

## Recommended visa durations for certain offshore general visitor visa applicants

**To:** All Chief Operating Officer Immigration Branch Staff  
**From:** Operational Policy, Immigration Design and Assurance  
**Action required:** Discuss with your teams

### Context

The advice in this Visa Pak replaces the advice previously communicated to staff in [Visa Pak 584](#).

Immigration Instructions [V2.15](#) sets out the maximum durations that multiple entry visitor visas can be granted for. The following guidance has been updated to help ensure more efficient processing of applications by minimising risks and to provide a better, more consistent, service to our customers.

### Recommended visa durations – Low Touch

From 6 July, the visa conditions below are considered the starting point for all offshore general visitor visa applications covered by the Low Touch process. This does not include Pacific Island Forum country passport holders (outlined in Table 2 below) or applicants who have spent more than 9 in the past 18 months in New Zealand.

**Table 1: Low Touch recommended visa durations**

Nationality	First Entry Before	Expiry Date Travel	Expiry Date Stay	Entries
China	N/A	5 years	3 months	M
United States of America	N/A	4 years	3 months	M
Philippines*	N/A	1 year	59 days	M
Visa Waiver nationals	N/A	3 years	3 months	M
Visa Required nationals	N/A	1 years	3 months	M

\*Philippines has a bilateral fee waiver with New Zealand, but the duration of stay cannot be more than 59 days unless they have paid a fee, in which case their travel and stay expiry dates can be granted in line with other visa required nationals

### Recommended visa durations – Pacific Island Forum Countries

From 6 July 2025, the default visa duration for passport holders of Pacific Island Forum countries is a two-year multi entry visitor visa. This approach reflects New Zealand's special relationship with the Pacific and is intended to facilitate easier travel to New Zealand for Pacific peoples.

These visa conditions are the starting point for all offshore general visitor visa applications from Pacific Island Forum country passport holders, and where the applicant has not spent more than 9 in the past 18 months in New Zealand.

**Table 2: Pacific Island Forum recommended visa durations**

Nationality	First Entry Before	Expiry Date Travel	Expiry Date Stay	Entries
Pacific Island Forum Countries*	N/A	2 years	3 months	M

\*Pacific Island Forum Countries: Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu (as of 6 July 2025)

For Diplomatic and Official Passport Holders from Pacific Island Forum Countries and Kiribati please see [Visa Pak 535](#) for guidance.

### Additional considerations for all offshore general visitor visa applications

#### Visa duration

Visa durations need to be considered carefully where an immigration officer needs to mitigate risk. An immigration officer should use the durations in the tables above as a starting point but if there are specific risks that would be mitigated by the grant of a shorter visa duration, a single-entry visa or a Limited Visa, an immigration officer should grant the visa accordingly. Rationale must be recorded.

A shorter duration may also be necessitated by the expiry date of the applicant's passport (see 'Passport validity' below).

Immigration officers may consider a longer visitor visa duration (except for nationals of China and USA, where the table reflects the maximum allowed for in instruction V2.15 ) for example for applicants who are travelling to visit family and intend to stay in New Zealand for more than the recommended visa durations and the requested duration is permitted under the visitor visa instructions.

**Passport validity**

Passport validity needs to be considered as per immigration instructions E3.10 . For example, where an immigration officer wants to grant a five-year multiple entry visa to a Chinese national but the passport is only valid for three years, they can only grant a visa to the date specified in the immigration instructions E3.10 . They cannot grant a five-year multiple entry visa into a passport with only three years validity.

**Applications in ADEPT**

When immigration officers are processing an offshore general visitor visa application in ADEPT and the application is covered by the Low Touch process, please check the proposed visa prior to a final decision to ensure the new duration is applied.

**Applications from Pacific Island Forum Countries submitted prior to 6 July 2025**

Immigration officers should consider granting the 24-month duration to applications that are submitted before 6 July 2025 that are still awaiting a decision. Please note that system changes in ADEPT will only apply to applications received on or after 6 July. As a result, any applications already on hand will need to be manually updated. Please refer to the relevant [Standard Operating Procedures for guidance](#) .

