



INZ QUEENSTOWN UPDATE #1

Tena koutou katoa,

There have been a number of changes within the Queenstown Branch over the past few months and it is important that we keep you, our customers within the Queenstown region, informed. It is our intention to distribute this update bi-monthly as a forum to clarify INZ policy requirements and interpretation as well as respond to any issues as they arise. This edition includes the following information:

1. Introducing the Queenstown Team
2. Turnaround Times
3. Changing Labour Market environment
4. Frequently Asked Questions

We trust that this update will provide you with further context to the work we do and clarify what we need to better enable us to achieve the agreed timeliness standards we continue to strive towards. If there is any particular information you would like included in the next edition, please email louise.wearing@dol.govt.nz.

Naku noa, na

The Queenstown Team

1. Introducing the Queenstown Team

The Queenstown Branch now consists of four locally based staff with a Branch Manager based in Christchurch.

General Enquiries/Info	Phone: 0508 55 88 55 www.immigration.govt.nz	
Office Hours	Monday to Friday 9.30am to 3.30pm Office 11-201b Level 2, Dart House Remarkables Park Town Centre Hawthorne Drive, Queenstown	
Louise Wearing	Immigration Manager	louise.wearing@dol.govt.nz
Belinda Ballantine	Immigration Officer	belinda.ballantine@dol.govt.nz
Jason Hannah	Immigration Officer	jason.hannah@dol.govt.nz
Damian Milne	Immigration Officer	damian.milne@dol.govt.nz
Sarah Clifford	Acting Branch Manager (Christchurch based)	sarah.clifford@dol.govt.nz

2. Turnaround Times

As you may be aware, in March 2008, Immigration New Zealand (INZ) Queenstown agreed to process 90% of work permit applications in 5 working days. Recent feedback from a number of stakeholders within Queenstown has raised concern that turnaround times have not improved to the level promised.

It is acknowledged that INZ has not delivered on this undertaking to date and we apologise for this. We continue to move in the right direction with September turnaround at 71% in 5 days and a further improvement in October with 79% in 5 days.

3. Changing Labour Market Environment

INZ is acutely aware that the characteristics of Queenstown's needs are unique and we are actively working to ensure that we are well positioned to deliver a service that meets the needs of Queenstown employers in a timely manner while simultaneously ensuring the integrity of New Zealand's work policy, and in particular the "Kiwis first" approach, is upheld with any identified risks being satisfactorily mitigated.

One of the main components of the work permit assessment is the labour market check to determine the availability of New Zealand citizens or residents for the work on offer. Of significance for INZ are the challenges the changing economic environment and softening of the labour market are beginning to present to our work permit assessment process. Essential Skills policy requires that a labour market check must be conducted with Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) for any occupation at ANZSCO Skill level 4 or 5.

In the current environment, it would assist us greatly if applicants and employers could ensure that evidence of advertising and/or listing the vacancy with WINZ is provided at the initial lodgement stage. This will better enable us to deliver on the agreed timeliness standard, 90% in five working days.

4. Frequently Asked Questions

- **Regarding work permit applications, what turnaround are you currently achieving?**

In September, we achieved **71%** in 5 days. In October we achieved **79%** in 5 days.

- **Does INZ expect to improve processing times?**

Yes. We are actively working towards achieving the 90% in 5 days target. A number of factors impact on our ability to realistically meet this target such as:

- Incomplete applications that are held pending further information
- Lack of supporting evidence of advertising from employers or evidence of vacancy listing with WINZ
- Medical certificates requiring referral to the Medical Assessor

- **How many applications do you receive on average each week?**

We receive approximately 110-120 applications per week. Approximately 85% of the applications we receive are work permits/visas.

- **Are they all processed in Queenstown?**

Queenstown Branch has been endeavouring to process all the applications it receives. However, about 10-15 per week have been transferred to Dunedin Branch to assist us. This does create delays as a result of the physical transfer of applications. It is intended that all Queenstown applications will be processed in Queenstown in the future.

- **Why are some applications delayed?**

The most common reasons for processing delays are:

- Incomplete or no Employment Agreement
- Part time/casual employment (does not meet definition of full time employment - minimum 30 hours per week)
- Variation of Conditions (VOC) - requesting a variation of more than one condition
- Labour market check required
- Medical certificates requiring referral to the Medical Assessor
- Further comment required from applicants in relation to prejudicial information identified

- **Are many applications referred back to an applicant or employer?**

At present, about 30% of applications to the Queenstown Branch do not have sufficient information for us to be able to make a decision within 5 working days. This in turn reduces the possibility of achieving the 90% in 5 working days target.

About 3% of applications require referral to the Medical Assessor to assess and determine whether the applicant's health meets policy requirements. This process takes approximately four weeks to complete, possibly longer if further medical tests or specialist reports are required.

- **How long does this take?**

If the information missing is minor, our preference is to request it by telephone.

If comments to potentially prejudicial information are sought from applicants then correspondence is generally in writing and sent via post which can take 3-5 days.

- **What can employers and applicants do to help avoid those issues arising?**

- Please use the work permit checklist (attached)
- Clarify any uncertainty around required documentation prior to lodging the application
- Identify when medical or police certificates will be required and ensure these are obtained in advance
- Where appropriate, provide evidence with the application of the vacancy being listed with Work and Income NZ as well as evidence of attempts to recruit New Zealand citizens or residents for the position being offered.

