letter confirming a visa extension, or a new Biometric Residence Permit with a revised expiry date?

All nationals who need evidence of their extension should contact the Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre by email at CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk

Can individuals now apply to switch visa types in the UK?

They'll be able to apply from the UK to switch to a long-term UK visa, including if they would usually need to apply for a visa from their home country. They'll need to meet the same visa requirements and pay the UK application fee. This includes those whose leave has been automatically extended to 31 March 2020.

They should apply online. They should select a biometric submission appointment to attend in line with public health guidance. The terms of their leave will remain the same until their application is decided.

They will not be regarded as an overstayer or be subject to enforcement action if they're unable to attend a biometric appointment due to coronavirus or if there are delays in processing their application.

What will happen to immigrants in the UK with regards to their jobs and finances?

- If you are a foreign national in the UK and have observed the terms of your visa prior to the coronavirus outbreak, your visa will be automatically extended to 31 May 2020 if your visa has an expiry date between 24 January 2020 and 30 March 2020.
- We understand that this is a difficult time and for this reason we are continually reviewing the situation to consider what more can be done for those in the UK whose immigration status has been affected by coronavirus.
- There also is a dedicated helpline available for anyone who wishes to discuss their individual circumstances.
- Further guidance: [gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents)



Home Office

How can we trust the Coronavirus Immigration Team (CIT) email and logging of cases will work?

The Coronavirus Immigration Team is providing advice and support on a number of different scenarios. Should an applicant raise a specific case, in accordance with normal Home Office/UKVI procedures, details will be logged on the relevant casework system. All emails sent and received are being retained. We are continually monitoring the volume of enquiries and ensuring that appropriate staffing resources are in place to manage these.

If you cannot pay the salaries of sponsored employees because you've temporarily reduced or ceased trading

You can temporarily reduce the pay of your sponsored employees to 80% of their salary or £2,500 per month, whichever is the lower.

Any reductions must be part of a company-wide policy to avoid redundancies and in which all workers are treated the same.

These reductions must be temporary, and the employee's pay must return to at least previous levels once these arrangements have ended.

If you have issued a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) or a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) and the sponsored employee or student has not yet applied for a visa

The employee or student will still be able to apply for a visa.

The start date for the course or employment stated on the CoS or CAS may have changed. We will not automatically refuse such cases.

For example, we may accept a CoS or CAS if they have become invalid because the employee or student was unable to travel as a result of coronavirus. We will consider this on a case by case basis.

Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre

If you have immigration queries related to coronavirus, please email the Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre.

Email: CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk. Your email must be in English.