

UK Work permits (Non-European Union artists only)

Introduction:

Any non European Union (EU) musicians, with few exceptions¹, that are performing in the UK and, crucially, any member of their travelling party involved in the performance (light and sound engineers for example) require work authorisation in the form of a Tier 5 Sporting and Creative Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) that can only be processed by a UK 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.

Although musicians must also be in possession of appropriate visas, in the United States and most Commonwealth countries a visa waiver program usually means this is not required unless the musician is staying for more than three months or a year (see "Important Notes" below). It is the musician's responsibility to obtain a visa from the British Consulate in their country of residence if one is needed.

Certificates of Sponsorship are given per musician per act. The certificate is a virtual document and all the act will typically see is the authorisation number for each musician. In addition, groups will receive a group authorisation number.

In practice, it is not difficult to obtain a work permit authorisation for international artists (see "Information we need to process your work authorisation" below) but to do this you must go through a UK based and licensed sponsor.

Fees:

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

We charge a flat £100 for each Certificate of Sponsorship for the first two musicians in a group with additional musicians in a group charged £50 (so a solo act would be charged £100, a duo £200 and a trio £250) up to ten musicians. For a group containing more than ten musicians (e.g. an orchestra) each additional musician will be charged £25 (so for a 20 piece orchestra the fee would be £850).

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:

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 state: "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)."

CME Artist Services
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Greaves Road
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Information we need to process your work authorisation:

1. Passport information for each artist and members of the artist's travelling party (sound engineers, 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 and expiration date (we need both) (dd/mm/yyyy)
2. Current address of each band member in their country of residence
3. Dates you plan to 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. If there is no remuneration you will almost certainly still need a permit.
6. Primary address in the UK where the act will be based
7. Has the artist performed in the UK before?
8. Name of the tour
9. Name of the act

Processing time:

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. On arrival at a UK international airport, UK Immigration will ask you for your certificate number when you declare that you are working as a musician and then check this against the UK Border and Immigration database which will include the

² Tax liability is not a problem providing the artist is making less than £12,000 in the UK in one year

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 musicians 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 artist:

1. Visa: If you are not an EU, Commonwealth, or USA citizen you will probably need a visa. As there are 54 Commonwealth countries you may still 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 can often apply online at: <http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/Welcome.htm> otherwise your nearest British Consulate can provide them.
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 waiver 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
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. Non-musicians in your travelling party. If you travel with other non-EU nationals who are involved in your work in the UK these individuals must also be furnished with a Tier 5 Sporting or Creative CoS. For example, light or sound engineers and stage managers.

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 act stayed overnight and the other act 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.