



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Visas for innovation



Innovation is a key long-term driver of economic prosperity, jobs and growth. We support the [Australian Government's innovation agenda](http://www.innovation.gov.au/) [http://www.innovation.gov.au/] through visa options. This helps Australia connect to the world's best and brightest.

In March 2018, the Government announced 2 pilot schemes targeted at supporting talent and innovation in Australia. These schemes are the *Global Talent Scheme* and *Supporting Innovation in South Australia*. Together, these aim to support business growth, skills transfer and job creation by attracting highly-skilled global talent to help foster innovative businesses in Australia.

These will support innovation in different ways:

- The *Global Talent Scheme* will provide:
 - businesses, including Australian startups, with a way to sponsor highly-skilled and specialised workers not covered by the standard Temporary Skill Shortage (TSS) visa (subclass 482) program
 - the cutting-edge skills Australia needs to compete globally.
- The *Supporting Innovation in South Australia* scheme will help support South Australia to attract foreign entrepreneurs to take forward innovative ideas and launch seed-stage startups.

Global Talent Scheme

What is the Global Talent Scheme (GTS)?

The GTS is a niche pilot scheme under the TSS visa program. The 12 month pilot will run from 1 July 2018.

Introducing the GTS as a pilot allows the Government to make refinements in consultation with industry to ensure it achieves its purpose.

The GTS is only for employers to fill highly-skilled positions that cannot be filled:

- by Australian workers
- through other visa programs, in particular the short-term and medium-term streams of the TSS visa.

Access to the GTS is not guaranteed. You must be able to demonstrate your need to access the scheme. If you can do this, you will be invited to enter into an agreement with the Government under the agreement stream of the TSS visa. Only then will you be able to sponsor workers for a TSS visa under the GTS.

The following information is to help employers decide whether to approach us to access the GTS.

What is the purpose of the GTS?

The GTS is designed to benefit Australia and Australian workers.

It is for bringing globally mobile, highly-skilled and experienced staff to Australia, who can act as 'job multipliers' in Australian businesses, helping them to hire more local staff and fill critical areas of need.

Any position filled through a GTS agreement must provide opportunities for Australians. These opportunities include the:

- creation of new jobs for Australians
- transfer of skills and knowledge to Australian workers.

An employer must demonstrate how these opportunities are being realised throughout the life of any GTS agreement.

What are the 2 GTS streams?

- **Established Business stream** allows employers who are accredited sponsors to employ highly-skilled individuals with cutting-edge skills to contribute to innovation in an established business, and help make Australian businesses and their Australian employees the best at what they do.
- **Startup stream** allows employers to sponsor highly-skilled individuals with cutting-edge skills to contribute to Australia's developing startup ecosystem and bring new ideas, new jobs, new skills and new technology for Australia. This stream is for startups operating in a technology based or STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) related field. Startups must be endorsed by the independent GTS startup advisory panel.

Is the GTS right for my business' need?

Before considering the GTS pilot, you must first determine that the position(s) cannot be filled by Australian workers.

You will also need to be able to demonstrate that you cannot fill the positions through the existing skilled visa programs.

Many of these visa options are subject to occupations being available on the [Lists of eligible skilled occupations](http://www.border.gov.au/trav/work/work/skills-assessment-and-assessing-authorities/skilled-occupations-lists) [<http://www.border.gov.au/trav/work/work/skills-assessment-and-assessing-authorities/skilled-occupations-lists>]. These lists are reviewed regularly by the [Department of Jobs and Small Business](https://www.jobs.gov.au/SkilledMigrationList) [<https://www.jobs.gov.au/SkilledMigrationList>] to ensure they are responsive to changes in the Australian labour market and regional variations across Australia. For further information about existing pathways see [Skilled Visa Options](http://www.border.gov.au/trav/work/empl/visa-options-comparison-charts) [<http://www.border.gov.au/trav/work/empl/visa-options-comparison-charts>].

Employer criteria

Details on the eligibility criteria are available on the [GTS factsheet \(387KB PDF\)](#)

[\[http://www.border.gov.au/WorkinginAustralia/Documents/global-talent-scheme-factsheet.pdf\]](http://www.border.gov.au/WorkinginAustralia/Documents/global-talent-scheme-factsheet.pdf).

For startups, in order to seek endorsement, your startup will need to meet at least one of the following requirements:

- the startup has received an investment of at least AUD50,000 from an investment fund registered as an [Early Stage Venture Capital Limited Partnership](#) [\[https://www.business.gov.au/assistance/venture-capital/early-stage-venture-capital-limited-partnership\]](https://www.business.gov.au/assistance/venture-capital/early-stage-venture-capital-limited-partnership)
- the startup has received an [Accelerating Commercialisation Grant](#) [\[https://www.business.gov.au/assistance/entrepreneurs-programme/accelerating-commercialisation\]](https://www.business.gov.au/assistance/entrepreneurs-programme/accelerating-commercialisation) at any time.

