

Want to live and work in New Zealand? 10 common questions answered

It's not always easy locating the information you need about how to find a job in New Zealand, applying for the right visa and who can help you find work once you have your legal documentation finalised.

We answer 10 most common questions about working in New Zealand.

What do I need in order to work in New Zealand?

Before you travel to New Zealand, you need to make sure you have the right visa.

If you are coming to New Zealand to work, [it's likely that you will need a job offer or a job](#) before you can apply for a resident or temporary work visa.

What visa do I need to work in New Zealand?

There are over 80 different visas that let you work in New Zealand. The best place to start is [Immigration New Zealand](#).

You need to make sure you meet the right criteria and complete the correct application for the visa you are applying for.

The most common types of working visas for overseas workers are:

- **Temporary visas**

These allow you to work and live in New Zealand for a particular period of time.

- **Essential skills work visas**

You can apply for this type of visa when you have received a job offer in an occupation that is listed on the [skill shortage list](#). The period of time that you can stay in New Zealand and the conditions of the visa depend on the term of your job offer, your salary and the labour market conditions. These visas do not tend to have an age limit.

- **Working holiday visa**

Young people (usually aged 18-30) can apply for working holiday visas, which let you travel and work in New Zealand for up to 12 months (or 23 months if you're from the UK or Canada), but your main reason for coming to New Zealand needs to be for a holiday, rather than for work.

- **Resident visas**

These visas usually let you live and work in New Zealand indefinitely. The [Skilled Migrant Category](#) assesses a number of factors including your age, work experience, qualifications and an offer of skilled employment to work out if you are eligible or not. Alternatively, the [Work to Residence Category](#) is when you apply to 'upgrade' from a temporary work visa to a residence visa after holding a temporary work visa for at least 24 months. You must be aged 55 or under to apply for these visas.

How long does it take until a visa gets processed?

On average, [work visas are processed](#) within 20 – 25 working days, however, this [may vary](#) depending on the type of application.

If you submit an Expression Of Interest under the [Skilled Migrant Category](#), you will usually receive an invitation to apply for residence within three weeks. Depending on whether additional checks and documents are needed, the majority of residence applications are processed within four to six months.

How long can it take to get work in New Zealand?

Finding the right job can take some time. It's not uncommon for [job seekers to be looking for a job for up to six months](#).

Will there be restrictions on my visa?

Some work visas restrict the work you can do, limiting it to a specific occupation, employer or location.

If your work visa has a restriction that you want to change, you can sometimes [apply to change](#) the conditions of your existing visa instead of applying for a new visa.

Is the visa process expensive?

The visa process can be expensive. Some visas are free, some cost a few hundred dollars and others are several thousand dollars. [The cost](#) depends on the specific visa you are applying for.

Most work visas can be applied for online. Online applications are usually faster and less expensive than using a paper application form.

What does right to work in New Zealand mean?

To work legally in New Zealand, you need evidence of your right to work. This could be a visa, evidence of permanent resident status, an Australian or New Zealand passport, New Zealand birth certificate or a certificate of New Zealand citizenship.

How can SEEK help me find work in New Zealand?

SEEK is a website that houses available jobs in New Zealand and other helpful career-related tools, but SEEK can't help you with information on visas or securing the right visa.

Once your visa and legal documentation has been finalised, SEEK can help you search for jobs, assist you with career advice and guidance, as well as help you set up a [SEEK Profile](#) so that when you are legally able to work in New Zealand, you'll be ready to go.

Discover what roles are right for you and the job opportunities available, with our [explore careers tool](#).

Once I'm working in New Zealand, what are my rights?

It doesn't matter which country you come from or your visa status; everyone employed in New Zealand has the same rights and protections at work.

New Zealand has many laws that relate to employment that help keep workplaces fair. It's important that you are aware of the rules, [your rights](#) and responsibilities.

Your employer must follow workplace and immigration laws, and this includes paying you the right rate for all the hours you have worked and making sure you have a safe place to work.

Where can I go for more information about visas?

International workers can seek advice and assistance from [Immigration New Zealand](#) or the Department of Internal Affairs. If you're looking for further guidance, visit the [Immigration Advisers Authority](#) for information on who to speak to for immigration advice.