

## **Interim General Skills Category Closure (General Skills Category effective 2 July 2003) – Questions and Answers**

### **Why has the Interim General Skills Category (IGSC) been closed?**

The IGSC has been closed from 12 noon (NZ time) 12 November 2003 because there are sufficient applications for residence in the system to meet the New Zealand Immigration Programme requirements for the year.

### **If the Interim General Skills Category has closed, does that mean I should apply under the General Skills Category?**

No. The IGSC was introduced in July 2003 and replaced the General Skills Category. Therefore you can not submit applications under either of these categories after 12 noon (NZ time) 12 November 2003.

### **My application was in the mail when the Government closed the IGSC – what does this mean for me?**

To be considered for residence under the IGSC your application must have been received by NZIS by 12 noon NZ time on 12 November 2003. If your application was received after this time it will be returned to you or your agent with your fee payment. Information about registering an Expression of Interest under the new Skilled Migrant Category will also be sent to you.

### **I was ready to apply and I have got my medical and x-ray certificate form completed. If I am successful in receiving an invitation to apply for residence will I need to get new medical and x-ray certificate form?**

If you are successful in receiving an invitation to apply in the early months of the Skilled Migration Category, NZIS will take into account dates of medical and x-ray certificates for those who may be affected by this closure.

### **I have a job offer, what do I tell my employer?**

You may be eligible for a work permit. Check the information about Work Policy on the immigration website at [www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz).

### **When can I send in my application for residence under the new category?**

The new Skilled Migrant Category will open in mid December. At that time, providing you meet the criteria, you will be able to

register an Expression of Interest in applying for residence under the new Skilled Migrant Category.

**Where can I get information about the new Skilled Migrant Category?**

The NZIS is beginning to release information about the new Skilled Migrant Category now. Information is available on the NZIS website ([www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz)) and will be updated as more details are confirmed and released.

**My GSC application was lapsed after the July 2003 changes, and I received notification of the lapsing in September. That letter said I had three months to lodge a new application using previously submitted certificates, can I still lodge a new application?**

No, not under the IGSC as this category has been closed. However the certificates can be used for the first month of the SMC.

## **Questions and Answers on the Skilled Migrant Category**

### **What's changing, when and why?**

#### **What's changing?**

The new Skilled Migrant Category announced by the Government in July is coming into effect in mid December 2003.

The new category replaces the Interim General Skills Category (IGSC) and is part of a new skilled migrant policy that will see New Zealand shift from being a passive recipient of residence applications to actively recruiting skills and talents that match our opportunities.

#### **When will this change take effect?**

The new policy will take effect in mid December – NZIS will make available information on key aspects of the policy and when it will take effect in December.

### **Why is the Government doing this?**

The change is part of the ongoing review of immigration policy that began after the 1999 general election. The new policy aims to increase the capacity of New Zealand by actively targeting skilled migrants who will settle well and contribute to the country's economic and social wellbeing.

### **Who will be affected?**

The new Skilled Migrant Category replaces the Interim General Skills Category (IGSC) and will affect anyone who wants to apply for residence in New Zealand as a skilled migrant.

### **Will this new policy prevent highly skilled migrants coming to New Zealand and working in low skill jobs?**

The government recognises that skilled employment is a key precursor to successful settlement. The new policy aims to ensure that skilled migrants coming to New Zealand are able to settle and contribute well by giving a high points weighting to ongoing skilled employment in New Zealand and offers of skilled employment in New Zealand.

### **What's different, how will it work, am I eligible?**

#### **How will it be different?**

To be considered under the new Skilled Migrant Category you need to be of good health, good character, have a reasonable standard of English and be no older than 55 years of age. People who meet these prerequisites and the minimum points score can submit an 'Expression of Interest'. These go into a pool from which a selection of the highest ranked Expressions of Interest is made. Based on the number of places available in the Skilled/Business stream of the annual Immigration Programme and the quality of the Expressions of Interest, those who score highest will be selected. If your Expression of Interest is selected it will undergo some verification, and if your details check out you will be invited to apply for residence.

#### **How can I apply under the new category?**

You will need to meet the prerequisites of health, character and English language. If you meet these prerequisites, are no older than 55 years of age and can claim the minimum points score (100), you can submit an 'Expression of Interest'. Expressions of Interest can be completed and submitted when the new category comes into effect in mid December 2003.