As the pilot progresses, we will review criteria for startups to consider how the GTS can assist a broader range of startup businesses in the future.

What is the relationship between the TSS program, Labour Agreement Stream and GTS?

The standard TSS program (Short-Term Stream and Medium-Term Stream)

This allows an employer to sponsor skilled workers where there is no Australian available. The main features of the standard TSS program are:

- main employer sponsored temporary work visa – (replaced the subclass 457 visa)
- visa requirements set out in Migration Regulations
- short-term stream (2 years) unless international obligations apply, medium-term stream (4 years)
- applicants must nominate an ANZSCO occupation on current skilled occupation lists
- occupation lists reviewed regularly.

The standard Labour Agreement stream

This stream of the TSS program is available when the standard TSS program does not cover employers' needs. It includes industry agreements for lower skilled positions, and concessions from standard TSS requirements. There are strong measures to protect the integrity of the TSS program. The main features of the Labour Agreement stream are:

- the option to negotiate variance from standard TSS visa requirements
- agreements can be company specific or designed for use in a specific industry or geographic area
- access to occupations that are not on current occupation lists at ANZSCO skill levels 1-4
- visa validity of up to 4 years, and can negotiate access to permanent residency pathway.

The GTS

A GTS agreement is available where an employer needs to fill a small number of high-skill, niche roles that cannot be filled through existing visa programs. Compared to standard Labour Agreements, the GTS provides faster processing and more flexible concessions. Approved businesses must first meet specific criteria and requirements to be considered for the GTS.

The main features of the GTS are:

- 2 streams – established business and startups
- higher earnings thresholds for visa applicants than under the standard TSS stream
- the ability to negotiate variance from standard TSS visa requirements
- agreement processing is prioritised
- access to highly-skilled roles for trusted employers - not restricted to occupation lists
- visa validity of up to 4 years, and access to permanent residency pathway
- negotiable age requirements on permanent residence pathway.

Next steps if you think your business is eligible

| Step | Process | Timing |
|------|--|----------------------------|
| 1 | <p>Indicate your interest in the GTS</p> <p>If your business meets all of the above criteria for the stream you are interested in, email globaltalentscheme@homeaffairs.gov.au with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business name and ABN/ACN • Description of the positions required and evidence that the positions are not available or are restricted on the eligible skilled occupations lists. <p>If you are seeking access to the startup stream, please also indicate which of the following qualifying thresholds you meet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an investment of at least AUD50,000 from an investment fund registered as an Early Stage Venture Capital Limited Partnership [https://www.business.gov.au/assistance/venture-capital/early-stage-venture-capital-limited-partnership]. Provide evidence of this investment. • receipt of an Accelerating Commercialisation Grant [https://www.business.gov.au/assistance/entrepreneurs-programme/accelerating-commercialisation]. | Determined by the business |
| 2 | <p>Complete a GTS request form</p> <p>We will send you a GTS request form if your business is eligible for consideration for the scheme.</p> <p>You will need to complete the form and return it with the required supporting documentation including evidence of labour market testing [http://www.border.gov.au/visas/supporting/Pages/482/labour-market-testing-requirement.aspx].</p> <p>If you are a startup, we will arrange for your business to be assessed by the GTS startup advisory panel.</p> | Determined by the business |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 3 | Our assessment We will make an assessment based on the information you have provided. If the information provided is incomplete it will delay process times significantly, and your request might be declined. | 6-11 business days (for complete applications) |
| 4 | Sign your agreement If your business meets the criteria to enter into a GTS agreement we will send you an agreement for signature. | Determined by the business |
| 5 | Nomination and visa application Once an agreement has been executed, you will be provided with a unique code (Permission Request ID). You must use this when you lodge nomination applications online for overseas workers. Nominated workers can then apply for a TSS visa online and will be assessed under the criteria established under the GTS agreement. | Nominations will be decided within 5 business days. Visa applications will be decided within 5 business days. |

Useful links

- [TSS visa sponsorship obligations \[http://www.border.gov.au/visas/supporting/Pages/482/sponsorship-obligations-monitoring-sanctions.aspx\]](http://www.border.gov.au/visas/supporting/Pages/482/sponsorship-obligations-monitoring-sanctions.aspx)
- [TSS accredited sponsor status \[http://www.border.gov.au/visas/supporting/Pages/482/sponsorship-accreditation.aspx\]](http://www.border.gov.au/visas/supporting/Pages/482/sponsorship-accreditation.aspx)
- [Skilled Migration Occupation Lists \[https://www.jobs.gov.au/SkilledMigrationList\]](https://www.jobs.gov.au/SkilledMigrationList)

Working with stakeholders throughout implementation

The Government has worked closely with stakeholders to design and implement the GTS pilot.