**Action**

Please discuss with your teams.

Contact	s s 9(2)(g)(ii)
Publish on Visa Pak Database	Yes
Publish on INZ website (publicly available)	No
Visa Pak issue date	4 July 2025
Visa Pak number:	632

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# VisaPak Database

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## New approval letter for family visitor visa holders

**To:** All Chief Operating Officer Immigration Branch  
Staff

**From:** Sam MacKenzie, Content

**Action required:** Discuss with your teams

### Context

A new visitor visa eVisa approval letter has been added to the Template Letter System. The new template is **v380g Visitor eVisa approval family**.

If you are issuing a visitor visa for a partner or dependent of a temporary visa holder, or New Zealand citizen or resident ('family visitor visas'), use the v380g template instead of v380.

The v380 template tells visitor visa holders with multiple entry conditions that they can spend no more than 6 months out of every 12 months in New Zealand. This requirement does not apply to visas issued under [V3.10](#). This means that currently, staff have to manually delete this information whenever sending v380 to family visitor visa holders.

The new v380g template does not refer to the 6 in 12-month visitor visa stay conditions or single-entry conditions. This new template is intended to streamline processes, minimise manual effort, and reduce the risk of sending letters with incorrect information.

A reminder to only use letters in the Template Letter System for non-ADEPT visa processing. This ensures you are using the latest content. If you have letter templates saved elsewhere (such as on your computer), you should delete these.

### Action

Please discuss with your teams.

Contact	<a href="#">Content team</a>
Publish on Visa Pak Database	Yes
Publish on INZ website (publicly available)	No
Visa Pak issue date	21 November 2025
Visa Pak number:	652

## Visitor Visa – MICE applications

**To:** All Chief Operating Officer Immigration Branch Staff

**From:** Aidan Keating, Senior Advisor Operations, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

**Action required:** Discuss with your teams

### Context

The purpose of this Visa Pak is to advise processing staff of the updated approach to assessing visitor visa – MICE applications.

### Background

The visitor visa – MICE category was introduced as an alternative visa pathway for approved travel agents to submit group visitor visa applications for travel related to meetings, incentives, conferences, and events. This pathway was historically used heavily by Tourism New Zealand’s agents, who requested a separate visa option for these purposes. New visitor visa – MICE applications can still be submitted, incorrectly, through this channel as group visas. This option will continue to be available until the visitor visa channel is decommissioned in IGMS, which is schedule for March 2026.

INZ continues to receive visitor visa group applications under the MICE category in IGMS. Currently, when applications are received under this category NaDO closes the application in IGMS and replaces it with the most appropriate visitor visa group pathway, usually a "visitor visa, general, group" (VVG group) application. The new applications are then referred to an immigration manager for a fee waiver to be granted.

This process is administratively burdensome and creates delays in application processing.

### New agreed approach:

Visitor visa – MICE applications do not have a specific set of immigration instructions to assess against, they are assessed against generic visitor visa (V2) instructions and visitor visa groups instructions (V3.1). These are the same immigration instructions used to assess visitor visa group applications. The fee for visitor visa – MICE applications is the same as the group visitor visa fee.

Given the resource associated with raising replacement applications and waiving fees, the current peak period and the imminent closure of this IGMS channel, the updated approach to managing visitor visa – MICE applications where it has been determined the correct category that should have been applied for is VVG groups, is to:

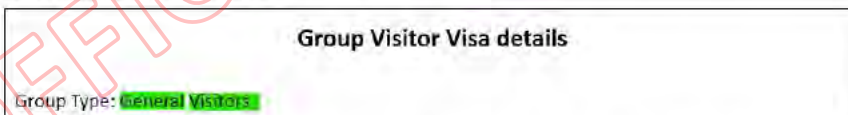
1. When a visitor visa – MICE application is received, staff are to proceed to lodge the application following standard lodgement requirements for visitor visa – MICE applications in AMS (and are not to replace with a VVG group application).
2. Proceed to assess visitor visa – MICE applications against the VVG Immigration Instructions and select 'General' as the visa type in the [Visitor Visa Assessment template](#)

**Note:** Despite the application being lodged under the visitor visa - MICE category, immigration officers must assess it under the VVG immigration instructions V2 & V3.1, in-line with the process for standard VVG group applications.

