

VISA PAK ISSUE 646 — 3 OCTOBER 2025

MARKET RATE ASSESSMENT GUIDE - ACCREDITED EMPLOYER WORK VISA

This Visa Pak introduces the use of Tahatū Career Navigator as the primary source to support the assessment of market rate in the Accredited Employer Work Visa.

Tahatū Career Navigator is run by the Tertiary Education Commission Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua who are the kaitiaki of Aotearoa New Zealand's tertiary education and careers system. The remuneration data provided through Tahatū offers valuable insight into sector-specific pay benchmarks and aligns well with Immigration New Zealand's need for a reliable, transparent, and up-to-date sources of information when evaluating whether applicants meet the market rate requirements under immigration instructions.

This Visa Pak replaces previous advice provided in [Visa Pak 618](#)

What is the market rate and why consider it?

Job offers must specify a rate of pay that is not less than the market rate for New Zealand workers in that occupation. As defined at immigration instruction [W2.2.15](#), the New Zealand market rate is the rate of pay which would be required to recruit a New Zealand citizen or residence class visa holder to do equivalent work.

Employment of migrant workers should not undermine the wages and conditions of New Zealand workers, displace New Zealanders from employment opportunities or hinder improvements to wages or working conditions. Allowing employers to recruit from offshore with pay rates below the market rate can have the effect of driving down the rates offered to New Zealand workers and affect genuine attempts to recruit New Zealanders.

How are market rate requirements assessed?

Market rate requirements can be assessed in several ways. An immigration officer may make an assessment based on information on hand or choose to consult approved sources with Tahatū being the primary source.

In cases where positions are well compensated and clearly meet or exceed the expected market rate, or that specified in Tahatū career navigator, immigration officers should not apply unnecessary scrutiny to the assessment and may determine the market rate assessment is met based on the information in the job check application.

- Tahatū career navigator: If review of the specific role in the Tahatū career navigator clearly demonstrates that market rate is met, an immigration officer may assess market rate requirements are met without consulting further sources, provided they are satisfied the source accurately indicates the New Zealand market rate and that a New Zealander would accept the rate of pay offered.
- Secondary sources: There may be instances where a particular role is not available or has a noticeably different wage scale in the Tahatū career navigator compared to the expected rate. In these case immigration officers may consult other approved sources for comparison

The number of sources an immigration officer should consider will depend on how much weight can be attributed to a particular source. If raising potentially prejudicial information (PPI) regarding the market rate, and sources show conflicting market rates, an immigration officer should reference each source they consider to be suitable in the letter to the employer.

When is the market rate not met?

Immigration officers should consider how different the specified pay rate is from the market rate in the sources consulted, and whether a New Zealander applying for the job would accept the pay rate. Where the pay rate is marginally or slightly outside a range stated in the applicable sources, and the employer is otherwise considered low risk and meets all instructions, the job check application may be approved if an immigration officer is satisfied New Zealanders would still accept the rate of pay offered. Immigration officers should consider taking PPI action where the pay rate offered is clearly outside the market rate stated in the applicable sources. Please consult a technical advisor in the first instance if there are any particular concerns about a specific market rate.

Weighing and balancing market rate sources:

When determining the market rate, the Tahatū career navigator should be utilised as the primary source.

Sources that express the market rate as a range are generally more representative of the market rate compared to a source that expresses the market rate as an average. Similarly, sources that provide market rate information based on the level of training and experience required for the role, region of employment, or other terms and conditions of employment may be more representative compared to a source that combines these factors and provides one pay range.

Where market rate sources conflict, immigration officers are not necessarily required to determine that the market rate should be set based on the source with the lowest pay rate. Instead, the sources should be carefully weighed and balanced to determine which source provides the more reliable information when assessing whether the pay rate offered is likely to meet the market rate.

Considering comparable roles where the market rate for the role may not be readily available

If a market rate for a specific role is not readily available on the Tahatū career navigator or through any other approved source, immigration officers may consider comparable roles or titles. This includes evaluating job function similarities, ANZSCO classifications, and the employer's specific circumstances to determine if market rate is met.

Considering where a position falls within a market rate range:

Immigration officers should consider the factors outlined at WA3.15.5(e) and W2.2.15 when considering whether the rate of pay meets the market rate. This may result in an immigration officer determining that the rate of pay offered may need to be above the lowest rate expressed in a particular market rate source.

Immigration officers should consider the amount of experience required for the role regardless of whether the experience was gained offshore or in New Zealand. Roles requiring less experience may reasonably sit at the lower end of the market rate range. However, if the pay is outside the market range entirely, further information may be needed and can be requested from the employer.

Keeping in mind that meeting ANZSCO experience requirements (e.g. three years) may still indicate entry-level experience or qualifications depending on the role, such an example may be a newly qualified lawyer, they do not have the experience but would meet the qualification requirements even though it would be entry-level.

Immigration officers should also consider the business size, structure, how the employer is placed within the market and any other relevant details that were provided by the employer.

In the example of a job check for a Carpenter, where three years of experience is required, Tahatū Career Navigator states a carpenter can earn between \$24 - \$47 an hour:

- The range starts just above the New Zealand minimum wage.
- Tahatū gets most of their pay information from Statistics New Zealand's population Census data, Statistics New Zealand's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) database and Inland Revenue data. This may include earnings from apprentices, interns, and starting out wage. The higher end of the range may include foreman and supervisory roles.

In this example, an immigration officer may consider that a proposed pay rate of \$24 per hour may not meet the market rate, based on the level of experience required for the role. Immigration officers should consider a range of appropriate market rate sources to determine the rate of pay which would be required to recruit a New Zealand citizen or residence class visa holder to do equivalent

work and consult with their Technical Advisor if still unsure on which rate is more suitable to recruit a New Zealand citizen or residence class holder.

Pay ranges:

Where a pay range is proposed at the job check stage, the entire pay range proposed in the job check must not be less than the market rate (or lower pay rate of a market rate range).

Future pay increases:

The market rate must be met at the time the job check application is made, rather than based on proposed future pay increases offered to the Accredited Employer Work Visa applicant.

Appropriate market rate sources:

Immigration officers should refer to the Tahatū Career Navigator as the primary source for market rate information.

The table below provides a list of resources that immigration officers may consider as part of their assessment process. Other market rate sources may be considered on a case-by-case basis, considering the guidance outlined above.

1. Tahatū Career Navigator	2. Seek Salary Guide
3. Hays Salary Guide	4. TradeMe Salary Guide*
5. Federated Farmers Salary Guide	6. Absolute IT - IT Job Market & Salary Report

**Where specific occupation data is available*

Potentially prejudicial information (PPI) process:

Where the immigration officer has consulted Tahatū, and any other appropriate sources, but determines that it is not reflective of the market rate, the PPI letter should outline which market sources were considered and why some of those sources were not considered relevant or reliable for the occupation.

While immigration officers can accept the appropriate market rate sources are likely representative of the market rate, immigration officers should also keep an open mind and consider additional information and other forms of evidence provided in response to any PPI letter.