

Frequently asked questions

Post-study work rights for international students

August 2018

The New Zealand Government is making changes to post-study work rights for international students. These changes will come into effect on 26 November 2018.

These changes ensure post-study pathways benefit international students and employers by contributing skills and qualifications that New Zealand needs.

When will these changes take effect?

26 November 2018.

Who will be eligible for post-study work visas?

The eligibility for this visa is not changing. You may be eligible for a post-study work visa if you have completed a programme of study that results in:

- A qualification at level 7 on the [New Zealand Qualifications Framework](#) that you have studied for at least 30 weeks in New Zealand; or
- One qualification at levels 4-6 on the [New Zealand Qualifications Framework](#) that you have studied for at 60 weeks in New Zealand; or
- Two qualifications at levels 4-6 on the [New Zealand Qualifications Framework](#) that you have studied for at 30 weeks each in New Zealand (a total of 60 weeks, where the second qualification is of a higher level than the first).

What's changing with post-study work visas?

From 26 November 2018, the conditions and duration of post-study work visas will change.

Visa conditions:

- Post-study work visas will be granted with 'open' work conditions.
- This means that your work visa won't be linked to any employer and the employer-assisted post-study work visa will no longer exist. You won't need a job offer to get a post-study work visa.

Visa duration:

- The open post-study work visa will be granted for one, two, or three years, or for the remainder of the time left on your visa if you hold an existing employer-assisted visa.
- The duration depends on various things, including the level of the qualification you have gained and where you completed your qualification.



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How will these changes impact me?

The changes will impact people in different ways. What you are eligible for will depend on what type of qualification you gain and your location of study. The table below shows what you may be eligible for:

If you're planning to study towards the following qualification(s)...	Then on successful completion of your qualification(s) you may be eligible for a...
Level 7 Bachelor's degree qualification or higher following at least 30 weeks study in New Zealand	Three-year open post-study work visa
Level 7 Graduate Diploma following at least 30 weeks study in New Zealand	One-year open post-study work visa, if you study in Auckland, and one additional year if you are working towards registration with a professional or trade body Two-year open post-study work visa, if you study outside Auckland (excluding distance/online learning)*
Other non-degree Level 7 qualification (such as a Diploma) following at least 30 weeks study in New Zealand	One-year open post-study work visa, if you study in Auckland Two-year open post-study work visa, if you study outside Auckland (excluding distance/online learning)*
One qualification at Level 4 to 6 following at least 60 weeks in New Zealand	One-year open post-study work visa, if you study in Auckland Two-year open post-study work visa, if you study outside Auckland (excluding distance/online learning)*
Two consecutive qualifications at Levels 4 to 6 following at least 60 weeks study in New Zealand (30 weeks per year) and the second qualification is at a higher level than the first	One-year open post-study work visa, if you study in Auckland Two-year open post-study work visa, if you study outside Auckland (excluding distance/online learning)*

* To qualify for this, you must have studied your entire qualification at a campus outside Auckland, and successfully complete your qualification(s) by 31 December 2021. If you complete your qualification(s) after that date, you may be eligible for a one-year open post-study work visa, and one additional year if you are a Graduate Diploma graduate and you are working towards registration with a professional or trade body.



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What do “open” work rights or conditions mean?

“Open” work rights/conditions mean that your visa is not linked to any employer. You can work in almost any job, for any employer, anywhere in New Zealand. You can use your post-study work visa to get some valuable New Zealand work experience.

How do I apply for a post-study work visa?

The process of applying for a post-study work visa is not changing. The easiest way to apply is by completing [our online application form](#). If you’re not able to apply online, you can complete our paper application form [INZ 1015 Work Visa Application](#). For information on where to send your application, see the [Fees, decision times and where to apply](#) information on our website.

Where do I find more information about studying in New Zealand?

You can find information about studying in New Zealand, including programmes and providers, on the [Study in New Zealand website](#).

Transitional policy for current students

There are special requirements for people who on 8 August 2018 have applied for or who hold a student visa for an eligible course of study (a level 4 to 10 course in New Zealand. These requirements ensure a seamless transition to the new immigration settings.

I currently hold a student visa for tertiary study, what work rights will I be eligible for once I graduate?

If you successfully complete an eligible qualification and you meet our standard post-study work visa requirements, you will be eligible for a three year open post-study work visa. ‘Eligible qualifications’ are qualifications at levels 4 to 10 on the New Zealand Qualification Framework and have a minimum study duration requirement. See the table above for more information.

What happens if I take a break from my studies?

If you are a current student, a break from your studies might reduce the amount of work rights you are eligible for.

If you are currently studying a level 4-6 qualification you will be eligible for a three-year open work visa under the transitional policy if you study for at least two consecutive years in New Zealand, and study for at least 30 weeks in each year.

If you don’t study for two consecutive years or don’t study for at least 30 weeks in each year, then you won’t be eligible for a three-year open work visa under the transitional policy.

Instead, you will need to check the new immigration settings to see what, if anything, you are eligible for.

If you are currently studying a level 7 or higher qualification and you study this for at least 30 weeks in New Zealand, you will continue to be eligible for a three-year open work visa.



