

A close-up photograph of a microscope's objective lens, which is metallic and has the markings 'M1', '90', and '1.25' on it. The lens is positioned over a slide, and a bright light source is visible at the bottom of the lens assembly. The background is a soft blue gradient.

# Guide to the UK Innovator visa

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# What is the Innovator visa?

The UK Government's Innovator visa enables the finest entrepreneurs from around the world to start innovative business ventures in the United Kingdom, contributing their skills, knowledge, creativity, business acumen and experience to maintaining the UK's position at the forefront of the global economy.

The Innovator visa is for experienced foreign individuals or teams with entrepreneurial or business backgrounds in all sectors. The visa is valid for 3 years and requires you to work full-time for your business venture in the United Kingdom. The visa can also be extended to your immediate family members. Following that the necessary criteria is met, after 3 years you can either apply for an extension or permanent settlement in the UK.

If you hold exceptional skills or have an original business proposition and want to take advantage of the UK's excellent business environment and quality of life, the Innovator visa is for you.

# What are the eligibility criteria?

You can apply for an Innovator visa if:

- You want to set up or run a business in the UK
- You're from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland
- You meet the other eligibility requirements (see [www.gov.uk/innovator-visa](https://www.gov.uk/innovator-visa))
- Your business or business idea has been endorsed by a specially-appointed endorsing body

You must have at least £50,000 in investment funds if you want to set up a new business.\* You do not need funds if your business is already established and has been endorsed for an earlier visa.

Getting endorsed	
To receive endorsement, you must be able to show that your business is:	
<b>Innovative</b>	You have a genuine, original business plan that meets new or existing market needs and/or creates a competitive advantage
<b>Viable</b>	You have the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and market awareness to run the business successfully
<b>Scalable</b>	There is evidence of structured planning and potential for job creation and growth into national and international markets
You must also confirm that you will spend your entire working time in the UK on developing your business venture(s). Undertaking other employment outside of your business venture(s) is not permitted.	

\* If your business has another team member who also has, or is applying for, an Innovator visa there must be £50,000 for each team member endorsed (for example, 2 endorsed team members require £100,000 funding).

# Maintaining your visa

In order to maintain your Innovator visa for the 3 years before you can apply for UK Permanent Residence, you must satisfy us that you have made significant progress in developing your business and made quantifiable achievements:

