


UK eGates

Faster Entry to the UK to enhance the welcome experience of travellers arriving is one of the Home Office priorities, hence there are now just over 260 eGates across 15 air and rail terminals across the UK. These gates are automated self-service barriers managed by the UK Border Force which travellers can use instead of having the face to face passport checks at the immigration desks.



These eGates function by cross checking the information the UK hold in their data base against the information contained in the chip located in electronic passports (which must have this symbol ) in conjunction with the travellers' biometrics and demographics details stored in their passport chip.

EU ID cards are not compatible with the eGates technology as it cannot read or capture the biometrics or demographics data from such documents. Therefore, travellers must see a UK Border Force officer at the desk to have their EU ID cards checked.

Who can use the eGates?

These gates can be used by those who are:

- aged over 12 (12 to 17-year olds must be accompanied by an adult)
- a British citizen
- a national of an EU country (Brexit transition period), Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland or the USA
- a member of the Registered Traveller Service which covers other 30 plus countries across the globe

Who are advised to not use the eGates?

Because eGates do not actually place a stamp on passports which is vital to activate Entry Clearance visas or to set the period allowed to remain in the UK, travellers should not use the eGates, even if they are entitled to, if they are coming to the UK:

- for short term study (less than and up to six months)
- with a Tier 5 Creative and Sporting Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) for short-term assignments (up to 3 months)
- to carry out Permitted Paid Engagements
- as the family member of an EEA national seeking to join them permanently in the UK and they are a national of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea or the USA
- to work and holding a non-activated Entry Clearance visa

If these travellers have gone through the eGates, they must go to a Border Force officer and explain the situation to obtain a stamp on their passport before leaving the Security Zone of the port of entry.

Tier 2 and 5 Sponsor Licence Holders Compliance and Visa Activation Issues.

Entry Clearance visas are not electronically activated. UK Border Force officers activate visas by simply placing a stamp on passports, which will confirm the immigration capacity the visa holder is coming into the UK and consequently determine the allowable activities they can undertake.

Compliance issues may arise if visas have not been activated as per above because migrants have used eGates or they have entered the UK before the validity of their visas. These employees may not be allowed to work in the UK and if they do, they may be committing a criminal offence and their respective Sponsor License holders may not be compliant with their sponsoring duties and obligations under the Tier 2 and 5 rules, even if they have undertaken a Right to Work Check (statutory excuse).

If you have any immigration questions or are concerned about the above, please contact us and we will be glad to assist you.