

McMillan&Co.

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Level 5, Forsyth Barr House, 165 Stuart Street, The Octagon, Dunedin 9016 | PO Box 5547, Dunedin 9054
Phone +64 03 477 2238 | Fax +64 03 474 5588 | mcmillanco.nz

Hiring Overseas Workers

Since March 2020, the New Zealand border has been closed to almost all travellers to stop the spread of Covid-19.

If your prospective employee is not a New Zealand citizen, permanent resident, or returning resident, they will need to obtain a travel exception to enter New Zealand. Registered Dentists, Hygienists and Oral Health Therapists are considered to be “critical health workers” and are eligible for the grant of a travel exception, subject to meeting other standard visa criteria.

Obtaining a New Zealand work visa

If the candidate is outside of New Zealand, they will need to make a request to travel as an exception to New Zealand’s border restrictions by submitting an expression of interest to apply for a critical purpose visitor visa, or a variation of conditions on their current visa (if applicable).

The critical purpose visitor visa is valid for up to 6 or 12 months. If the worker needs to stay beyond this date, they will need to apply for a further visa with work conditions.

Changes to the work visa programme

The New Zealand work visa programme is currently in a state of transition. A new visa programme will be implemented mid-2022, which will replace 6 work visa types, some of which have already closed to new applications, and some of which are closing at the end of October. The new “Accredited Employer Work Visa” (AEWV) will be employer-led and is expected to offer a pathway to residency to migrant workers. Employers will need to obtain accreditation to use the AEWV. The AEWV is expected to come into effect in mid-2022. The temporary “Essential Skills Work Visa” will remain open until the AEWV comes into effect.

Pathways to Residency

There are a number of benefits to obtaining residency in New Zealand for migrant workers, and visas which offer pathways to residency often require the support of an eligible New Zealand employer. Employers should be aware of certain criteria which may affect the candidate’s eligibility for a residency visa, such as salary thresholds, work hours, employment agreement type and the age and skill level of the candidate.

Employers willing to support a migrant worker’s residency application will have a competitive advantage over employers who are only looking to hire workers on a temporary basis.

This document is intended as a guide only. If you require further information on hiring an overseas worker, or an assessment of their eligibility for a New Zealand visa, please contact sarah@mcmillanco.nz to book an appointment.