

# Home Office immigration data excluding asylum seekers: quality assurance of administrative data used in population statistics, Feb 2017

Quality assurance undertaken on administrative data for Home Office Immigration data used within Population Statistics Division (PSD) publications.

Contact:  
Pete Large  
pop.info@ons.gsi.gov.uk

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# 1 . Introduction

Population Statistics Division (PSD) within the Office for National Statistics (ONS) requests the following data from the Home Office (HO) covering international migrants:

- certificates of sponsorship to work
- certificates of acceptance to studies
- grants of extension of leave to remain for work
- grants of extension of leave to remain for study
- entry clearance visa
- asylum seekers
- asylum seeker support

The first 4 of these datasets are used in the calculation of short-term international migration estimates and also contribute to the local authority distribution of long-term international migration when processing the mid-year population estimates. The fifth item is used as a comparator in Migration Statistics Quarterly Report. There are separate reports which cover the use of [asylum seeker data](#) and [asylum support data](#).

This report covers the processes, from data collection through to publications produced by PSD and focuses on quality assurance. It identifies potential risks in data quality and accuracy as well as details of how those risks are mitigated.

This report does not cover the publication of sponsorship and visa statistics; its purpose is to examine the quality assurance processes that the data go through when they are used as a data source in other statistics. This report is intended to supplement existing documentation:

- [migration statistics quarterly report user information](#)
- [Home Office user guide to immigration statistics](#)
- [methodology to estimate short-term international migration for local authorities in England and Wales](#)

This report has been published in a bid to help you understand data processing and provide reassurance that the subsequent statistics produced by PSD using these data are suitably robust.

Within PSD, these datasets were assessed separately by relevant teams using the [UK Statistics Authority's Quality Assurance of Administrative Data Toolkit](#). The results of those assessments are that these 5 administrative data sources received an A1 rating.

The A1 rating means that a basic level of assurance is required for these sources and this report will provide information to meet this level of assurance. The scores provided by each team and the rationale behind those scores will be provided, in terms of both the risk and profile components, later in this report. If you feel that this report does not adequately provide this assurance then please contact [pop.info@ons.gov.uk](mailto:pop.info@ons.gov.uk) with your concerns.

The toolkit outlines 4 areas for assurance; the rest of this report will be split into these areas, with further subdivisions. The areas for assurance are:

- operational context and administrative data collection
- communication with data supply partners
- quality assurance principles, standards and checks applied by data suppliers
- Producer's quality assurance investigations and documentation

## 2 . Operational context and administrative data collection

Someone wanting to enter the UK legally, who is not a UK citizen, a European Economic Area (EEA) national <sup>1</sup> or a Swiss national, can apply to the Home Office (HO) for a visa, for work or study and obtain a certificate from a sponsoring employer or educational institution. A points-based system (PBS) is used for managing immigrants to the UK and contains a 5-tier framework. Applicants require a certain number of points in the assessment in order to obtain entry clearance or leave to remain. Eligibility criteria for a visa and the type of visa required for an individual can be found on the government's [check if you need a UK visa](#) webpage.

The tiers are:

- tier 1 – high value individuals, such as entrepreneurs, graduate entrepreneurs, investors and exceptional talent
- tier 2 – skilled workers with a job offer in the UK from a registered employer, such as ministers of religion, sportspersons and intra company transfers
- tier 3 – low-skilled workers needed to fill specific temporary labour shortages
- tier 4 – students who want to study in the UK (applicants must have an offer of a place at a registered educational establishment→)
- tier 5 – temporary workers, such as those from sporting or creative industries, charity workers, religious workers, government authorised exchange or international agreement and a youth mobility scheme

For more information on the tier system, see the [Immigration Rules](#).

### 2.1 Certificates of sponsorship to work

Organisations wanting to employ workers, who are not UK citizens, EEA nationals or Swiss nationals, may need a sponsor licence for the workers to work in the UK (more information on this can be found in [UK visa sponsorship for employers](#)). In order to obtain a sponsor licence, an employer must apply to the HO. An employer needs to check whether their business is eligible to be a sponsoring employer, choose the PBS categories that they want to apply for a licence for, decide who will manage the sponsorship processes in the business and then apply for a licence online. The licence lasts for 4 years and is renewable.

