

VISA PAK ISSUE 441 — 13 JULY 2020

SPECIAL DIRECTION – VISA EXTENSION FOR EMPLOYER ASSISTED WORK VISAS AND LOW-SKILLED ESSENTIAL SKILLS WORK VISA REDUCTION

The Government has made short-term changes to visa settings for temporary work visa holders already in New Zealand.

The changes are:

- Extending certain existing employer-assisted temporary work visas for people who are in New Zealand and whose visas are due to expire before the end of 2020 by six months from the current expiry date; and
- Reducing the duration of Essential Skills work visas for lower-skilled employment from 12 to six months for applications made after 9 July 2020.

Visa extension

The Minister of Immigration has extended by special direction certain employer-specific work visas with a visa an expiry date between 10 July and 31 December 2020 (inclusive). These visas have been automatically extended by six months from the date of expiry.

The visas extended are:

Description
<u>WR1 Talent (Accredited Employers) Work Instructions</u>
<u>WR3 Long Term Skill Shortage List work instructions</u>
<u>WR2 Talent (Arts, Culture and Sports) work instructions</u>
<u>WK Essential Skills work instructions</u>
<u>WI12 China Special Work Instructions</u>
<u>WI13 China Skilled Workers Instructions</u>
<u>WI11 Thai chefs</u>
<u>WI10 Interpreters from Japan</u>
<u>WI14 Philippines Special Work Instructions</u>
<u>WI15 Vietnam Special Work Instructions</u>
<u>WI17 Indonesia Special Work Instructions</u>
<u>WI19 Republic of Korea Special Work Instructions</u>
<u>WL2 Silver Fern Practical Experience</u>
<u>WR7 South Island Contribution work instructions</u>
<u>Work visas granted under s61 of the Immigration Act 2009 which have a visa condition specifying the employer</u>

On 13 July 2020 INZ will email most of the affected visa holders to confirm their visa has been extended, using the address most recently provided to INZ. It is expected that some visa holders will not be contacted, as in some cases the address supplied might not have been current or valid, or might have been of a third party; and despite efforts to identify a valid email address for most visa holders, some visa holders might not receive the letter.

The visa extension will appear in AMS on the Visa tab under the column 'Expiry Date Stay'. The Expiry Date Stay will be updated and will be displayed on both the Visa Summary section and Visa Detail Section (both are under Visa Tab in AMS).

Visa holders can use the Visa Verification Service available on the Immigration New Zealand website to confirm the extension has been applied to their visa. Employers can use Visa View (also on the website) to verify that an employee is able to legally work for them.

Some eligible visa holders will not have had their visas extended automatically. This is likely to be where a person has had their visa conditions varied after the visa was granted, has had their visa replaced in AMS (as the 'replace' type) or issued a visa under section 61 that specifies a visa holder.



The visas of partners and dependents have not been extended. These people must apply for further visas if they are in New Zealand and wish to remain for the extended duration of their partner/parent's visa.

Interim visas have not been extended. People holding interim visas who have applied for an employer-specific visa will have their visa application assessed as normal.

Visa holders who believe they are eligible for an extension but don't receive an email from INZ confirming their visas have been extended, or do not see the visa extension in the Visa Verification Service have been asked to contact INZ.

If you receive an enquiry from an eligible visa holder whose visa has not been extended please pass on that person's details to [internal use only email inbox]

Please include the person's name, date of birth and client or application number so that their visa can be extended correctly.

Effect of extension on the stand-down period

Visas have been extended for people who would otherwise have been subject to the stand-down period (WK3.20.5). The stand-down period will apply to these people if they apply for a further Essential Skills work visa to work in lower-skilled employment.

6 month duration for Essential Skills work visas for lower-skilled employment

Essential Skills work visas for lower-skilled employment that are made on or after 10 July 2020 may be granted for a maximum of 6 months (WK4.1 (a) (iii)). This change to the duration of Essential Skills work visas is temporary (until 10 January 2022), and intended to preserve employment opportunities for New Zealand workers over the next 18 months.