NEW ZEALAND IMMIGRATION

27 November 2026

IMMIGRATION NEW ZEALAND INSTRUCTIONS: Amendment Circular No. 2026-41

AMENDMENTS TO THE IMMIGRATION NEW ZEALAND OPERATIONAL MANUAL

Introduction

This circular outlines changes to immigration instructions. A copy of the amended instructions is attached.

All immigration officers dealing with immigration applications should read the amendments and operate in accordance with the amended instructions from the effective date.

Note

The amendments described in this circular will be published in the Immigration New Zealand Operational Manual in due course.

Information about these changes is available on our website www.immigration.govt.nz

Description of changes

RV2.5 How do resident visa holders or former holders qualify for a permanent resident visa?

RV3.20 Special provisions

RV4.20 Special provisions for the grant of a second or subsequent resident visa

Immigration instructions have been amended to suspend the investment and business establishment Permanent Resident Visa pathways for people who have been granted residence other than under an investment or Business Investment category. This suspension takes effect 30 May 2027.

Variation of Travel Conditions and Second or Subsequent resident visa instructions have also been updated to enable resident visa holders who intended to demonstrate their commitment to New Zealand through the suspended investment or business pathways, and who meet the relevant requirements, to obtain a 24-month extension of their travel conditions or a further resident visa.

Changes to immigration instructions take effect 30 November 2026 and 30 May 2027.

Appendix 1: Amendments to Temporary Entry instructions effective on and after 30 November 2026

RV2.5 How do resident visa holders or former holders qualify for a permanent resident visa?

Upon application principal applicants, except for those to whom RV2.10 applies, will be granted a permanent resident visa if:

a. they either:

   i. hold a resident visa, and have held that resident visa continuously for at least 24 months at the time of application; or

   ii. have held a resident visa in the 90 days before the application is made, and had held that resident visa continuously for at least 24 months before it expired (provided RV1.25 does not apply); and

b. their first day in New Zealand as a resident (R5.66.1) was at least 24 months before the application is made; and

c. they can demonstrate a commitment to New Zealand by meeting the requirements set out in any one of the five subsections below (RV2.5.1 to RV2.5.20); and

d. they have met any conditions imposed under section 49(1) or section 50 of the Immigration Act; and

e. they meet character requirements for residence (see A5).

Note: Principal applicants who have been granted residence under the Migrant Investor, Active Investor Plus or Parent Retirement categories will be assessed under RV2.10 rather than RV2.5.

The immigration instructions enabling applicants to demonstrate a commitment to New Zealand by making an investment in New Zealand (RV2.5.10) or establishing a business in New Zealand (RV2.5.15) are suspended from 30 May 2027.

RV2.5.1 Significant period of time spent in New Zealand

A principal applicant has demonstrated a commitment to New Zealand if they have been in New Zealand as a resident for a total of 184 days or more in each of the two 12-month portions of the 24 months immediately preceding the date their application for a permanent resident visa was made (ie, in each of the two 12-month portions, a period or periods that amount to 184 days or more).

RV2.5.5 Tax residence status in New Zealand

A principal applicant has demonstrated a commitment to New Zealand if:

a. they have been in New Zealand as a resident for a total of 41 days or more in each of the two 12-month portions of the 24 months immediately preceding the date the application for a permanent resident visa was made (ie, in each of the two 12-month portions, a period or periods that amount to 41 days or more); and

b. they are assessed as having tax residence status (RV1.15.10) for the 24 months preceding their application.

RV2.5.10 Investment in New Zealand

a. A principal applicant has demonstrated a commitment to New Zealand if:

   i. he or she was approved a resident visa under the Business Investor Category, and has met any conditions imposed (see BI to 26/11/2007) under section 49(1) of the Immigration Act 2009 (except travel conditions); or

   ii. he or she has been approved a resident visa other than under the Business Investor Category before 30 November 2026, and has maintained an investment in New Zealand of N.Z.$1,000,000 or more that complies with the rules for investment funds set out in RV2.5.10(b) below for a period of 24 months or more after the date the resident visa was granted.

b. Principal applicants applying for a permanent resident visa under RV2.5.10 (a)(ii) must meet the following rules for investment funds:

   i. investment funds must originally have been transferred to New Zealand through the trading bank system, or have been earned or acquired lawfully in New Zealand; and

   ii. investment funds must be invested in New Zealand in New Zealand currency; and under normal circumstances, be capable of providing a commercial return; and

   iii. apart from the interest earned from the investment, investment funds must not be used for their own personal use, for instance investment in assets such as a personal residence, car, boat or similar; and

   iv. investment funds must not be used as collateral for any loan during the 2 year investment period, unless the money loaned remains within New Zealand and in New Zealand dollars only; and

   v. if the investment funds are moved from one investment to another during the two year period each investment must also meet the rules for investment funds.