Under the points-based system, workers can be sponsored for Tier 2 (skilled workers) and Tier 5 (temporary workers) visas. All workers need to obtain a certificate of sponsorship to work from a licensed employer before they are eligible to apply for a Tier 2 or Tier 5 visa.

## 2.1.1 Employers

Organisations who want to sponsor overseas workers under the Tier 2 and Tier 5 of the PBS have to apply for a sponsor licence from HO.

Organisations have to show that they are a suitable and eligible organisation when applying for a sponsor licence. In order to confirm that the organisation is eligible, it has to show that it is genuine and has an operating or trading presence in the UK. Suitability criteria include whether the organisation has the appropriate human resources and recruitment systems in place to meet the sponsor duties and that they can offer a genuine vacancy which meets the criteria of the category being applied for. A sponsor licence is valid for 4 years and can be renewed.

The organisation has to register online on the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) website. They complete an online application form, pay a fee and submit their application, identifying which tiers and sub-categories they want to apply for a licence for. When the organisation makes an application, they must specify how many certificates of sponsorship to work they want to assign in each tier in the first year. They can apply for a licence for more than one tier and more than one category within a tier.

If their application is successful, a sponsor licence is granted to the organisation. UKVI will decide how many certificates the organisation will be allocated. Once a licence has been granted, a Sponsorship Management Service (SMS) account will be created for the organisation. The SMS account contains information about the sponsor licence and allows the organisation to allocate certificates and report changes relating to their licence and organisation.

The organisation then allocates certificates to workers when the job is suitable for sponsorship, using the SMS. The worker can then apply for a Tier 2 or Tier 5 visa using the certificate. A register of Tier 2 and Tier 5 sponsors is available on the Home Office website.

Compliance checks are carried out on employers on the sponsor registers. Licences can be suspended and revoked.

For more information, see [Tier 2 or Tier 5 worker guidance for employers](#).

## 2.1.2 Workers

A worker can apply for a Tier 2 (skilled workers) or Tier 5 (temporary workers) visa if they have been offered an appropriate job in the UK and are not a UK citizen, EEA national or Swiss national. They will need a certificate of sponsorship to work from a licensed sponsor before they can apply for a visa. They have to be eligible for a particular tier visa. When they receive a certificate, they have to apply for a visa within 3 months.

A worker, living outside the UK, must create an account when applying for a visa for the first time on the Visa4UK website. They can then make an application for a visa. The worker creates an account on the Visa4UK service in order to apply for Tier 2 or Tier 5 visa. The worker completes an online application form, pays a fee and books an appointment at a visa application centre. If successful, the worker receives a Tier 2 or Tier 5 visa. A worker can stay in the UK for the time given on the certificate, which can be up to 5 years, depending on the category.

For more information, see the [Tier 2 visa](#) and [Tier 5 visa](#) sections of the Home Office website.

The management system for the Tier 2 and Tier 5 visa application process is separate from the application process for a Tier 2 and Tier 5 sponsor licence and the database (SMS) for sponsors to maintain their certificates of sponsorship to work.

An applicant wishing to apply under the Tier 2 or Tier 5 categories requires a certificate of sponsorship to work and a student applying under Tier 4 requires a confirmation of acceptance for studies.

Other work or study routes in the UK include Tier 1 categories, short-term study (previously known as student visitors) categories and non-PBS work routes (including overseas domestic workers, UK ancestry and representatives of overseas businesses). People who enter on a standard visitor visa can, to a limited extent, study. Some people who have an entry clearance visa granted or been granted leave to remain may enter the UK multiple times.

## 2.2 Confirmation of acceptance for studies

### 2.2.1 Education providers

Education providers who want to enrol overseas students (students who are not UK citizens, EEA nationals or Swiss nationals) must become a licensed Tier 4 sponsor. A Tier 4 sponsor has to offer courses to full-time students in the UK. There are eligibility and suitability requirements for education providers applying for a sponsor licence. The education provider must show that all its sites meet acceptance education standards. They must achieve the required rating in either a Tier 4 educational oversight inspection or a statutory education inspection. A Tier 4 licence is valid for 4 years.

