



CHANGES TO THE SKILLED MIGRANT CATEGORY AND ACCREDITED EMPLOYER WORK VISA

Skilled Migrant Category

New settings for the Skilled Migrant Category have now been confirmed, which will be implemented from 9th October 2023. These have been designed to assist employers manage their workforce more effectively and to provide migrants more certainty in planning their residence pathways. It will be a more simplified system and a faster pathway to residence for those highly skilled people which New Zealand currently requires.

The changes include a new points system where people will need to meet specific requirements. Applicants must have a skilled job or job offer with an Accredited Employer in New Zealand and will need a total of six points to apply under the new Skilled Migrant Category criteria.

Applicants can claim three to six points from their:

- New Zealand occupational registration, or
- Qualification (Bachelor's degree or higher), or
- Income from their job or job offer (earning at least 1.5 times the median wage in NZ which currently equates to NZD \$44.49 per hour)

Occupational Registration and points

Points	Requirements
6	A minimum of 6 years training is required to gain registration
5	A minimum of 5 years training is required to gain registration
4	A minimum of 4 years training is required to gain registration
3	A minimum of 2 years training is required to gain registration

Applicants may use skilled work experience gained in New Zealand to top up their points total, but if they are working in an occupation requiring registration, they can only use skilled work experience gained after becoming registered in New Zealand.

Qualification points

If applicants have a qualification awarded from outside New Zealand, it may need to be assessed by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). Upon a successful assessment, it will then be possible to claim between three and six points depending on what level the qualification is assessed at on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF). An updated list for qualifications which do not need assessment will be updated by Immigration New Zealand and available in early October 2023, which will hopefully ease the long wait times currently being experienced at NZQA.

Points	Qualification (Equivalent under the NZQF)
6	Level 10 Doctoral Degree
5	Level 9 Master's Degree
4	Level 8 Bachelor Honours Degree or Postgraduate Diploma
3	Level 8 Postgraduate Certificate Level 7 Bachelor's degree

Income points

The income an applicant earns will also allow points to be claimed under the new Skilled Migrant Category framework. The job that the income points are derived from must be with an Accredited Employer, be for at least 30 hours per week and be either a permanent role or fixed term for at least 12 months.

Points	Wage Threshold
6	Job or job offer in New Zealand at 3 times the median wage (currently NZD \$88.98 an hour) or more.
4	Job or job offer in New Zealand at 2 times the median wage (currently NZD \$59.32 an hour) or more.
3	Job or job offer in New Zealand at 1.5 times the median wage (currently NZD \$44.49 an hour) or more.

In addition to claiming points from occupational registration, qualification or income, applicants will be able to claim up to a maximum of three points for skilled work experience gained in New Zealand. (One point for each year of skilled work experience gained in New Zealand).

To claim these additional points, applicants must have met the relevant wage threshold for the entirety of the years of skilled work experience being claimed.

There is also a further skilled work requirement relating to wage thresholds depending on the ANZSCO level of the job.

- People in ANZSCO level 1 to 3 roles must earn the median wage or above
- People in ANZSCO level 4 to 5 roles must earn 1.5 times the median wage or above

Points for skilled work experience in New Zealand can be claimed for:

- 36 months' experience during the 60 months before the application is made if claiming 3 points
- 24 months' experience during the 48 months before the application is made if claiming 2 points
- 12 months' experience during the 24 months before the application is made if claiming 1 point

Further points to note

- Character and Health requirements remain unchanged
- English language requirements remain unchanged
- The age requirement remains – applicants must be 55 years or under to be eligible to apply
- As there will now be no capped limits on numbers of people who can apply for residence under the Skilled Migrant Category, Immigration New Zealand anticipate faster processing times under the new framework
- There will be a new Skilled Migrant Category Interim Visa introduced. This will enable those applicants to remain in New Zealand if they have submitted an application under the Skilled Migrant Category AND their current temporary visa expires whilst waiting on a decision. This interim visa will allow people to travel in and out of New Zealand and will carry the same conditions as the temporary visa last held
- The Highly Paid resident visa pathway will be revoked and incorporated into the new Skilled Migrant Category settings

Accredited Employer Work Visa changes

There will be an extension to the maximum duration of an Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) from three to five years later in 2023. All new AEWVs will be issued for up to five years from November 2023, and those on existing three-year AEWVs will be able to seek a two-year extension once the new rules come into effect.

Importantly, those who do not have a pathway to residence through either the Green List or Skilled Migrant Category will be subject to a 12 month stand down period outside of New Zealand, once they have reached a total of five years on an AEWV. Note that employment or time spent on other visas will NOT count towards this five year maximum.

If you have any questions, please either email your current New Era adviser or email us through enquiries@neweraconsulting.co.nz.