

UK Work permits (Tier 5 Sporting and Creative)

Introduction:

The following job types are covered under the Tier 5 Sporting and Creative Certificates of Sponsorship (Cos):

Artists, Authors, writers, Actors, entertainers, Dancers and choreographers, Musicians, Arts officers, producers and directors, Designers, graphic, Designers, product clothing and related, Journalists, newspaper and periodical editors, Broadcasting associate professionals, Photographers and audio-visual equipment operators, Sports players, Sports coaches, instructors and officials, Fitness instructors, Sports and fitness occupations n.e.c

Any non European Union (EU) individuals that are working in the UK in any one or more of the above job types, *even if that work is unpaid (with few exceptions¹)*, will require a Tier 5 Sporting and Creative Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS).

Individuals must also be in possession of appropriate visas though in the United States, most Commonwealth countries and other countries with strong ties to the UK there is often a visa exemption program in place *provided your stay is 3 months or less* (any longer and you need to apply for a visa by submitting your CoS number and passport to your nearest British Embassy.

CoS can only be processed by a UK based sponsor licensed by the UK Border (and Immigration) Agency (UKBA). Licensed sponsors must have at least 5 years experience and must be incorporated companies within the UK.

CME Artist Services have over ten years experience with a 100% track record for bringing creative workers into the UK. This has resulted in UKBA awarding CME Artist Services a Grade A Level Sponsorship rating.

The CoS is a virtual document and all the travelling group will typically see is the authorisation number for each individual and a group number.

In practice, it is not difficult to obtain a work permit authorisation for individuals falling under the Tier 5 guidance (see "Information we need to process your work authorisation" below).

Turnaround times for CoS are vastly improved now the system is online and can be processed in hours, at most days, rather than the previous weeks and months (provided we receive the correct information).

Fees:

This, and the fact that promoters receive a limited number of certificate allocations per year, for which there is considerable demand, means that we charge a reasonable, but professional, fee for authorising non-EU workers.

We charge £150 for the first musician in a group and £50 for each subsequent musician up to ten musicians and then each is charged £25 per permit.

¹ The commonest exception is for unpaid academic work, for example an unpaid workshop or seminar, though recent cases have suggested that even this is not certain. The specific UKBA regulations on this states: "Academics may be eligible to enter as a mainstream business visitor if they are coming to participate in a conference or seminar where it is a single event, and the event is not a commercial venture (organisers are not making a profit)."

There are no permit fees for acts selected to participate on one of our showcase tours (see <http://cmeas.com/opportunities.htm> for current openings).

Payment:

We can accept the fee in £GBP payable via secure online payment (all major credit cards), by Pay Pal or by check in £GBP made payable to CME Artist Services and sent to:

CME Artist Services
3 Kensington House
Greaves Road
Lancaster LA1 4UY

Information we need to process your work authorisation:

1. Passport information for each member of the travelling party (musicians, sound engineers, DJs, MCs, stage managers etc):
 - Country AND place (i.e. town or name of issuing authority) of passport issue (State will suffice for US applicants)
 - Full name as it appears on the passport
 - Date of birth (dd/mm/yyyy)
 - Place (town and country) of birth
 - Passport number
 - Passport issue date and expiration date (we need both) (dd/mm/yyyy)
2. Current address of each member in their country of residence (PLEASE include your post code or zip)
3. Dates of work in the UK
4. Do you plan to travel out of the UK at anytime during your first and last work dates?
5. Remuneration (gross) of the work in British pounds. This is needed for UKBA to report to the UK Inland Revenue Service². Even if there is no remuneration you will almost certainly still need a permit.
6. Primary address in the UK where the group, or individual, will be based
7. Has the group, or individual, worked in the UK before?
8. Name of the tour (if applicable) or job description
9. Name and address of your employer/s
10. Name of the act/team (if applicable)

Processing time:

² Tax liability is not a problem providing the artist is making less than £1,000 in the UK in one year

Since the Border Immigration Agency gave successful UK promoters the responsibility for issuing a limited number of permits a year rather than deciding the application themselves, our work load in this regard has shrunk. We can usually process the online sponsorship and complete the paperwork within 24 hours (current work load permitting).

What Next:

When we have all the information we require we will then process your application and on receipt of payment provide you with a PDF document which will be a screenshot of your certificates from UKBA's online sponsor management system along with our payment receipt and terms of your sponsorship (this can also be used for those individuals who need a sponsor letter to obtain an entry visa). On arrival at a UK international airport, UK Immigration will ask you for your certificate number when you declare that you are working as an artist (or athlete or any other job title covered by Tier 5) and then check this against the UK Border and Immigration database which will include the authorisation profile that we have created for your act. Very quick and very simple (and no, it wasn't always this easy!)

IMPORTANT NOTES

In over ten years of obtaining work permits for international individuals we've had only one entry refusal (the artist returned after their first permit had expired but did not let us know) but the following are important and although we can certainly advise you some matters are up to the applicant:

1. Visa: If you are not an EU citizen (EU citizens don't need a CoS) and staying more than three months you will need a visa. If you are staying for three months or less and are a Commonwealth or USA citizen you probably won't need a visa. We suggest you test your eligibility for waiver using the UKBA website "do I need a visa" link: <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/doineedvisa/>. If you need a visa you should obtain a CoS first. Visas are issued by your nearest British Consulate. If you are entering the UK soon and are unsure how long it will take to get a visa we suggest you contact the British Consulate before obtaining a CoS. If you come from a country that the UK requires a visa from remember that no visa equals no entry regardless of whether you have a CoS or not.
2. Multiple Entry: If you plan to leave and re-enter the UK during the time covered by your work permit you MUST let us know. If you are not on a visa exempt program you will need to obtain a multiple clearance visa prior to your visit here from your British Consulate or you won't be let back in after your first departure.
3. Transit visas: It might be that you have to enter the UK and leave before your work permit period starts. If so, you will need a transit visa if your layover is greater than 24 hours or if you are on the UKBA list of countries that need layover visas (most countries are exempt).³

³ For example, we had two Malaysian acts that had a show in Dublin, Ireland (which is not part of the UK) before their performances in the UK. However, there are no direct flights to Dublin from Malaysia (at that time) and so the acts had to fly to London first in order to fly to Ireland. However, even though one group stayed overnight and the other group departed from another London airport, in both cases the time the acts were in the UK was less than 24 hours and Malaysia is exempt from requiring a transit visa so there was no problem.

4. If the applicant has a single sponsor, for example an agent, and there is no more than a maximum of 14 calendar days between each engagement, that sponsor can issue a single certificate of sponsorship to cover the whole period.
5. The maximum amount of sponsored stay in the UK for work on a Tier 5 authorisation, by default, is 3 months. In practice this can be extended to a year. If you have any questions about your sponsorship we can consult the UKBA. However, a response from UKBA can take up to a week or more so we always recommend an early application if you have any uncertainties.
6. Other individuals in your travelling party. If you travel with other non-EU nationals who are involved in your work in the UK these individuals **MUST** be furnished with a Tier 5 Sporting or Creative CoS *even if they're not getting paid*. For example, light or sound engineers, stage managers or team coaches.