

UK Work Permits for Musicians Overview

Canadian musicians have to apply for a Tier 5 CoS UK Work permit to perform in the UK.
Below are the details on the various options, including cost and timelines.

Tier 5 Certificate of Sponsorship Work Permits

The Tier 5 Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) is a UK temporary work permit. It is required for musicians and their crew who are performing in the UK, whether paid or unpaid (such as a showcase). Permits can be used for multiple entries and can be issued for a 3 month period. Band and crew all require this permit to work in the UK. Any stays in the UK longer than 3 months require a Visa prior to entry (which is a different process than the Tier 5 CoS permit).

How to apply: You will need a UK sponsor to apply for this permit. A sponsor is a registered company who can apply for the Tier 5 CoS permit, the sponsor will facilitate the submission of the application. There are several sponsorship agencies who will provide this service. If you are an artist with a UK agent or tour promoter they might be registered as a sponsor; it is advisable to check with them prior to going any further. Sound Diplomacy – a Canadian music export consultant company with offices in the UK - offers sponsorship as a service. Contact information for them is below. You will be required to submit personal information (Passport info, addresses, DOB) for all band and crew, as well as entry and exit dates.

Cost: 21 Pounds for each musician or crew's individual Tier 5 CoS plus the fee your sponsor may charge for processing. Sound Diplomacy is charging a flat all in fee of 121 Pounds which covers 1-4 musicians plus 50 Pounds for each additional musician (fees are quoted as of Oct 30, 2015 and may vary depending on sponsor and on complexity of legal and citizenship status of band/crew).

Timeline: Applications can be made 3 months from entry point to within a day of travel. It is advisable to begin work on the permit and secure a sponsor a minimum of 4 weeks from your date of travel to the UK.

Tips: You will receive a CoS number which you must have when you enter the UK. You will be asked for it by UK border officers, so make sure each person in your party has the number and has each a valid CoS number attached to their name.

If you want to enter the UK multiple times on one permit you must let your sponsor know at the time of application.

Promotional performance opportunities can count as eligible performances to extend your permit.

You have a two week grace period after your last performance to remain in the UK.

Taxes: Canadian Artists will be subject up to a 20% withholding tax of performance revenue, you are able to file a UK tax return to have it returned, or show the amount as taxes paid on your Canadian tax return. Ask your agent or sponsor for further information. Tax in the UK is governed by the FEU – and is detailed in the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/topic/personal-tax/foreign-entertainer-rules>

Registered independent sponsors:

Sound Diplomacy – Canadian music export consultants <http://www.sounddiplomacy.com/>

T&S Immigration – UK Immigration and Work Permit Sponsors <http://www.tandsimmigration.co.uk/>

UK Gov info on the Tier 5 for Musicians – Overview of the Tier 5

<https://www.gov.uk/tier-5-temporary-worker-creative-and-sporting-visa/overview>

Further key info on Tier 5 CoS page 119 of the following document re 3 month CoS rule:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/461312/tier_2_5_sponsor_guidance_04_15_word_v1_2.pdf