

VISA PAK ISSUE 399 — 03 MAY 2019

## **MAY 2019 RELEASE – CHANGES TO IMMIGRATION INSTRUCTIONS**

A number of changes to immigration instructions will take effect in May 2019. The extension of the Pathway Student visa took effect on 1 May 2019, and all other changes will take effect on 13 May 2019. The key policy changes are set out below.

### **Extension of the Pathway Student visa pilot**

The Pathway Student visa pilot has been extended to 24 November 2019. All current pilot participants will be able to continue offering pathway student visas, and pathway student visa applications will continue to be accepted until 24 November 2019.

### **New Zealand Residence Programme (NZRP) planning range**

A new NZRP planning range of 50,000 to 60,000 residence approvals will be in place for the 1 July 2018 to 31 December 2019 period. This is a transitional range as a new approach to the NZRP is due to be introduced in 2020.

### **South Island Contribution Resident Visa changes**

The South Island Contribution work to residence category was established in May 2017 to provide a pathway to residence for South Island-based applicants who held an Essential Skills work visa for the five years preceding 22 May 2017, but who were not eligible for residence through other categories. Applicants who were granted work visas under this category will be eligible for a South Island Contribution resident visa in May this year.

Changes will be made to clarify that:

- applicants from the Philippines who provided false work experience information but were subsequently granted a South Island Contribution work visa may also be granted a South Island Contribution resident visa (and, subsequently, a permanent resident visa), provided they have not given further false or misleading information and they meet all other requirements.
- English language requirements do not apply to any partner or dependent child included in a South Island Contribution resident visa.

### **Place of lodgement for China Special and China Skilled work visas**

The requirement for China Special and China Skilled work visa applications to be lodged in China will be removed.

#### List of Qualifications Exempt from Assessment (LQEA)

The LQEA contains qualifications that do not require assessment by NZQA in order to be recognised by INZ, and is updated regularly to reflect the latest information from the New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA). Changes will be made to the following lists:

- Canada - Academic Qualifications
- Germany - Craft and Trade Qualifications
- Hungary - Academic Qualifications
- Indonesia - Academic Qualifications
- Poland - Academic Qualifications
- Singapore - Academic Qualifications
- Sweden - Academic Qualifications

#### Minimum income threshold

Several visa categories require that parents meet a minimum income in order to support dependants in visa applications. These minimum income thresholds apply in the Samoan Quota and Pacific Access residence categories, and for holders of Religious Worker and Essential Skills work visas. The thresholds will be updated as follows:

Category	Old threshold	New threshold
Samoan Quota and Pacific Access Category (residence)	\$38,199.20	\$38,577.76
Essential Skills and Religious Worker (temporary)	\$42,944.20	\$43,322.76

#### Other minor changes and corrections

The following minor changes will also come into effect:

- Reference to 'aid' or 'award' will be removed to reflect the current names of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade scholarships
- Position titles 'Area Manager' and 'Operations Manager' will be updated to 'Head of Operations' and 'Visa Operations Manager'
- 'Business Migration Branch' will be updated to 'Business Migration,' and in some cases removed
- 'New Zealand Child, Youth and Family (CYF)' will be updated to 'Ministry for Children, Oranga Tamariki'
- A note will be added to clarify residence options for people who have renounced their New Zealand citizenship and are deemed to hold a residence visa
- Other minor formatting and cross-referencing changes and corrections will also be made.

The lists of affected instructions for each policy change, as well as the instructions themselves, can be found in [Amendment Circular No. 2019/02](#).