For a licence to be granted, an education provider must be a genuine education provider with acceptable education quality standards, operating lawfully in the UK and applying with the appropriate rules and regulations ([Tier 4 of the PBS: guidance for sponsors – applying for a Tier 4 licence](#)). It must also be able to carry out its duties as a sponsor. Acceptable education quality standards are assessed by an Educational Oversight body or statutory education inspections. UKVI consider whether an education provider is eligible and suitable to hold a Tier 4 licence.

For short courses in the UK, overseas students can apply for a short-term student visa or short-term student child visa. A student can stay in the UK for 6 months on a short course or 11 months on an English language course if they are 18-years-old or over.

An education provider has to register online on the UK Visas and Immigration website. They complete an online application form, pay a fee and submit their application. When the education provider makes an application, they must specify how many confirmations of acceptance for studies they want to assign in the first year. A confirmation of acceptance for studies is a virtual document, containing a unique reference number, which must be given to the student. The student needs this information in order to apply for a Tier 4 visa.

UKVI processes applications for Tier 4 sponsor licences and notifies the applicant of the outcome. If successful, the sponsor's name is published on the Tier 4 register of sponsors and they become a probationary sponsor. Only after successfully passing a Basic Compliance Assessment ([Tier 4 of the PBS: guidance for sponsors – Tier 4 compliance](#)) after a year will a sponsor be granted Tier 4 Sponsor status. An allocation of confirmation of acceptance for studies for the first 12-month period will be given by UKVI. Once a licence has been granted, UKVI sets up an account for the education provider on the SMS. The SMS account contains information about the sponsor licence and allows the education provider to allocate confirmations to students and report changes relating to their licence.

Compliance checks are carried out on education providers on the sponsor registers. Licences can be suspended and revoked.

For more information, see [Tier 4 \(Students\) guidance for sponsors](#).

## 2.2.2 Students

Individuals, who want to attend an education course in the UK longer than 6 months and are not a UK citizen, EEA national or Swiss national, will need a Tier 4 visa. They must have an unconditional offer of a place on a course with a licensed Tier 4 sponsor (educational provider), who require a licence from the HO to provide courses for international students. They will need a confirmation of acceptance for studies from the licensed Tier 4 sponsor. They may apply for a visa no more than 3 months before the start date of the course of study as stated on the confirmation of acceptance for studies.

Students, living outside the UK, can make an application for a Tier 4 visa using the Visa4UK website. The student completes an online application form, pays the fee and books an appointment at a Visa Application Centre in the country where they are living. If successful, the student receives a Tier 4 student visa. For courses lasting 6 months or more, students can arrive in the UK a month before the start of the course. For courses lasting less than 6 months, students can only enter the UK a week before the start of the course. The length of time a student can remain in the UK after the end of the course varies.

For more information please see the [Tier 4 student visas](#) webpage.

The management system for the Tier 4 visa application process is separate from the application process for Tier 4 sponsor licences and the database for sponsors to maintain their confirmations of acceptance for studies.

## 2.3 Grants of extension of leave to remain for employment

People, who have permission to enter or stay in the UK with an appropriate visa or qualifying work permit, may be able to apply for an extension to stay in the UK under a Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 5 visa. For a Tier 2 visa, if the applicant has the same job and they are still working for the employer who assigned the certificate of sponsorship to work and earning the appropriate salary, the applicant is eligible to apply for an extension to stay under a Tier 2 visa. They may have to apply for an extension if they change occupation or change employer. They will require a new certificate of sponsorship to work.

For all visas, applicants must apply for an extension before the existing permission expires. The maximum time an individual can spend in the UK depends on the category they are in.