The Minister established an Industry Advisory Group (IAG) to support this.

The IAG is providing ongoing targeted industry advice to the Government to help guide and review the GTS pilot.

The IAG is made up of industry experts from a variety of fields including startups, tech and biomedical sectors, as well as organisations representing businesses and universities all over Australia.

Organisations represented on the IAG include:

- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Australian Information Industry Association
- Business Council of Australia
- Cochlear
- Fragomen
- Innovation and Science Australia
- StartupAUS

- Universities Australia

The Government is committed to engaging with interested parties throughout the GTS pilot.

Do you have suggestions on how we can improve the GTS? Contact us at globaltalentscheme@homeaffairs.gov.au

Supporting Innovation in South Australia

What is the Supporting Innovation in South Australia scheme?

Startups are important for the future prosperity of the Australian economy. Startups generate new jobs, drive innovation and bring opportunities to diversify our economy.

This pilot scheme will:

- complement existing visas for startups and entrepreneurs in the *Business Innovation and Investment* program
- ensure Australia remains open and competitive in attracting the best and brightest entrepreneurial talent needed to drive innovative ideas to commercial reality.

How will this scheme be implemented?

We are working closely with the South Australian Government to develop this pilot scheme for implementation in 2018. Subject to a successful review, the scheme will roll out nationally in 2019.

More information about this scheme is available in a media release by the Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration and Border Protection, the Hon Peter Dutton MP – see [Supporting Innovation in South Australia](http://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/peterdutton/Pages/supporting-innovation-in-south-australia.aspx). [<http://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/peterdutton/Pages/supporting-innovation-in-south-australia.aspx>]

Other pathways

For further information about the other migration pathways we offer to support Australian businesses and the growth of talent and innovation for Australia see [Australia's skilled visas](http://www.border.gov.au/trav/work/skilledvisas) [<http://www.border.gov.au/trav/work/skilledvisas>].



Global Talent Scheme

| Established Business | Startup |
|--|--|
| Employer criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate that access to the GTS will support job opportunities and skills transfer for Australians.• Labour market testing evidence for the specific positions as part of request for a GTS agreement.• The employer must be in good standing with relevant regulatory agencies, including compliance with immigration and workplace laws.• Must be publicly listed or have an annual turnover of at least \$4 million for each of the past 2 years.• Be endorsed as a TSS accredited sponsor. | Employer criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate that access to the GTS will support job opportunities and skills transfer for Australians.• Labour market testing evidence for the specific positions as part of request for a GTS agreement.• The employer must be in good standing with relevant regulatory agencies, including compliance with immigration and workplace laws.• Operates in a technology based or STEM-related field (eg digital, biomedical, agtech).• Independent startup advisory panel will assess and endorse the business as a viable and genuine startup. |
| Applicant and position criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must meet health, character and security requirements.• No familial relationship with directors/shareholders.• Qualifications must be commensurate with the highly skilled role.• At least 3 years work experience directly relevant to position.• Capacity to pass on skills/develop Australians.• Position must have minimum annual earnings equivalent to the Fair Work High Income Threshold (\$145,400 as at 1 July 2018) | Applicant and position criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must meet health, character and security requirements.• No familial relationship with directors/shareholders.• Qualifications must be commensurate with the highly skilled role.• At least 3 years work experience directly relevant to position.• Capacity to pass on skills/develop Australians.• Minimum annual earnings at the market salary rate, but not less than \$80,000. This can include equity, but must have a cash component that is no less than the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (currently \$53,900). |
| Features <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access up to 20 positions per year (applicant and position criteria must be satisfied on each occasion).• Flexibility in certain visa criteria, including access to 4 year TSS visas.• Transitional pathway to permanent residence after 3 years, including age cap concessions.• Simpler agreement applications and faster processing of agreements.• If the position ceases the visa holder will have 60 days to find a new sponsor and a new visa or depart Australia. | Features <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access up to 5 positions per year (applicant and position criteria must be satisfied on each occasion).• Flexibility in certain visa criteria, including access to 4 year TSS visas.• Transitional pathway to permanent residence after 3 years, including age cap concessions.• Simpler agreement applications and faster processing of agreements.• If the position ceases the visa holder will have 60 days to find a new sponsor and a new visa or depart Australia. |

Timeframes

- July 2018: Launch of the Global Talent Scheme pilot
- July 2018-June 2019: Periodic review and refinement