**Graduate Immigration Route FAQ’s**

**What is the Graduate Immigration Route?**

The Graduate Route is a new work route for students who have studied at degree level (or other relevant qualification at degree level or above) from an approved UK Higher Education provider. The new visa category permits you to remain inside the UK to find employment. Your application does not need sponsorship or any endorsement by an employer or by St Mary’s University. It is similar to the old Tier 1 Post-Study Work route that ended in 2012, you will be able to work in most jobs under this visa category. While your Graduate Route application is pending, you can continue to work under the conditions of your Student Route or Tier 4 permission.

**When does the route open?**

Online visa applications will open from 9am on Thursday 1st July 2021.

**What jobs can I work in?**

When your Graduate Route visa is issued you can work in most jobs either employed or self-employed but you are unable to work as a professional sportsperson or coach. You can be employed at any level of salary or skill but if your plan is to switch in to the Skilled Worker Route afterwards, please check which jobs are eligible under the route to ensure the switch in to the same job is possible. (More information about the Skilled Worker Route can be found below).

**Am I eligible?**

You will be eligible to apply when you have successfully completed your course. You must have successfully completed the course for which your visa was granted. If you leave St Mary’s with an exit award or you do not complete the course for which your visa was granted, you will not be eligible to apply. If you changed your course during your studies and that did not require you to make a new visa application from overseas, you will be eligible to apply. Before you can apply for your visa, St Mary’s must first notify the Home Office that you have successfully completed your course, this will happen after the exam board. The UKVI Compliance and Immigration Team (UCIT) will confirm for you by email when confirmation has been submitted to UKVI.

**What are the eligible programmes?**

The relevant course must be either:

* Undergraduate degree
* Masters degree
* PhD degree or other doctoral qualification

Or one of the qualifications listed in paragraph GR 5.2 of the Graduate Immigration rules when they are published.

* A law conversion course validated by the Joint Academic Stage Board in England and Wales
* The Legal Practice Course in England and Wales, the Solicitors Course in Northern Ireland, or a Diploma in Professional Legal Practice in Scotland
* The Bar Practice Course in England and Wales, or the Bar Course in Northern Ireland
* A foundation programme in Medicine or Dentistry
* A Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) or Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)
* A professional course requiring study at UK bachelor’s degree level or above in a profession with reserved activities that is regulated by UK law or UK public authority.

**Can I switch from a different immigration category such as Tier 2?**

No, you will only be eligible to apply if your current visa is under the Tier 4 or Student Routecategory.

**Can I apply from inside or outside the UK?**

You must be inside the UK when you submit your visa application. Please note that your visa must be valid (not expired) when you apply.

**What if I am Distance Learning, when do I need to be inside the UK?**

Due to COVID-19, there are concessions in place for students unable to travel to the UK due to the pandemic, recognising the continued disruption many face in international travel.

If you have been distance learning (overseas) during your studies, you must read the concessions to ensure you understand the dates by which you will need to have entered the UK. The information is separated for students whose courses are more than 12 months or less than 12 months in duration.

More information can be found [here](https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Working-after-studies#study-in-the-uk-including-covid19-concessions).

Continuing St Mary’s students

If you are on a course of longer than 12 months that began before September 2020 and you would have required student visa sponsorship for more than just the final year of your course, any time that you spend outside the UK distance learning between 24 January 2020 and 27 September 2021 will not prevent you from meeting the ‘study in the UK’ requirement. In summer 2021, this is most likely to apply to UG students who began their St Mary’s degrees in 2018/19.

**What is the duration of the visa?**

Undergraduate and Postgraduate level applicants can stay for two years. PhD graduates can stay for three years.

**Can I work and study at the same time?**

You are allowed to take courses such as part-time courses, short courses and evening courses while you are in the UK on a Graduate Route visa. If you want to study a programme that requires a visa under the Student Route, you should not attempt to enrol on that programme with a Graduate Route visa as this is not permitted.