People in the UK, who are on a work-related visa may be able to apply to extend their visa. People who are in the UK can also apply to switch from another type of visa, under certain conditions. An individual can apply to change from another visa to a work-related visa. They must make an application online using the Home Office website (online applications for Tiers 2 and 5 only). There are restrictions on the categories which applicants can switch between while they are in the UK.

Applicants must apply for a change from another visa or scheme before the existing permission expires.

An applicant can apply online for an extension or switch to another visa on the Home Office website. They need to complete the application form, provide any supporting document and pay any fees. They require a certificate of sponsorship to work from a licensed sponsor.

A student cannot apply for an extension of leave to remain for employment, but must instead apply for a visa through the certificate of sponsorship route; more information can be found on the [guidance on switching to a Tier 2 visa](#).

## 2.4 Grants of extension of leave to remain for study

## 2.4.1 Extensions of leave to remain in the UK

Some students may be able to apply from within the UK to stay longer in order to continue their course or to study a new course. They must be in the UK and meet the eligibility requirements of a Tier 4 visa. They must apply before their current visa runs out.

## 2.4.2 Switch to a study visa

Someone may be able to switch to a Tier 4 visa if they are in the UK and can apply if either they hold certain visas or are eligible under certain schemes. They must apply before their current visa runs out (but no more than 3 months before their course starts) and within 6 months of receiving a confirmation of acceptance for studies.

An applicant can apply online for an extension or switch to another visa on the Home Office website. A confirmation of acceptance for studies is required by the applicant. They need to complete the application form, provide any supporting documentation and pay any fees.

## 2.5 Entry clearance visa data

Entry clearance visas are documents which allow a person to travel to and enter the UK. Visas are required by nationals in the [Immigration Rules](#) listed as needing a visa. The figures of entry clearance visas granted show intentions to visit, rather than actual arrivals and individuals can arrive at any time during the period that the visa is valid. Entry clearance visa data, therefore, provide an indication of the number of people who have an intention to enter the UK and are available on a timelier basis than admissions of passengers given leave to enter and estimates on long-term international migration that are published alongside them. However, they are only applicable to non-EU migrants.

The process involves the collection of information used by sponsors to assign certificates to people wanting to apply for a visa, from the SMS.

## Notes for Operational context and administrative data collection

1. The EEA comprises the 28 countries of the EU plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

## 3 . Communications with data supply partners

Our provision of data from the Home Office (HO), excluding entry clearance visa data and covered in this report (that is data relating to certificates of sponsorship to work, confirmation of acceptance for studies, grants of extensions of leave to remain for employment and grants of extensions of leave to remain for study), is not covered by a data-sharing agreement. We will be seeking a data-sharing agreement with HO, to cover the data provision, in the first half of 2017. The data we receive was previously covered by a data-sharing agreement and the supply we receive is in accordance with the previous data-sharing agreement.

We make an annual request to HO for the 4 administrative sources in July. The agreed delivery date is normally the last working day of August. The data requested is for the latest 4 quarters relating to the data year (that is quarters 1 and 2 of the current calendar year and quarters 3 and 4 of the previous calendar year). The data requested are grants of extensions to leave to remain for employment and grants of extensions to leave to remain for study, used certificates of sponsorship to work and used confirmation of acceptance for studies certificates. Data we receive contain record-level and aggregate information and are stored on restricted access drives.

The variables requested for certificates of sponsorship to work and confirmation of acceptance for studies data are:

- sponsor name
- sponsor licence
- sponsor postcode
- quarter and year
- length (3 to 12 months or greater than 12 months)
- tier (for certificates of sponsorship to work)

The variables requested for grants of extensions of leave to remain for employment and grants of extensions of leave to remain for study data are:

- outcome (whether the visa has been granted)
- work stream (tier)
- despatch date
- quarter and year
- postcode
- number of cases
- leave to remain length
- PBS grouping

The Population Estimates Unit (PEU) and the Migration Statistics Unit (MSU) independently check the data to ensure what has been received meets their requirements. Any issues with the data discovered by PEU or MSU during their quality assurance processes are logged and PEU then discuss and resolve the issues raised with the Home Office.