Note: Investments in New Zealand with international exposure are acceptable only for the proportion of the investment that is retained in New Zealand.

For example, an investment in a unit trust with sole international exposure would completely fail to meet the above

requirement that an investment be "invested in New Zealand".

RV2.5.15 Establishment of a business in New Zealand

a. A principal applicant has demonstrated a commitment to New Zealand if they have been approved a resident visa under any category before 30 November 2026, and have successfully established a business in New Zealand that has been trading successfully and benefiting New Zealand in some way for at least 12 months immediately preceding the date the application for a permanent resident visa was made.

b. Principal applicants applying for a permanent resident visa under these instructions will be considered to have successfully established a business in New Zealand if:

   i. they have established or purchased, a business operating in New Zealand; or

   ii. they have invested in a business in New Zealand by purchasing 25% or more of the shareholding of an established business.

c. For the purposes of these instructions evidence that a business is trading successfully and benefiting New Zealand in some way is production of a set of the latest accounts relating to that business certified by a New Zealand chartered accountant and which confirm that in their view the business is a going concern.

RV2.5.20 Base established in New Zealand

a. A principal applicant has demonstrated a commitment to New Zealand if they have established a base in New Zealand. A principal applicant is considered to have established a base in New Zealand if:

   i. each and every member of their immediate family who was included in their application for a resident visa has resided in New Zealand for at least 184 days in the two year period immediately preceding the date the application for the permanent resident visa was made; and

   ii. they have been in New Zealand as a resident for a total of at least 41 days in the 12 months immediately preceding the date the application for the permanent resident visa was made; and either

   - they own and maintain a family home in New Zealand; or
   - they have been engaged in full time continuous genuine employment in New Zealand immediately preceding the date the application for the permanent resident visa was made.

b. For the purpose of these instructions applicants are considered to own and maintain a family home in New Zealand if:

   i. they have purchased a residential property in New Zealand within 12 months of their first day in New Zealand as a resident and still own that property either solely or jointly with members of their immediate family who were included in the application for a resident visa; and

   ii. they and/or members of their immediate family who were included in the application for a resident visa occupy that property.

c. Evidence of owning and maintaining a home in New Zealand includes but is not limited to items in the name of the applicant and/or members of their immediate family who were included in the application for a resident visa such as:

   - mortgage documents or title deeds to the residential property
   - rates demands
   - home and contents insurance cover
   - invoices for telephone, electricity, gas, or water
   - documents showing that household effects have been moved to New Zealand

d. For the purpose of these instructions, applicants are considered to have been engaged in full time continuous employment in New Zealand if they can produce evidence of genuine full time paid employment in New Zealand for a period or periods amounting to at least 9 months in the 24 months immediately preceding the date the application for the permanent resident visa was made. Employment involving payment by commission and/or retainer is not acceptable. Self-employment is acceptable if they can produce evidence of genuine lawful active involvement in the management and operating of a business in New Zealand which the principal applicant has established, purchased, or has a shareholding in.

Appendix 2: Amendments to Residence instructions, effective on and after 30 May 2027

RV2.5 How do resident visa holders or former holders qualify for a permanent resident visa?

Upon application principal applicants, except for those to whom RV2.10 applies, will be granted a permanent resident visa if:

a. they either:

   i. hold a resident visa, and have held that resident visa continuously for at least 24 months at the time of application; or

   ii. have held a resident visa in the 90 days before the application is made, and had held that resident visa continuously for at least 24 months before it expired (provided RV1.25 does not apply); and

b. their first day in New Zealand as a resident (R5.66.1) was at least 24 months before the application is made; and

c. they can demonstrate a commitment to New Zealand by meeting the requirements set out in any one of the three subsections below (RV2.5.1, RV2.5.5 or RV2.5.20); and

d. they have met any conditions imposed under section 49(1) or section 50 of the Immigration Act; and

e. they meet character requirements for residence (see A5).

Note: Principal applicants who have been granted residence under the Migrant Investor, Active Investor Plus or Parent Retirement categories will be assessed under RV2.10 rather than RV2.5.

