

Working in New Zealand (Work Visa)

If you are not a New Zealand or Australian citizen/resident, you will need a work visa to work in New Zealand.

A work visa allows you to work in New Zealand. It will normally include an expiry date and any conditions, such as the type of employment, your employer's name and where you are permitted to work in New Zealand.

Work visas are issued for various periods. There is no limit on the number of subsequent work visas that you can obtain.

If you are coming to New Zealand to settle permanently and to invest in or set up a business, there are a number of business residency and work to residency processes that may be more appropriate. **Queen City Law** can advise you on these processes and the consequent outcomes if required.

IMPORTANT: New Zealand's immigration legislation allows the Minister of Immigration to make and implement immigration policy as and when required, and this includes the processes and criteria described in this fact sheet. As a result, immigration policy and criteria can – and do – change without warning, so it is essential that you check the details in this newsletter against the most current Immigration New Zealand information (available online at www.immigration.govt.nz) before making an application.

Applying for a work visa

A work visa application normally takes up to 60 days to process – although this can depend on where you apply, application levels and your particular circumstances.

Immigration requirements change frequently and we advise you to check with us or the Immigration New Zealand (INZ) before preparing your application. The INZ website at www.immigration.govt.nz contains more information on the application process and requirements. All INZ forms are available from Queen City Law and can also be downloaded from the INZ website.

Successful applicants will need:

- to satisfy health and character requirements; and
- provide evidence of a job offer; and
- provide evidence that your employer is unable to fill your position from the New Zealand labour market.

Health and character requirements

If you intend to stay in New Zealand for longer than 12 months, you must provide medical and X-ray certificates, and if for longer than 24 months, police certificates from your country of citizenship and from any country in which you have lived for five or more years since the age of 17 years.

At the time of application, medical certificates and X-rays must be less than three months old and police certificates must be less than six months old.

Advice and information

Queen City Law, PO Box 6908, Wellesley Street, Auckland

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Email: marcus@queencitylaw.co.nz or brad@queencitylaw.co.nz or
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A list of international medical practitioners authorised to complete medical certificates is available from the INZ website.

Offer of employment

You will need to provide evidence of an offer of employment, which must contain a full job description, including:

- Job title;
- Address of place of employment;
- Type of work;
- Duties and responsibilities involved;
- Details of pay and conditions;
- Any qualifications, registration, experience or training required;
- Duration of the job; and
- How long the offer will remain open.

If there is a known regional labour market skills shortage of your skills of occupation, the INZ Skills Shortages scheme can help streamline the work permit and visa process. You can check the current list of Skills Shortages on the INZ website.

Employers' evidence

You will also need to supply details and evidence provided by your prospective employer of their efforts to find suitable New Zealanders for this position and the reasons why they are unable to employ or readily train suitable New Zealanders for this position.

As employers wishing to employ foreign workers to work in New Zealand must comply with all relevant employment and labour law in force in New Zealand, they may be required to provide evidence and/or confirmation of past and future compliance with employment and labour law.

INZ must be satisfied that job offers made to foreign workers are both genuine and sustainable for the period of the proposed employment contract.

What about your family members?

Your accompanying partner and children should apply for a visit or student visa – more details on these are available from Queen City Law.

Specific purpose or event work visa – including secondment

Work visas are also available for senior staff or business specialists on secondment, who have a job offer either within a substantial New Zealand company or a New Zealand subsidiary of an overseas company, provided they can prove they are:

- Coming to New Zealand for a specific purpose or event for a particular period; and
- Skilled in areas relevant to that specific purpose or event that are likely to benefit New Zealand; and unlikely to impact negatively on employment opportunities for New Zealand citizens or residents by virtue of their employment in New Zealand.

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Spouses and dependent children may also be issued with multiple journey visas for the same period. Dependent children may be issued with student visas, provided that they meet the standard student policy requirements.

Similar applications can be made for those seconded to New Zealand as chief executive or a senior staff member of a multinational company for which similar applications have been approved.

Remember, if you intend to stay in New Zealand for longer than 12 months, you must be able to satisfy health and character requirements (for over 24 months).

Advice and information

Queen City Law's Immigration Team can advise on all aspects of work visa applications. For further information contact:

For further information please contact:

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Disclaimer: This publication is necessarily brief and general in nature. You should seek professional advice before taking any further action in relation to matters dealt with in this publication.

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