There are quarterly Migration Reporting Working Group (MRWG) meetings which act as a means to discuss:

- the progress toward publication of visa statistics
- any proposed changes for the future
- any risks and issues (such as processing issues) which exist or may emerge and the mitigation for those risks and issues

If there are any issues relating to the data, they are discussed and resolved with the Home Office. If a revision has to be made to the data, a new dataset will be supplied.

We have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with HO in relation to the supply of entry clearance visa data. This outlines the practical implications of which data shall be delivered by HO, when and is use by MSU in our statistical releases. The MoU covers the expected standards, quality and performance.

## 3.1 User engagement

We held a joint consultation with other government departments on the Government Statistical Service's international migration statistics outputs, last year.

PSD continually engages with users, through a variety of means, to understand how our outputs are meeting their requirements. Feedback provided tends to relate to the overall statistical methodology and the impact on the final statistics, rather than to any individual data source. To date no specific feedback on the use of these data sources have been provided.

## 4 . Quality assurance principles, standards and checks applied by data suppliers

This section details the checks and standards applied to the data prior to receipt by Population Statistics Division (PSD). The checks carried out by PSD upon receipt of the data are detailed in Section 5.

### 4.1 Certificates of sponsorship to work and confirmation of acceptance for studies

The sponsorship information is collected on the Home Office's (HO) Sponsorship Management System (SMS). The data contained in the SMS is administrative information used by the sponsors. It allows sponsors to:

- create and assign certificates and confirmations
- manage licence details
- renew allocations and apply for additional certificates and confirmations
- assign certificates and confirmations to workers and students

Before the datasets are sent to PSD, the figures are quality assured by the HO analyst creating the tables. The HO analyst compares the figures against regular reports produced by the team and the total figures against published figures, if they are available. As this is a regular request, the team will look at previous requests to ensure that a consistent methodology has been used. The tables are checked and quality assured by a second person before they are sent to PSD. The tables are sent with a cover sheet, confirming what data have been sent.

There is a service standard for sponsor licence applications to be dealt with within 8 weeks. As part of the performance monitoring, transparency tables are published each quarter by HO on UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) sponsorship activities. Tables are published on the number of sponsors registered on points-based system routes by tier, the number of new applications made in each tier by quarter and the length of time taken to process new applications. An online customer satisfaction survey is undertaken by UKVI, which includes all those who have had a decision on a visa application in the previous month.

The overall quality of the certificates of sponsorship to work and confirmation of acceptance for studies data is considered to be high. The level of missing data is very low. Data that are part of the measures of processing performance will be of high quality. Postcodes are supplied by employers and education providers and so may be less accurate and are not subject to the same quality checks as other variables.

Data quality issues are known relating to certain classification data. This variable is not used by PSD.

## 4.2 Grants of extensions of leave to remain for employment and grants of extensions of leave to remain for study

Information on grants of extensions of leave to remain is maintained on the Home Office's Case Information Database (CID).

Before the datasets are sent to PSD, the figures are quality assured by the HO analyst creating the tables. The HO analyst compares the figures against regular reports produced by the team and the total figures against published figures, if they are available. As this is a regular request, the team will look at previous requests to ensure that a consistent methodology has been used. The tables are checked by a second person before they are sent to PSD. The tables are sent with a cover sheet, confirming what data have been sent.

There is a service standard for decisions on extensions of leave to remain applications to be dealt with within 8 weeks. As part of the performance monitoring, [transparency tables are published each quarter by the HO on UKVI temporary and permanent migration tables](#). Tables are published on the number of temporary and permanent in-country visa applications received and input for each route and the percentage of temporary and permanent in-country visa applications, for each route, processed within service standards.

The overall quality of the data for the total number of those granted an extension to stay is considered to be high. The level of missing data on fields such as sex, category and nationality is low. Data that are part of the measures of processing performance will be of high quality. Postcodes are supplied by employers and education provider and so may be less accurate and are not subject to the same quality checks as other variables.

