

Frequently asked questions

Changes to post-study work rights for international students

Updated November 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.

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.

How will these changes impact me?

The changes will impact people in different ways. The following sections provide further FAQs based on the situation that applied to you when the announcements were made on 8 August 2018.

- [Transitional policy for those already studying on 8 August 2018](#)
- [Future students](#)
- [Current post-study work visa holders](#)
- [Supporting a partner's work visa](#)

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 (excluding the provision of commercial sexual services), 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](#).

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 those already studying on 8 August 2018

There are transitional policies that ensure a seamless transition for people who had applied for or already held a student visa on the 8 August 2018. Certain requirements must be met for the transitional policy to apply.

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 Qualifications Framework that meet the minimum study duration requirement. Additionally, if your ‘eligible qualification’ is made up of two qualifications at levels 4 to 7 and you were still studying towards your first qualification on 8 August 2018, the transitional policy will only apply to you if you meet certain requirements. See the next answer for more information.

What happens if I take a break from my studies?

If you are a current student, taking a break from your studies might mean that the transitional policy arrangements can no longer be applied to you.

If you're completing two qualifications at levels 4-7 and you were still studying towards your first qualification on 8 August 2018, the transitional policy will only apply to you if you start your second qualification in the same or consecutive calendar year as when you started your first qualification. For example, if you gain qualifications at level 5 and level 6, and you started studying for your level 5 qualification in February 2018, you must start studying your level 6 qualification in 2018 or 2019 in order to come under the transitional policy. If you don't meet this requirement, the transitional policy won't apply and you will come under the new post-study work visa policy.

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.

I am a current student studying a level 7 diploma and have previously held a post-study work visa – open, will I be eligible for a further post-study work visa under the transitional policy?

Yes, if your qualification would have met the requirements to be granted an employer assisted post-study work visa, you will be eligible for an open work visa of the same duration (two years).

Future students

I am a new student so I don't fall under the transitional policy, what work rights will I be eligible for when I finish studying?

When you complete your qualification, you will be eligible for a post-study work visa under the new immigration settings (provided you meet the visa requirements). 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.

How do you determine if I've studied in or outside Auckland?

If the campus you study at is within the territories covered by the Auckland Council and is listed as being in Auckland on the [New Zealand Qualifications Authority website](#) , we consider that you have studied in Auckland.

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

If the registration authority is listed in the Immigration Instructions and on the INZ website, you will be able to apply for a second one-year post-study work visa.

Current post-study work visa holders

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

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

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 – see the next answer if this applies to you.

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 conditions stated on your work visa would be removed.

If you plan to stay in your existing job, you may choose to stay on your current employer assisted post-study work visa. However, you will need to apply for a variation of conditions if you plan to change your job, employer, or location of work.

To apply for a variation of conditions to have the employer conditions removed you must complete an *Application for a Variation of Conditions for holders of a Post-Study work visa – Employer Assisted (INZ 1243)*, pay \$190 and send it to your nearest Immigration New Zealand office. See www.immigration.govt.nz/contactus for office addresses. The application form will only be available from 26 November 2018.

Supporting a partner's work visa

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

From 26 November 2018, 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 is granted a work visa, their

dependent children will not be required to pay international student fees to attend primary or secondary school.

If you are studying a level 4 to 6 qualification, you are not able to support your partner's work visa application. However, your partner can apply for a visa in their own right.

I plan to study a Level 8 qualification, 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 regardless of your area of study. 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 I support my partner's 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 0508 558 855 (if in New Zealand) or +64 9 914 4100 (if outside New Zealand).