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I've just finished my qualification and want to apply for a post-study work visa before November, what will I be eligible for?

The changes to immigration settings come into effect on 26 November 2018 and do not apply to applications received before then. You will have to apply under the current immigration settings. Provided you have completed an eligible qualification, you can apply for a one-year open post-study work visa. After the new settings come into effect you will be able to apply for a further two-year open work visa (as part of the transitional policy).

I hold a student visa for a course that doesn't qualify me for a post-study work visa (e.g. English language studies, secondary school studies) but intend to study New Zealand at a higher level following this. What will I be eligible for when I complete my higher qualification?

Once you complete your higher qualification, you may be eligible for a post-study work visa under the new immigration settings.

Future students

I intend to start study in New Zealand but haven't yet applied for my student visa, what work rights will I be eligible for when I finish studying?

You will be eligible for a post-study work visa under the new immigration settings when you complete your qualification (provided you meet the visa requirements). See the table above.

I'm planning to study in Auckland, what work rights will I be eligible for after I graduate?

If you plan to study for a level 7 Bachelor's degree qualification or higher, you will be eligible for a three-year open work visa at the completion of your qualification. You must also have studied for at least 30 weeks in New Zealand to gain that qualification.

If you plan to study for a qualification at level 4-6 or non-degree level 7, you will be eligible for a one-year open work visa, provided you meet the requirements for the duration of study.

You may be eligible for a further one-year open work visa if you are studying a Graduate Diploma that allows you to gain professional or trade registration. More information on which occupations will qualify for this will be published on the Immigration New Zealand website before the new immigration settings comes into effect in November.

I'm planning to study outside of Auckland, what work rights will I be eligible for after I graduate?

Just like Auckland students, if you are studying for a level 7 Bachelor's degree qualification or higher, you will be eligible for a three-year open work visa at the completion of your qualification. You must also have studied for at least 30 weeks to gain that qualification.

Unlike Auckland students, if you are studying for a qualification at level 4-6 or non-degree level 7, you will be eligible for a two-year post study work visa after completing the qualification(s). You will need to study the whole qualification at a campus outside of Auckland (not by



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distance learning), complete it before 31 December 2021, and meet requirements for the duration of study.

What is your definition of 'Auckland'?

We will consider that you study in Auckland if the campus you study at is within the territories covered by the Auckland Council.

I intend to study a Graduate Diploma. What types of registration will qualify for an additional year of post-study work?

More information will be published on the Immigration New Zealand website before the new immigration settings comes into effect in November.

Am I eligible for a post-study work visa if I study and complete my qualification outside New Zealand (for example, through offshore delivery or distance learning)?

No, you must have studied in New Zealand for a minimum amount of time in order to be eligible for a post-study work visa (for example 30 weeks in New Zealand for qualifications at level 7 and higher). Some twinning arrangements or partnerships between New Zealand and foreign education partners may meet these requirements.

Workers

I hold an open post-study work visa, how will these changes affect me?

If your open work visa is due to expire before the changes take effect on 26 November 2018, you can apply for an employer assisted post-study work visa before 26 November 2018. You will need a job offer relevant to your qualification to apply for this. If you want to, you will be able to apply for a variation of conditions to have the employer conditions removed from your work visa when the changes come into effect on 26 November 2018. This means the job and employer stated on your work visa would be removed, so you do not have to contact Immigration New Zealand if you change jobs or employers in the future.

If your open work visa expires after 26 November 2018, you will be eligible to apply for a further two-year open work visa when these changes take effect in November.

I hold an employer assisted post-study work visa, how will the changes affect me?

From 26 November 2018, you will be able to apply for a variation of conditions to have the employer conditions removed from your work visa. This means the job and employer stated on your work visa would be removed, so you do not have to contact Immigration New Zealand if you change jobs or employers in the future. This is your choice. You only need to apply for a variation of conditions if you plan to change your job, employer, or location of work. If you plan to stay in your existing job, you do not need to change your visa.



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Partners

As a student, am I able to support my partner's work visa?

You can support your partner's work visa application if you are studying a Level 7 or 8 qualification provided the qualification is specified on the Long Term Skill Shortage List, or a Level 9 or 10 qualification. If your partner has dependent children, they will be eligible for fee-free primary and secondary schooling.

People studying at levels 4 to 6 are not able to support their partner's work visa application, but their partner can apply for a visa in their own right.

I plan to study a Level 8 qualification and will apply before the end of the year, am I able to support my partner's work visa?

If you and your partner have applications accepted for processing by Immigration New Zealand before 26 November 2018, you can support your partner's work visa. If you apply on or after 26 November 2018, you will only be able to support your partner if your qualification is on the Long Term Skill Shortage list.

You and your partner must also meet all normal visa requirements.

Can my partner still get a work visa after I have finished my study?

Post-study work visa holders are able to support their partners for work visas, provided they meet usual partnership requirements. In turn, dependent children are eligible for student visas and are regarded as domestic students for the purpose of all tuition fees at primary and secondary schools for the period of the parent's work visa.

For more information visit www.immigration.govt.nz or call ph. 0508 558 855