

Skilled Worker qualifications requirement

Guidance on describing qualification requirements in roles where Skilled Worker sponsorship may be required.

The Skilled Worker visa route replaced Tier 2 on 1 December 2020. While the strict Tier 2 advertising rules no longer apply, there is a requirement that the role is a 'genuine vacancy'. The advert/job description must accurately reflected the requirements of the vacancy, and the applicant must hold the 'qualifications required' for the role.

It is not possible to sponsor someone for a Skilled Worker visa who does not hold the 'qualifications required', as described in the job description, as they would not be considered to be suitably qualified to take up the role.

To ensure consistency and compliance, four clearly defined options are provided below for listing the 'qualifications required', together with the evidence that must be submitted to SIT with a Skilled Worker CoS application in each case.

The following options are primarily drafted with research and lecturer (professorial) roles in mind. They should, however, apply equally well to other roles within the collegiate University which are eligible for Skilled Worker sponsorship, such as Statisticians, Research managers, IT project managers and programmers, Engineers, and other roles.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENT	EVIDENCE REQUIRED WITH SKILLED WORKER COS APPLICATION
<u>Option 1</u> – 'Hold a PhD/ DPhil in...'	EITHER a copy of their PhD/ DPhil award certificate; OR an academic reference confirming the qualification has been awarded. <i>PLEASE NOTE: if 'post qualification experience' is also listed SIT will not be able to sponsor someone who has just finished their PhD/DPhil/doctorate.</i>
<u>Option 2</u> – 'Hold, or be close to completion of, a PhD/DPhil in...'	EITHER a copy of their PhD/ DPhil award certificate; OR an academic reference confirming the qualification has been awarded; OR an academic reference confirming that they have submitted their thesis , if they have not yet completed.
<u>Option 3</u> – 'Hold a Bachelor's Degree (or Master's) in...' as <i>essential</i> with 'Hold a PhD/DPhil in...' as <i>desirable</i>	EITHER a copy of their Degree (or Masters) award certificate; OR an academic reference confirming Degree (or Masters) has been awarded. <i>PLEASE NOTE: Option 3 should not be used for Research roles above Grade 6</i>
<u>Option 4</u> – 'Hold a PhD/DPhil in...' with the possibility to underfill if they instead 'Hold a Bachelor's Degree (or Master's) in...' <i>Standard underfill wording: Whilst the role is a grade Y (£- £ p.a.) position, we would be willing to consider candidates with potential but less experience who are seeking a development opportunity, for which an initial appointment would be at grade X (£- £ p.a.) with the responsibilities adjusted accordingly. This would be discussed with applicants at interview/appointment where appropriate.</i>	EITHER a copy of their award certificate; OR an academic reference confirming the qualification has been awarded. Those with the substantive qualification would be appointed on the substantive grade. Those with the lower qualification would be appointed on one grade lower, with a specific adjustment of duties and a development plan setting clear milestones which must be met (including award of a PhD/DPhil, if applicable) before promotion to the substantive grade, normally within one year. Changes in job title & salary etc. on promotion to the substantive grade <u>must</u> be reported to SIT. <i>Please refer to Personnel guidance on 'Underfilling of posts' for more information: https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/main-salary-and-grading-structure</i>

COMMENT ON 'EQUIVALENT EXPERIENCE'

If including 'or equivalent experience', options of what might be accepted as equivalent should be discussed/ explored when drafting the adverts and job description.

Where a Skilled Worker applicant is seeking to rely on 'equivalent experience' in lieu of a qualification, references (normally from their current employer) would be required which specifically detailed the applicant's research (or other activities) and explained how these are considered equivalent to the qualification in question.

PLEASE NOTE: Research towards an, as yet incomplete, Masters or PhD/DPhil cannot be relied on as equivalent to holding these qualifications.

PLEASE REMEMBER that, where possible, [generic job descriptions](#) should be used, and where substantive changes are made from the generic duties and selection criteria the role should be referred to the reward team.

SIT is happy to review job descriptions to help ensure the qualifications required for the role are clear.

<https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/>