

**From Student to Worker
Home Office Schemes and Programmes
for international students**

Andrew Humphrey

Students Advice Line, UKCOSA

Welfare Adviser, *Queen Mary University of London*

From Student to Worker: CONTENTS

- Working while you are a student
- Staying on in the UK: context of the immigration rules
- SEGS 12-month working scheme
- Work Permit scheme
- Highly Skilled Migrant Programme
- Training and Work Experience Scheme
- Innovators
- Your dependants
- Other work schemes
- Staying in the UK for another reason

Working while you are a student

Maximum 20 hours a week during term-time

- No limit in vacations and between end of your course and the end of your visa.
- Not because you need the money for basic living costs
- No self-employment
- No permanent career vacancy

Staying on in the UK: context of the immigration rules

- You cannot stay on in the UK after your studies and look for work just because you want to
- You must fit into one of the existing Home Office schemes and programmes
- Home Office Schemes and Programmes are created to benefit the UK, not to reward or benefit individuals
- If you are sponsored by government or scholarship agency, you must get their consent to switch to a work category.
- Application fee increasing for all applications on 1 April 2007.

SEGS 12-month work scheme: undergraduates (and postgraduates who started before 1 May 2006)

- Science and Engineering students, as defined by JACS code for your course

- To fill skills shortages in these fields
- Permission to stay and work in the UK for 12 months without a Work Permit
- Any work, including self-employment
- Eligible first degree students must have achieved at least a 2.2, postgraduates must have passed
- Current list of eligible courses is only for those who graduate before 30 April this year.

SEGS 12-month work scheme: postgraduates who started after 1 May 2006

- Anyone who completes a postgraduate course *in any subject* which they started after 1 May 2006
- Includes integrated Masters
- 12 months in the UK to do any work, including self-employment
- Must normally have valid student leave (visa) for the course issued after 1 May 2006

SEGS 12-month work scheme: how and when to apply

- Use FLR(SEGS) application form: www.workingintheuk.gov.uk
- Apply no later than 12 months after end of student visa for the eligible course
- Application fee: £395 in the UK by post, £200 in your home country
- To apply in the UK, you must currently have immigration status of student, student nurse, re-sitting an exam or writing up a thesis
- Proof of degree
- Proof you can support yourself through your work or from your sponsor

SEGS 12-month work scheme: after SEGS

- Go home
- Continue working by switching to Work Permit or HSMP, if eligible
- Continue studies: Visa nationals who have travelled outside the UK during SEGS must apply in their home country for new student visa, others can switch back to student status in the UK
- You cannot extend SEGS itself beyond 12 months
- You cannot do SEGS again, even if your new course is eligible

Work Permit: the basics

- Issued for jobs where no one suitable can be recruited, and occupations where there is a shortage of qualified workers
- Granted for a specific job for a specific period
- Skilled work only. Applicants must have degree or equivalent, or 3 years' full-time experience in same type of work
- Must be a genuine vacancy. Unless it is a shortage occupation, vacancy must be advertised nationally and have no suitable existing local person for the job.

Work Permit: shortage occupations

- Engineering occupations

■Health care occupations:

doctors, dentists,
consultants, nurses,

■Other occupations:

teachers in compulsory education, veterinary surgeons

■Full list: www.workingintheuk.gov.uk

Work Permit: how to apply

■Stage 1: Employer applies for the permit.

■Stage 2: If granted, you use the permit to apply to the Home Office extend your stay (£335) or to the British Embassy in your home country for entry clearance (£200)

■You can only switch in UK from student to work permit holder if you have an honours degree from the UK, or if you are a student nurse, postgrad doctor or postgrad dentist

■Can apply for ILR after 5 years

Highly Skilled Migrant Programme

■for those with degrees and work experience and prior earnings at a certain level

■Points-based system: 75 points needed (and re-tested at end of initial period, on a different basis)

■Points for education and salary, re-tested 2 years later with points for experience and salary

■Most new graduates are not eligible, unless they also have relevant work experience

■Initial permission to stay for 2 years, Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) after 5 years

Highly Skilled Migrant Programme

■Stage 1: apply for eligibility on FLR(HSMP) form. Application fee: £400 (or free)

■87% of applications decided in 25 working days

■Stage 2: immigration application to Home Office (£350) or to British Embassy in your country (£200).

Training and Work Experience Scheme

■“to enable individuals to gain skills and experience through work-based learning, which builds on their previous education and training and which they intend to use on their return overseas”

■Only issued on the understanding that you will leave the UK at the end of the agreed period. Not for longer-term work.

■www.workingintheuk.gov.uk

Innovators scheme

- “to attract to the UK outstanding entrepreneurs from overseas whose business proposals will result in exceptional economic benefits for the UK”
- “...mainly designed for those specialising in high-tech area, in science and technology based sectors.”
- www.workingintheuk.gov.uk

Dependants

- Husband, wife, child
- Civil partner
- Unmarried partner: living with you for two years in a relationship akin to marriage
- Dependants who are already in the UK can be included on same application form
- If applying abroad, spouse, civil partner or unmarried partner must do separate VAF1 form, paying £200 application fee. Children included on main applicants application.

Other work-related schemes

- An elected sabbatical post with the Students Union: 12 months, then go home or continue studies
- Voluntary worker for a registered charity for up to 12 months
- Postgraduate doctor/dentist
- Working Holidaymaker
- (most Commonwealth nationals): 2 years
- An established artist
- Start a business with £200k
- BUNAC (US residents): 6 months
- EU Association agreement (Turkey)

Other non-work reasons to stay, which allow you to work

- Spouse, civil partner or unmarried partner of a settled person
- Spouse, civil partner or unmarried partner of someone with limited leave (student, SEGS, Work Permit, HSMP, TWES, etc.)
- Right of abode or ancestry. Commonwealth nationals.
- Long residence. 10/14 years.

Earnings and taxes

■ National Minimum Wage from 4/10/06:

18-21 years old: £4.45/hr
22+ years old £5.35/hr

■ Income Tax 2006/7:

less than £5035 none

£5035.01 - £7185 10%
£7185.01 - £38335 22%

National Insurance:

£97+ 11%

National Insurance Number

- If you already have one, you don't need another
- Apply when you are offered a job or when you start work
- Apply at JobCentrePlus
www.jobcentreplus.co.uk
- Show employer your application letter
- Wait up to 16 weeks, but meanwhile you can work and get paid

Further advice on your right to work in the UK

International Student Adviser at your college
www.workingintheuk.gov.uk
www.ukcosa.org.uk