## Settlement in the UK

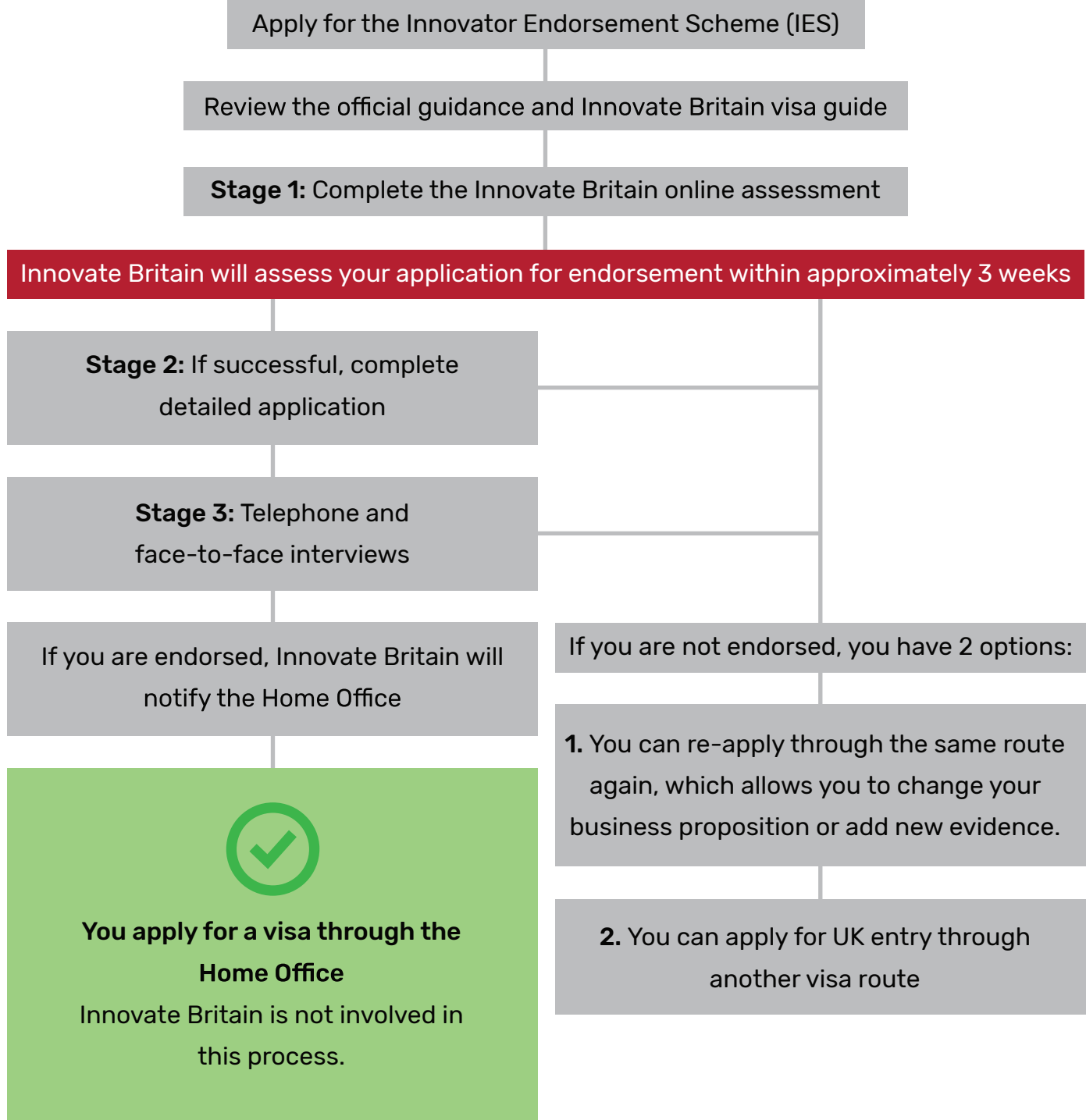
Progress must be made in all of the following:

- The applicant has shown significant achievements, judged against the business plan assessed in their previous endorsement
- The applicant's business is registered with Companies House and the applicant is listed as a director or member of that business
- The business is active and trading
- The business appears to be sustainable for at least the following 12 months, based on its assets and expected income, weighted against its current and planned expenses
- The applicant has demonstrated an active key role in the day-to-day management and development of the business

At least 2 of the following achievements must be met:

- At least £50,000 has been invested into the business and actively spent furthering your business plan
- The number of your business's customers has doubled within the most recent 3 years and is currently higher than the mean number of customers for other UK businesses offering comparable main services
- The business has engaged in significant research and development activity and has applied for intellectual property protection in the UK
- The business has generated a minimum annual gross revenue of £1 million in the last full year covered by its accounts
- The business is generating a minimum gross revenue of £500,000 in the last full year covered by its accounts, with at least £100,000 from exporting overseas
- The business has created the equivalent of at least 10 full-time jobs for UK resident workers
- The business has created the equivalent of at least 5 full-time jobs for UK resident workers, which have an average salary of £25,000 a year (gross pay, excluding any expenses)

# How to apply





# Other visa routes

## Start-up visa

You can apply for this route if you are an early-stage entrepreneur and want to set up a business in the UK. You don't need any funds to invest in your business but must not have previously set up a business in the UK. Whilst the majority of your time will be spent developing your business you can also take on other work outside of this business to support yourself.

## Tier 1 (Investor) visa

You can apply for this route if you want to invest £2,000,000 or more in the UK. You must be able to prove that the money belongs to either you or your spouse/partner. The funds must be held in one or more regulated financial institutions either in the UK or overseas.

## Tier 2 (General) visa

You can apply for this route if you've been offered a skilled job in the UK. Your employer must be a licensed sponsor. As part of the recruitment process, your sponsor checks that you can do the job they're hiring you for and if it qualifies for a visa. They'll assign you a certificate of sponsorship to prove this.

## Tier 2 (Intra-company Transfer) visa

You can apply for this route if your overseas employer has offered you a role in a UK branch of the organisation. Your employer must be a licensed sponsor. Your sponsor checks that you can do the job they're hiring you for and if it qualifies you for a visa. They'll assign you a certificate of sponsorship to prove this.

For more information, visit [www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/work-visas](https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/work-visas)



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