The immigration instructions enabling applicants to demonstrate a commitment to New Zealand by making an investment in New Zealand (RV2.5.10) or establishing a business in New Zealand (RV2.5.15) are suspended from 30 May 2027.

RV2.5.1 Significant period of time spent in New Zealand

A principal applicant has demonstrated a commitment to New Zealand if they have been in New Zealand as a resident for a total of 184 days or more in each of the two 12-month portions of the 24 months immediately preceding the date their application for a permanent resident visa was made (ie, in each of the two 12-month portions, a period or periods that amount to 184 days or more).

RV2.5.5 Tax residence status in New Zealand

A principal applicant has demonstrated a commitment to New Zealand if:

a. they have been in New Zealand as a resident for a total of 41 days or more in each of the two 12-month portions of the 24 months immediately preceding the date the application for a permanent resident visa was made (ie, in each of the two 12-month portions, a period or periods that amount to 41 days or more); and

b. they are assessed as having tax residence status (RV1.15.10) for the 24 months preceding their application.

RV2.5.20 Base established in New Zealand

a. A principal applicant has demonstrated a commitment to New Zealand if they have established a base in New Zealand. A principal applicant is considered to have established a base in New Zealand if:

   i. each and every member of their immediate family who was included in their application for a resident visa has resided in New Zealand for at least 184 days in the two year period immediately preceding the date the application for the permanent resident visa was made; and

   ii. they have been in New Zealand as a resident for a total of at least 41 days in the 12 months immediately preceding the date the application for the permanent resident visa was made; and either

   - they own and maintain a family home in New Zealand; or
   - they have been engaged in full time continuous genuine employment in New Zealand immediately preceding the date the application for the permanent resident visa was made.

b. For the purpose of these instructions applicants are considered to own and maintain a family home in New Zealand if:

   i. they have purchased a residential property in New Zealand within 12 months of their first day in New Zealand as a resident and still own that property either solely or jointly with members of their immediate family who were included in the application for a resident visa; and

   ii. they and/or members of their immediate family who were included in the application for a resident visa occupy that property.

c. Evidence of owning and maintaining a home in New Zealand includes but is not limited to items in the name of the applicant and/or members of their immediate family who were included in the application for a resident visa such as:

   - mortgage documents or title deeds to the residential property
   - rates demands
   - home and contents insurance cover

- invoices for telephone, electricity, gas, or water
- documents showing that household effects have been moved to New Zealand

d. For the purpose of these instructions, applicants are considered to have been engaged in full time continuous employment in New Zealand if they can produce evidence of genuine full time paid employment in New Zealand for a period or periods amounting to at least 9 months in the 24 months immediately preceding the date the application for the permanent resident visa was made. Employment involving payment by commission and/or retainer is not acceptable. Self-employment is acceptable if they can produce evidence of genuine lawful active involvement in the management and operating of a business in New Zealand which the principal applicant has established, purchased, or has a shareholding in.

RV3.20 Special provisions

RV3.20.1 Australian citizens and residents

a. Persons who hold a resident visa (or are deemed to hold a resident visa) because they are holders of current Australian permanent residence visas, current Australian resident return visas or Australian citizenship may be granted a variation of travel conditions for 24 months from the date their current resident visa was granted.

b. Australian citizens or residents who:

   i. have held, or are deemed to have held, a resident visa for over 24 months; or

   ii. have been previously granted a variation of travel conditions under this provision;

   may apply for variations of travel conditions under the provisions of RV3.5 or RV3.10 or for a permanent resident visa (RV2).

RV3.20.5 Partners of New Zealand citizens who do not qualify for a permanent resident visa

a. Unless RV3.1 (c) applies, partners of New Zealand citizens who do not qualify for a permanent resident visa (see RV2), may be granted a further variation of travel conditions for a 24 month period, provided the New Zealand partner supports the application in writing and:

   i. the applicant's resident visa was obtained on the basis of their partnership with the same New Zealand citizen and the partnership is ongoing; or

   ii. an immigration officer is satisfied that the applicant has been living with the New Zealand citizen in a genuine and stable relationship for at least one year at the time of application.

b. Dependent children of the partner of a New Zealand citizen, who were included in that partner's residence class visa application, may be granted with a variation of travel conditions for a period of 24 months, equivalent to that of the partner's travel conditions.

c. An immigration officer may ask for any additional evidence that the relationship is ongoing, genuine and stable, including that obtained by interview.