- **What are the basic requirements of these work permits?**

The attached checklist sets out the basic information required.

- **What percentage of applications are approved?**

Approximately 95% of work permits are approved in Queenstown

- **What are the main reasons for applications being declined?**

- Not meeting minimum 30 hours per week
- Bona fides of applicants

Policy E5.1

A bona fide applicant for temporary entry is a person who:

- a. genuinely intends a temporary stay in New Zealand for a lawful purpose;
and
- b. in the opinion of a visa or immigration officer is not likely:
 - i to remain in New Zealand unlawfully, and
 - ii to breach the conditions of any permit granted.

- **What checks do you undertake to ensure there are no New Zealanders available to do the work?**

The large majority of work applications received by Queenstown Branch are for occupations classed as low skilled (ANZSCO Skill level 4 or 5). When determining whether there are New Zealand citizens or residents available to do the work, INZ policy requires that immigration officers must seek advice from WINZ.

If employers provide evidence of attempts to advertise and recruit New Zealand citizens or residents including listing the vacancy with WINZ at the time the application is lodged, this will facilitate a faster assessment process.

Matters an immigration officer may take into account when determining whether or not a labour market test is satisfied include but are not limited to:

- advice from the service delivery arm of the Ministry of Social Development, WINZ about the availability of New Zealand citizens or residents to do the work offered;
- evidence of a genuine attempt on the part of the employer to recruit New Zealand workers by way of advertising and/or use of other appropriate avenues of recruitment likely to attract New Zealand workers;
- advice from relevant stakeholders within the particular industry, including unions.
- the employer's case in support of an individual worker's application

- **Are the applications subject to the same scrutiny as those lodged elsewhere in the country?**

Yes, applications are subject to the same scrutiny in Queenstown as they are across New Zealand.

As stated before, INZ is acutely aware that the characteristics of Queenstown's needs are unique and we are actively working to ensure we are well positioned to deliver a service that enables employers to meet their labour and skill needs in a timely manner.

It is however important to ensure that the integrity of New Zealand's work policy is upheld and that identified risks are mitigated satisfactorily. As such it is important from our perspective to continue to build positive and collaborative working relationships with stakeholders within the region to ensure timely and appropriate communication of Immigration information.

WORK PERMIT ESSENTIAL SKILLS CHECKLIST

IMMIGRATION
NEW ZEALAND
A SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR



APPLICATION FEE

Acceptable Methods of Payment for Fees are Bank Cheque or Credit Card ONLY

- Work PERMIT \$200.00** **Work VISA (multiple journey) \$200.00** **BOTH \$400.00**

(A permit allows you to work in NZ in accordance with the conditions specified on the permit label. A Visa allows you to enter NZ in accordance with the conditions specified on the visa label. A permit expires when you leave NZ, so if traveling overseas a Visa is required in addition to a permit)

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Completed and signed Application form (INZ 1015)
- Passport or travel document (which must be valid for at least 3 months past the date you plan to leave NZ)
- A recent passport size photograph **attached** to the application

HEALTH

- An Immigration New Zealand Chest X-ray Certificate is required if you intend to stay in New Zealand for more than 6 months and up to 12 months and you are a citizen of a high incidence TB country or have spent 3 months or more in high incidence TB countries within the past 5 years, or
- An Immigration New Zealand Medical and Chest X-Ray Certificate is required if you have been or intend to stay in New Zealand for longer than 12 months and have not provided a Medical and Chest X-Ray Certificate in the last 24 months. Please note this includes time already spent in New Zealand.

Your Medical certificate must accompany your Work Permit Application

CHARACTER

- An original and translated Police Clearance Certificate is required if you intend to stay in New Zealand for longer than 24 months and have not provided one previously from your countries of citizenship and from any country which you have lived for more than 5 years or more since attaining the age of 17 years of age. For information on how to obtain a Police Clearance Certificate go to www.immigration.govt.nz/forms

FROM YOUR EMPLOYER

- A completed and signed Employer Supplementary Form (INZ 1113), including an assessment of the skill level of the position offered. Refer to ANZSCO at www.immigration.govt.nz
- A full time job offer from your prospective employer. **Please note:** Full time employment is defined as AT LEAST 30 hours or more per week. This must be clearly shown in the employment agreement.
- Evidence of your prospective employers' attempts to advertise and recruit a New Zealand citizen or resident worker for the job on offer including listing the vacancy with Work and Income.
- Evidence of Qualifications or Work Experience to demonstrate your suitability for the position offered. Please provide work references from your past employers, a C.V is not sufficient as evidence of your work experience.
- If the position offered to you is an **ANZSCO skill level 4 or 5**, we must seek advice from Work and Income with every application to determine if there are any unemployed New Zealanders available to take up the work. To shorten the application processing time it is recommended that the employer approach Work and Income themselves before supporting an application of an overseas worker.
- A **copy** of your Employment Agreement as this will **not** be returned to you.

APPLICATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION COMPLETE?

- Please bring your completed application to Immigration NZ and place in the Drop Box
- An envelope will be supplied to put your application in.
- You may be asked for additional information.
- **If your application is incomplete it will be returned to you**