## 4.3 Entry clearance visa data

HO visa statistics are published independently as part of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are National Statistics and subject to assessment by the UK Statistics Authority. They must meet certain criteria, which include being:

- fit for purpose
- methodologically sound
- politically independent
- transparently produced

UKVI deals with the application stage of the entry clearance visa process. They both act as decision makers for visas applications and provide scrutiny of the workflow, to help avoid slow processing. UKVI conduct internal checks, for example sampling the decisions made by Entry Clearance Officers to formal quality assurance. The appeals process after decisions have been made is also a form of quality checking. External checks are also made in the form of regular reports by the Home Affairs Select Committee on the work of UKVI (and Border Force) and previous reports by the National Audit Office and the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. Data are produced in a variety of daily, weekly, or monthly reports as part of the management of casework. This helps identify emerging trends and could help flag up any issues.

When the data is passed to the Migration Statistics team within HO, quality and process checks are carried out. As part of the production process, the team check the file sizes of the data extracts received, undertake cross-checking of tables to ensure consistent totals and check for consistency against previous totals. Significant changes investigated with HO operational and policy teams.

After these reconciliation checks, the publication-ready tables and text are checked by a second member of the Migration Statistics team against the raw data. The prepared text is also checked against the publication-ready tables. Statisticians are responsible for checking that the commentary appropriately describes the trend seen in the data and is not biased.

Aside from this, ad hoc research has been conducted on several occasions comparing and explaining the differences between visa data with data sources from other government departments (such as International Passenger Survey data from ONS). The team also compare sponsorship data and visa data as they come from separate databases.

Overall, the data quality for the total numbers of entry clearance visas is considered to be high. These data:

- are administrative counts of HO's casework processes, which are defined in UK legislation and are recorded under detailed categories on the Home Office's administrative database
- are scrutinised closely as part of the performance monitoring of the Home Office: a wide range of checks are implemented, such as checks of the figures at the processing level by processing staff, topic owners and senior staff; this can involve comparing figures with previous quarters and checking the narrative around it for correctness and consistency
- are assessed as part of the Home Office's [Statement of Compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#); there is also separate QA of the operational and administrative processes behind it (that is the decision making process)
- have not, in recent years, had to be altered significantly between initial provisional totals released in February each year and subsequent revised totals released in the following August when the status of the data is altered to final
- undergo a reconciliation process: reconciliation includes sum checks and comparison of output files supplied to the HO with raw totals from underlying data sources, as well as comparison with internal management information, in a range of contexts
- the level of missing data on related fields such as nationality is very low, with such missing data reported as unknown and therefore no grossing, imputation or other estimation methods are used

## 5 . Producer's quality assurance investigations and documentation

### 5.1 Population Estimates Unit (PEU)

Population Estimates Unit (PEU) uses the following datasets:

- certificate of sponsorship to work
- confirmation of acceptance for studies
- grants of extension of leave to remain for employment
- grants of extension of leave to remain for study

Quality assurance checks carried out on the datasets include checking for missing and invalid values in each variable and duplication of entries, comparing total numbers for each tier with the previous year and checking that columns add to totals. Any queries are raised with contacts at the Home Office for further clarification.

PEU uses these data to distribute estimates of long-term international migration by local authority. This is undertaken to provide estimates at a lower level of geography than is available only using the International Passenger Survey (IPS).

## **5.2 Migration Statistics Unit (MSU)**

A set of datasets are provided by PEU to MSU for their short-term international migration (STIM) estimates by local authority for England and Wales. MSU uses 4 administrative data sources (certificate of sponsorship to work, confirmation of acceptance for studies, grants of extension of leave to remain for employment and grants of extension of leave to remain for study) for their short-term international migration (STIM) estimates by local authority for England and Wales.

MSU carry out sense checks on the datasets. They check what the current local authority boundaries are, that the data received uses those boundaries and that the correct year and quarters have been supplied. They compare the data for each quarter in the current year with data from previous years. Where there has been a large change, the team consider whether there is a plausible reason for any change and discuss any issues with the PEU team. They contact the supplier to highlight the time series issues that have been identified.

The final tables are quality assured within the team. The tables are produced by a member of the team and quality assured by a second person. Final tables (all, students and workers) are compared to previous years (by local authority, region and country).

