

# Engineering Your Future in New Zealand

**A Guide to Work and Residence Visas**



# Why New Zealand?

New Zealand is increasingly attracting skilled engineers from around the world, drawn by its innovative industries, lifestyle, and opportunities for long-term residence.

Whether you are a civil, structural, mechanical, electrical or any other engineer, this guide outlines the key visa options and visa pathways for you and your family to work and live in New Zealand.



# Work Visa Options for Engineers



# General Work Visa Requirements and Common Pathways

## Visa Requirement for Work

A valid work or resident visa is mandatory to legally work in New Zealand.

## Common Work Visas

Common work pathways include:

- Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV)
- Specific Purpose Work Visas (SPWV)
- Working Holiday Visas (WHV)
- Post-Study Work Visas (PSWV)
- Partnership-based Work Visas

# Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV)

## Job Offer Requirement

You must have a suitable job offer from a New Zealand employer accredited by Immigration New Zealand (INZ).

## Qualifications and Experience

You must have the required relevant qualifications and/or work experience.

## Approved Job Check

Employers must have an approved Job Check for the role to evidence no suitable New Zealanders are available (or if the role is on the Green List).

## Visa Duration and Flexibility

The AEWV is typically granted for up to 5 years and is specific to the employment role and location, although it is possible to vary the conditions of the AEWV to change roles and employers.





# Direct Residence Eligibility via Green List

## Green List Roles

Many engineering roles are on Green List, which details current skills shortages, including:

- Civil Engineers
- Structural Engineers
- Electrical Engineers
- Mechanical Engineers
- Software Engineers & others

## Eligibility Criteria

If your role is on the Green List, and you satisfy the required criteria, you may be eligible to make a Straight to Residence Visa application.

## Residence Visa Benefits

Once you hold a resident visa, you have the right to live and work in New Zealand without the need for any work visa.

# Specific Purpose Work Visa & Working Holiday Visa

## Specific Purpose Work Visa

If you are required to work in a specialist role on a particular work project in New Zealand, and for a fixed term, the SPWV may be the most appropriate work visa.

## Working Holiday Visa

New Zealand has working holiday reciprocal visa arrangements with 45 countries which can provide work rights to young citizens (usually 18y to 35y) from these countries. You can work in fixed term and casual employment on a WHV but cannot work in permanent employment. NB: Different eligibility criteria and visa durations apply depending on the country but most WHVs are issued for 1 year (and up to 3 years for UK citizens).





# Open Work Visas and Benefits

## **Post-Study Work Visa Eligibility**

International students in New Zealand may be eligible for a post-study work visa of up to 3 years following graduation. Studying in New Zealand is also an option which can be considered if your existing qualifications need upgrading and to enhance job prospects.

## **Work Rights While Studying**

Students can work up to 25 hours per week while studying (depending on their study course) and full-time during semester breaks.

## **Partnership-based Work Visa**

Partners of New Zealand citizens or residents, or those of eligible work and student visa holders, may also be eligible for work visas.

## **Benefits of Open Visas**

Open visas allow the holder to work for any employer, in any role, and do not require any employment offer to obtain the visa. Open work visas provide an opportunity to showcase your skills to an employer and make a case for long term employment.

# Visas for Families of Work Visa Holders

## Spouse/Partner Visa Eligibility

Spouses or partners may qualify for partnership work visas allowing employment in any role in New Zealand.

## Dependent Children Visa Options

Dependent children under 20 years may be eligible for domestic student visas up to completion of secondary school in New Zealand.



# New Zealand Residence

Once a person has New Zealand residence, they no longer require a work visa and can work in any role and for any employer.

# Residence Options & Requirements

## **Green List Residence Pathways**

If you have a job offer for, or current employment in, a role on the Green List, and you have the required credentials, then you can immediately make a straight-to-residence application.

## **Skilled Migrant Category (SMC)**

The SMC is the main job-based residence category for applicants under 56 years of age.

Applicants must achieve a total of 6 x SMC points made up from a combination of either their NZ professional registration, or their qualification, or their payrate, and the skilled work experience in New Zealand.

Recently announced changes have streamlined the SMC, making it more accessible for applicants who complete certain qualifications in New Zealand.

# Additional Considerations for Engineers



All residence applicants must meet minimum English requirements



Some engineering roles may require registration with a professional body  
e.g., Engineering New Zealand Te Ao Rangahau



All visa applicants must meet acceptable health and character standards



Your residence visa application can include your partner and any eligible dependent children

# Next Steps

## **Review Job Prospects**

Connect with, and consider membership of, Engineering New Zealand to learn more about the engineering profession in NZ and what you need to enhance your job prospects.

## **Job Search**

Undertake online job search to see what jobs are available. Brush up your LinkedIn profile – connect with NZ employers and recruiters.

## **Consider Visa Options**

Reviewing the INZ Green List to see if you satisfy the criteria and, if not, consider what action is needed to do so. Consider your WHV eligibility.

## **Contact Pathways®**

Connect with Pathways to New Zealand® directly to understand more about your visa options.



## **New Zealand, it is!**

New Zealand offers a unique blend of professional opportunity, natural beauty, and a welcoming community. Whether you're seeking career advancement, a better lifestyle, or a safe and supportive environment for your family, relocating to New Zealand as an engineer could be the beginning of an exciting new chapter.

Take the first step today – explore your visa options, connect with industry professionals, and start planning your future in New Zealand.

# Pathways to New Zealand®

Established in 1992, Pathways® is one of New Zealand's most experienced and trusted immigration firms.

Our team of 12 Licensed Immigration Advisers brings together over 150 years of combined immigration expertise. They include enrolled lawyers, previous Immigration New Zealand immigration officers, and experienced and passionate professionals from New Zealand, the UK, Philippines, China, India, and Malaysia.

We speak 10 languages and provide expert, practical and proven guidance across all New Zealand visa categories with some 25,000+ people from over 125 countries having already relied on Pathways® to make New Zealand their home.

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