RV3.20.10 Resident visa holders seconded overseas as part of their New Zealand employment

a. Unless RV3.1 (c) applies, resident visa holders seconded overseas as part of their New Zealand employment, who do not qualify for permanent resident visas, may be granted a variation of travel conditions for a further 24-month period provided that their New Zealand employer confirms in writing that they require the applicant to remain overseas and still consider the applicant to be a New Zealand resident.

b. Written confirmation from a New Zealand employer must state the terms and duration of the secondment and confirm the applicant is still considered a New Zealand resident.

c. Further travel conditions under this provision may be granted every two years, for up to a total of 8 years stay outside New Zealand.

d. Partners and children may be granted further travel conditions for a period equivalent to that of the principal applicant provided the immigration officer is satisfied that the relationship between them and the principal applicant is genuine and ongoing.

RV3.20.15 Resident visa holders who invested in New Zealand

a. Principal applicants may be granted travel conditions current for 24 months if:

   i. the principal applicant's resident visa was granted before 30 November 2026; and

   ii. before 30 November 2026, the principal applicant held an investment of NZD $1,000,000 or more in New Zealand that complied with the rules for investment funds set out in (b) below; and

   iii. the principal applicant has maintained the qualifying investment continuously for a period of at least 24 months from the date the investment was made until the date the application for a variation of travel conditions is made.

b. Principal applicants applying for a 24-month variation of travel conditions under RV3.20.15 must have maintained, and continue to maintain at the time of application, an investment which meets the following rules:

   i. investment funds must originally have been transferred to New Zealand through the trading bank system, or have been earned or acquired lawfully in New Zealand; and

   ii. investment funds must have been invested in New Zealand in New Zealand currency; and under normal circumstances, be capable of providing a commercial return; and

   iii. apart from the interest earned from the investment, investment funds must not be used for their own personal use, for instance investment in assets such as a personal residence, car, boat or similar; and

   iv. investment funds must not have been used as collateral for any loan during the investment period preceding the variation of travel conditions application, unless the money loaned remains within New Zealand and in New Zealand dollars only; and

   v. if the investment funds have been moved from one investment to another during the period preceding

their variation of travel conditions application, each investment must also meet the rules for investment funds.

c. Eligible non-principal applicants may be granted travel conditions in accordance with RV1.20.

RV3.20.20 Resident visa holders who established a business in New Zealand

a. Principal applicants may be granted travel conditions current for 24 months if:

   i. the principal applicant's resident visa was granted before 30 November 2026; and

   ii. before 30 November 2026, the principal applicant had:

      - established or purchased a business operating in New Zealand; or
      - purchased 25% or more of the shareholding of an established business in New Zealand; and

   iii. the business has been trading successfully and benefiting New Zealand for at least 12 months at the time the application for a variation of travel conditions is made.

b. For the purposes of these instructions evidence that a business has been trading successfully and benefiting New Zealand is the production of a set of the latest accounts relating to that business, certified by a New Zealand chartered accountant, confirming that in their view the business is a going concern.

c. Eligible non-principal applicants may be granted travel conditions in accordance with RV1.20.

Note: The immigration instructions previously enabling applicants to demonstrate a commitment to New Zealand by making an investment in New Zealand (RV2.5.10) or establishing a business in New Zealand (RV2.5.15) are suspended from 30 May 2027.

RV4.20 Special provisions for the grant of a second or subsequent resident visa

RV4.20.1 Partners of New Zealand citizens

a. Partners of New Zealand citizens may be granted a second or subsequent resident visa with 24 months of multiple entry travel conditions, provided the New Zealand partner supports the application in writing and:

   i. the applicant's resident visa was obtained on the basis of their partnership with the same New Zealand citizen and the partnership is ongoing; or

   ii. an immigration officer is satisfied that the applicant has been living with the New Zealand citizen in a genuine and stable relationship for at least one year at the time of application.

b. Dependent children of the partner of a New Zealand citizen, who were included in that partner's residence class visa application, may be granted a second or subsequent resident visa with 24 months of travel conditions, equivalent to the partner's second or subsequent resident visa.

c. An immigration officer may ask for any additional evidence that the relationship is ongoing, genuine, and stable, including that obtained by interview.