The Migration Statistics Quarterly Report contains tables on work-related visas granted to non-EU nationals and sponsored visa applications to study from non-EU nationals. The data are sent to MSU in the form of embedded text. MSU check the narrative for sense to make sure that the message being given matches what the figures show. Completed table templates are sent from the Home Office to MSU, with the data from these tables used within corresponding downloadable Excel spreadsheets created within MSU. Percentage changes or numerical differences over time are checked by several different individuals within MSU for accuracy before they are signed off.

# **6 . Conclusions**

## **6.1 Strengths and limitations**

The main strengths and limitations of these datasets are that:

- the data cover a known gap in the coverage of the International Passenger Survey, allowing distribution to local authority
- the data are complete
- information on expected length of stay for work or study is included on the data provided to help determine whether an applicant is a long- or short-term international migrant
- the data are held on a live system and data are provided on this basis rather than as snapshots which remain stable over time
- they are measures of intent: they do not measure the length of period of residence, which could be longer or shorter than originally intended
- entry clearance visas can be for less than 12 months and as a result may not represent the definition of a long-term international migrant
- there are no means to assess whether entry clearance visas or grants of leave to remain are used
- an individual can have multiple applications concurrently or consecutively; the datasets contain all applications and do not consolidate applications for an individual, there is no linkage made between the datasets
- the geo-referencing information is provided at postcode level, rather than full address
- postcode is for the employer or education provider rather than the home address of the individual for certificates of sponsorship to work and confirmations of acceptance to studies; for grants of extensions of leave to remain home address is provided

## 6.2 Level of assurance

### 6.2.1 Population Statistics Unit (PEU)

PEU uses certificates of sponsorship to work, confirmations of acceptance for studies, grants of extension of leave to remain for employment and grants of extension of leave to remain for study to help distribute international migrants to local authority level. For this purpose there is a low risk of quality concerns as the data:

- represent people who have applied for entry and subsequently been issued with an entry clearance visa
- have a standard collection process
- are extracted from the management system used to manage applications
- provide indicators as to those who are likely to be long- and short-term international migrants
- are complete
- undergo a suitable level of data quality checks

These datasets feed into the long-term international migration component of the mid-year population estimates. These statistics are used to make decisions on resource allocation by central and local government; they also feed into other National Statistics as denominators across the civil service. As such they are deemed to have a higher public interest profile.

PEU deem certificates of sponsorship to work, confirmations of acceptance for studies, grants of extension of leave to remain for employment and grants of extension of leave to remain for study to have an A1 assurance rating: basic assurance.

## 6.2.2 Migration Statistics Unit (MSU)

MSU use certificates of sponsorship to work, confirmations of acceptance for studies, grants of extension of leave to remain for employment and grants of extension of leave to remain for study to help distribute short-term international migrants to local authority level. For this purpose there is a low risk of quality concerns as the data:

- represent people who have applied for entry and subsequently been issued with an entry clearance visa
- have a standard collection process
- are extracted from the management system used to manage applications
- provide indicators as to those who are likely to be long- and short-term international migrants
- are complete
- undergo a suitable level of data quality checks

These datasets feed into the short-term international migration estimates. These statistics are of interest to the media and general public, but it is the long-term international migration statistics that are of greater interest in the media and in policy terms, as such MSU deem the short-term international migration estimates to have a medium public interest profile.

MSU deem certificates of sponsorship to work, confirmations of acceptance for studies, grants of extension of leave to remain for employment and grants of extension of leave to remain for study to have an A1 assurance rating: basic assurance.

The entry clearance visa data is used as a comparator with the long-term international migration estimates and do not feed into the estimates themselves. The data also go through a series of checks. For these reasons they are deemed by MSU to have a low risk of quality concerns.

Entry clearance visa statistics are published in Migration Statistics Quarterly Report, alongside the long-term international migration estimates. As such they are deemed to have a higher public interest profile, due to the media and policy interest in migration statistics.

MSU deem entry clearance visa data to have an A1 assurance rating: basic assurance.