

United Kingdom

Business visitors: FAQs



If planning on traveling to the U.K. for temporary business, it is important to remain compliant with the immigration laws of the U.K. The purpose of the visitor's intended travel, duration of stay and citizenship will determine if and what type of visa is required. The information in this document is intended to serve as an informational resource about business visitor requirements in the U.K.

Who needs a business visitor visa for the U.K.?

A business visa is required for persons who wish to enter the U.K. for the purposes of temporary business. Business visitors are not permitted to engage in employment of any kind while in the U.K.

What activities are permitted as a business visitor?

Activities permitted typically include:

- Attending meetings or conferences
- Arranging deals or negotiating/signing trade agreements or contracts
- Undertaking fact-finding missions
- Conducting site visits
- Delivering goods and passengers from abroad
- Speaking at a "one-off" non-commercial conference
- Representing a foreign manufacturer by coming to service or repair its products within the initial period of guarantee
- Representing a foreign machine manufacturer by coming to erect or install machinery too heavy to be delivered in one piece, as part of the contract of purchase and supply

- Acting as a monteur (a worker such as a fitter or serviceperson) for up to six months to erect, dismantle, install, service, repair or advise on the development of foreign-made machinery
- Attending board meetings in the U.K. as a board-level director, provided the visitor is not employed by a U.K. company
- Representing a computer software company by coming to install, debug or enhance its products

Activities not permitted typically include:

- Performing productive work
- Accepting salary from a U.K. source
- Filling a specific role in the U.K.
- Producing goods or providing services
- Studying

These lists are subject to change and are not all-inclusive.

Who is required to apply for a business visa?

All visitors having the intention to undertake any activities of a business visitor visa should apply for such a visa. U.K. visa nationals should apply for a business visitor visa prior coming to the U.K. Nationalities who do not require a visa for the U.K. should apply for one upon entering the U.K.

How long can a traveler stay in the U.K. on a business visa?

The maximum allowable stay on a business visa in the U.K. is six months within a period of 12 months.

Is there a limit on the number of times a visitor may travel to the U.K. on a business visa in any given period?

There is no limit on how many visits a person may make to the U.K. in any given period. However, individuals must prove that they are not using the visits in order to live in the U.K.

Can a visitor's spouse and children also come to the U.K.?

A business visitor's spouse and children can come to the U.K. as visitors; however, they must each apply for their own separate visa.

Penalties related to non-compliance for the business visa category?

Engaging in unlawful work in the U.K. can result in serious consequences for both the employer and the business visitor including:

- Fine of £20,000 per employee
- Deportation
- Ban of up to 10 years
- Imprisonment for up to two years

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