RV4.20.5 Former resident visa holders seconded overseas as part of their New Zealand employment

a. A former resident visa holder seconded overseas as part of their New Zealand employment may be granted a second or subsequent resident visa if:

   i. the principal applicant would have met the criteria to be granted a variation of travel conditions under RV3.20.10 had they applied for it on the date their resident visa expired and;

   ii. the principal applicant met the criteria under RV3.20.10 at the time the application for a second or subsequent resident visa was made; and

   iii. the date the principal applicant's resident visa expired was less than 24 months before the date the application for the second or subsequent resident visa was made.

b. The multiple entry travel conditions on second or subsequent resident visas granted under these instructions must be valid until 24 months from the date the resident visa expired.

c. Partners and children may be granted a second or subsequent resident visa with travel conditions for a period equivalent to that of the principal applicant provided the immigration officer is satisfied that the relationship between them and the principal applicant is genuine and ongoing.

RV4.20.10 Second or subsequent resident visas for Filipino dairy workers who have provided false documents and hold a South Island Contribution resident visa

a. These instructions apply to people who:

   i. are nationals of the Philippines; and

   ii. are subject to A5.25(i) as an immigration officer has established that, on the balance of probabilities, in the course of applying for a New Zealand visa they provided any statement, information, evidence or submission regarding their work experience that was false, misleading or forged; and

   iii. were granted an Essential Skills work visa to work on a dairy farm prior to 1 September 2015; and

   iv. were granted a South Island Contribution resident visa based on ongoing employment, or an offer of employment, on a dairy farm; and

   v. are applying for a second or subsequent resident visa.

b. Despite the requirement that applicants be of good character (see RV4.10(c)), applicants who meet the requirements of RV4.20.10(a) may still be granted a second or subsequent resident visa if they:

   vi. have not withheld information or provided further false, misleading or forged information in the course of applying for a New Zealand visa since the grant of the visa which satisfied the requirement at RV4.20.10(a)(iii); and

   vii. meet all other criteria for the grant of a second or subsequent resident visa, including not falling under any of the provisions of A5.25 other than A5.25(i).

RV4.20.15 Second or subsequent resident visas for those who invested in New Zealand

a. Principal applicants may be granted a second or subsequent resident visa with 24 months of multiple entry travel conditions if:

   i. the principal applicant's resident visa was granted before 30 November 2026; and

   ii. before 30 November 2026, the principal applicant held an investment of NZD $1,000,000 or more in New Zealand that complied with the rules for investment funds set out in (b) below; and

   iii. the principal applicant has maintained the qualifying investment continuously for at least 24 months from the date the investment was made until the date the application for a second or subsequent resident visa is

made.

b. Principal applicants applying for a second or subsequent resident visa under RV4.20.15 must have maintained, and continue to maintain at the time of application, an investment which meets the following rules:

   i. investment funds must originally have been transferred to New Zealand through the trading bank system, or have been earned or acquired lawfully in New Zealand; and

   ii. investment funds must have been invested in New Zealand in New Zealand currency; and under normal circumstances, be capable of providing a commercial return; and

   iii. apart from the interest earned from the investment, investment funds must not be used for their own personal use, for instance investment in assets such as a personal residence, car, boat or similar; and

   iv. investment funds must not have been used as collateral for any loan during the investment period preceding the variation of travel conditions application, unless the money loaned remains within New Zealand and in New Zealand dollars only; and

   v. if the investment funds have been moved from one investment to another during the period preceding their second or subsequent resident visa application, each investment must also meet the rules for investment funds.

c. Eligible non-principal applicants may be granted a second or subsequent resident visa in accordance with RV1.20.

RV4.20.20 Second or subsequent resident visas for those who established a business in New Zealand

a. Principal applicants may be granted a second or subsequent resident visa with 24 months of multiple entry travel conditions if:

   i. the principal applicant's resident visa was granted before 30 November 2026; and

   ii. before 30 November 2026, the principal applicant had:

      - established or purchased a business operating in New Zealand; or
      - purchased 25% or more of the shareholding of an established business in New Zealand; and

   iii. the business has been trading successfully and benefiting New Zealand for at least 12 months at the time the application for a second or subsequent resident visa is made.

b. For the purposes of these instructions evidence that a business has been trading successfully and benefiting New Zealand is the production of a set of the latest accounts relating to that business, certified by a New Zealand chartered accountant, confirming that in their view the business is a going concern.

c. Eligible non-principal applicants may be granted a second or subsequent resident visa in accordance with RV1.20.

Note: The immigration instructions previously enabling applicants to demonstrate a commitment to New Zealand by making an investment in New Zealand (RV2.5.10) or establishing a business in New Zealand (RV2.5.15) are suspended from 30 May 2027.