**Can I apply again for a Student Route visa after the Graduate Route?**

Yes you can but you will only benefit from applying for the Graduate Route once.

**How much does the application cost?**

The [Home Office's factsheet about the Graduate route](https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2019/10/14/fact-sheet-graduate-immigration-route/) states the application fee will be £700. Nationals of [the 26 European countries that come under the CESC agreement](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fee-arrangements-for-cesc-nationals/fee-arrangements-for-cesc-nationals) will have a £55 discount. You will pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) at £624 per year of permission that you are applying for. This is 2 years for UG and PG students and 3 years for PhD graduates.

***UG/PG level applicant = £1948, (plus partner = £3,896), (plus partner and one child = £5,536).***

***PhD level applicant = £2572 (plus partner = £5,144), (plus partner and one child = £7,254).***

**What about the visa conditions for dependants?**

Your dependant/s (who are under 18) who are already here in the UK as your Tier 4 or Student Route visa dependant/s can apply to extend their stay. They can only apply to extend their visa/s from within the UK. Dependant/s who are outside the UK are unable to apply for a visa as your Graduate Route dependant/s.

Any dependant/s from overseas cannot be added (for example, your dependant/s may have been overseas as you were not eligible to have them with you in the first place or your partner may have remained overseas for work purposes etc).

Partners already in the UK with you under another form of immigration permission cannot be added as a dependant under the Graduate Route.

Your dependant/s will have the same work conditions as you, they can work in most jobs either employed or self-employed but they are unable to work as a professional sportsperson or coach.

Graduate Route dependants do not have the same study restrictions and can enrol on to any programme with a Student Route Sponsor.

**Alternatives to the Graduate Route**

You may be offered Sponsorship under the Skilled Worker Route by an employer instead. You may therefore need to apply under the Skilled Worker Route so please check the conditions of the route before you apply to ensure you meet the requirements. There is no deadline for applying in your home country under the Skilled Worker route. For the first two years after you return home, you only need to meet the

lower "new entrant" minimum salary for a Skilled Worker application. Even after two years, you can still be a "new entrant" if you are under 26 years old.

See the detailed guide to the Skilled Worker Route on this [UKCISA page](https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Working-after-studies#layer-6784), with other work route options.

**What are the differences between Graduate Route and Skilled Worker Route?**

* To apply to switch into the Skilled Worker Route you must be sponsored and offered a job at the correct skill level, and earn the required salary for the job.
* The Skilled Worker Route leads to Settlement in the UK, the Graduate Route does not.
* You can add dependant/s to the Skilled Worker Route who were not student dependant/s.
* You cannot add dependant/s to the Graduate Route if they were not already your student dependant/s.
* All study is permitted on the Skilled Worker Route. Study is restricted on the Graduate Route.
* It is easier to change jobs on the Graduate Route. You would need to obtain new sponsorship to change your job on the Skilled Worker Route.
* You can switch into the Skilled Worker Route as a new entrant providing you obtain sponsorship before the Graduate Route visa expires.

**Can the St Mary’s help me to find employment?**

St Mary’s Careers Service can help you plan your job search and identify potential vacancies through booking a one to one appointment with a Careers Consultant. You can do this by emailing careers@stmarys.ac.uk or calling 0208 240 4055. Appointments are available online or in person. We have a jobs board, [Career Connect](https://careers.stmarys.ac.uk/unauth/operator/login) through which you can find part-time jobs, internships and graduate opportunities and lots of information on [finding jobs on the Careers Moodle](https://mymodules.stmarys.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=23921#section-6) pages.

**Can I have help with writing a CV?**

There is a lot of information on writing a successful CV on the [Careers Moodle](https://mymodules.stmarys.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=23921#section-0) pages. You can also book an appointment to get a CV check by emailing careers@stmarys.ac.uk or calling 0208 240 4055. Appointments are available online or in person.

Disclaimer:

Please note the FAQ’s were formed before the Home Office published Policy Guidance or the Immigration Rules and are subject to change at any point in time. The information is considered as a guide to provide you with more information for your perusal.