#### **How will I know whether I am eligible?**

Detailed information on the new category will be available when it comes into effect in mid December 2003. At that time you will also be able to complete an initial self-assessment (called a Quick Check), which will give you an idea of whether you should proceed to complete an Expression of Interest. This will be available online at [www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz).

### **How can I get an Expression of Interest form?**

Expression of Interest forms will be available online at [www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz) and from NZIS offices and New Zealand diplomatic and consular offices once the new category comes into effect in mid December. If you are invited to apply you will need to complete a short application form which will be provided at that time.

### **How can I tell whether my job/job offer is outside the Auckland region?**

The finer details of the policy should be available in December, including information around definitions in the points table.

### **How can I tell whether my job/job offer/work experience is in an identified growth area, cluster or area of absolute skills shortage?**

The finer details of the policy should be available in December, including information around definitions in the points table.

### **How will NZIS determine my ability to settle and contribute?**

Applicants will be assessed as having the ability to settle and contribute if they score points for:

- an offer of skilled employment in New Zealand, or
- current ongoing skilled employment in New Zealand, or
- full-time study for at least two years in New Zealand that has resulted in the award of a post-graduate tertiary qualification

If you do not score points in these areas, NZIS will interview you to gather further information on your potential to settle and contribute.

### **How many points will I need to qualify under the new category?**

A minimum of 100 points is necessary before your Expression of Interest can go into the pool, and you will also need to meet the prerequisites of health, character and English language. Based on the number of places available, those who score highest in terms of employability and capacity building and whose details check out will be invited to apply for residence.

**Can I make the points up from anywhere or do I need some from each points factor?**

You will require points for either work experience or qualifications.

**Are the definitions in the points table the same as under the IGSC?**

Not necessarily – finer details of the policy should be available in December, including information around definitions in the points table.

**How much will it cost to apply under the new Skilled Migrant Category?**

NZIS will have details on the fee structure for the new category available in December.

**How long will the application process take under the new system (from submitting EOI to approval for residence)?**

All Expressions of Interest which meet the prerequisite criteria and claim at least 100 points will go into a pool. Expressions of Interest will be selected from the pool periodically, rather than as they are submitted. It is not a case of first in, first served. The length of time from submitting an Expression of Interest to knowing whether you have been approved for residence will vary, depending on such things as when the Expression of Interest is selected from the pool through to the level of verification required. An advantage of the new category is that applications will only be invited from the number of people required to meet the annual Immigration Programme at that time. In the current year only 27,000 people are required.

**I'm in New Zealand at the moment but have to leave before the new category comes into effect - can I submit my Expression of Interest now?**

No. You will be able to download, complete and submit an Expression of Interest form from [www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz) once the new category comes into effect in mid December, providing you meet the prerequisites of health, character and English language, and claim the minimum points score (100).

**What English language requirements apply under the new category?**

Principal applicants (and their partners if that person is claiming points for a job or qualification) must have an English speaking background or an average IELTS score of 6.5. Secondary applicants aged 16 years and over must have an English speaking background, an average IELTS score of 5 or pre-purchase a specified amount of ESOL tuition.

## **Getting more information**

### **When can I get more detailed information on the new Skilled Migrant Category?**

NZIS will have more information available in December, including

- The key policy definitions, e.g. criteria concerning 'skilled employment', recognised qualifications, etc
- The fee structure
- The exact date from when you can submit an Expression of Interest
- A site map for the new Skilled Migrant component of the New Zealand Immigration Service website.

You can access this information as it becomes available through the NZIS website – [www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz) – or by contacting NZIS directly if you do not have access to the Internet. Full details will be available when the policy takes effect in mid December.

### **Where can I get information on the changes now?**

NZIS has produced a pamphlet on the new Skilled Migrant Category, which is available on the NZIS website at [www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz) or on request from NZIS. The pamphlet contains information about the criteria you must meet before you can submit an Expression of Interest, the new points framework, and an overview of the new process.

### **Why isn't more information available now?**

NZIS is giving people as much information now as it can so they can get an idea of what the new Skilled Migrant Category will entail. More information will be released as soon as it is available.