



NEW ZEALAND
IMMIGRATION

Immigration Factsheets

Culturally arranged marriages

May 2021

- Culturally arranged marriages typically follow an identified cultural tradition where the arrangements for the marriage are made by people who are not parties to the marriage, for example the couples' parents.
- Up until November 2019 the culturally arranged marriage ceremony had to take place in New Zealand. Individuals who were already in a culturally arranged marriage where the marriage ceremony took place offshore were not eligible for a Culturally Arranged Marriage visitor visa.
- In November 2019, the Minister of Immigration made a change to the original culturally arranged marriage visitor visa policy of 2003 to allow individuals who had a culturally arranged marriage outside of New Zealand to be eligible for the visa.
- Immigration New Zealand has also issued new guidance to clarify that if an individual is travelling to New Zealand to join a partner - and who may therefore seek to remain in New Zealand longer term - they may still be considered a genuine visitor visa applicant. The individuals will still need to meet health and character requirements, be genuine visitors to New Zealand, comply with their visa conditions and leave New Zealand at the end of their stay.
- The changes may provide individuals who have met and undergone a traditional cultural ceremony, but who have not lived together with an opportunity to come to New Zealand to live together so that they may later satisfy immigration partnership visa requirements. Partnership-based visas require a couple to be living together in a genuine and stable partnership before a visa can be granted.
- The table below shows the number of people decided for Culturally Arranged Marriage visitor visas in the last five financial years. It's important to note that there may be other people who have entered into a culturally arranged marriage with a New Zealand citizen or resident who did not apply under this category (i.e. they applied under a general partnership or visitor visa):

Financial year (1 July to 30 June)	Number of people approved	Number of people declined
2015/16	60	154
2016/17	52	112
2017/18	58	128
2018/19	24	122
2019/20	38	60