3. When deciding a visitor visa – MICE application, staff should proceed to issue the decision letter using the appropriate template in AMS (for example, letter template V386a for approval letters). Before issuing the letter, staff are advised to amend the letter so that it accurately reflects the application has been assessed against VVG group requirements as shown in the highlighted sections of the screenshot below:

#### Group Visitor Visa application approved

Thank you for your application for a visitor group visa - **General**, which we received on 28 October 2025. The details of your visa are:



This approach will remain in place until IGMS visitor visa groups pathway is closed, following ADEPT groups implementation in March 2026.

Staff should continue advising applicants, lawyers, and licensed immigration advisers not submit visitor visa groups applications under the visitor visa - MICE category.

If you require advice on how to process visitor visa – MICE category, please consult with your Technical Adviser.

### Action

Please discuss with your teams.

Contact	ss 9(2)(g)(ii)
Publish on Visa Pak Database	Yes
Publish on INZ website (publicly available)	No
Visa Pak issue date	12 December 2025
Visa Pak number:	655

## Pilot process for Visitor Visa applications with health declarations

**To:** All Chief Operating Officer Immigration Branch Staff  
**From:** Caitlin Hooper, Operations Support  
**Action required:** Discuss with your teams

### Context

This Visa Pak is to advise about the completion of the pilot process for Visitor Visa General (VVG) applications with health declarations. The advice contained within this Visa Pak replaces the advice of [Visa Pak 646](#).

The pilot process for VVG applications with health declarations ends on **15 December 2025**. Staff should resume the previous approaches for assessing health declarations and medical information submitted with VVG applications, in accordance with the guidance outlined below.

#### For VVG applications allocated to an immigration officer that contain medical documents

Immigration officers should no longer use the VVG Health Pilot Panel templates, and Practice Leads are no longer required to refer these cases to Operations Support. In the first instance, staff should assess health declarations or any medical information provided with VVG applications in line with the Standard Operating Procedure [Assess health \(temporary entry\)](#), regardless of the applicant's declared intended length of stay.

If medical information is requested, it is important that immigration officers document the rationale for making this request (the grounds for the individual being considered likely to impose excess costs and demands on New Zealand's publicly funded health or special services, and the link between the information requested and the relevant immigration instructions).

If an immigration officer has any questions regarding a health case or health condition of an applicant, and whether further medical information should be requested, it is recommended to contact the Health Assessment Team (HAT) following the standard operating procedure [Send communications to HAT](#).

#### For ADEPT health declaration activities received by a HAT immigration officer

HAT Immigration Officers should revert back to their previous process of referring health declarations to the Chief Medical Officer when required based on the type of declaration made and intended length of stay and actioning all health activities for VVG applications in ADEPT prior to the application being allocated to a processing office for further assessment.

### Next steps

The findings of the pilot will be reviewed, and Operations Support will work with the Health Assessment Team, Visa Operations, and Legal Services and determine if any changes are needed. Operations Support will report back by the end of January 2026 on the findings of the pilot panel and will provide any other updates.

### Action

Please discuss with your teams.

Contact	<a href="#">Operations Support</a>
Publish on Visa Pak Database	Yes
Publish on INZ website (publicly available)	No
Visa Pak issue date	12 December 2025
Visa Pak number:	655

## Advice on assessing English language requirements for Occupation Registration Visitor Visa applications from nurses

**To:** All Chief Operating Officer Immigration Branch Staff  
**From:** Alex Wolf – Henderson Visa Operations  
**Action required:** Discuss with your teams

### Context

This Visa Pak provides guidance to staff in assessing English language requirements for Occupation Registration Visitor Visa applications from internationally qualified nurses and should be read in conjunction with [Visa Pak 566](#) and [Visa Pak 572](#).

The Nursing Council of New Zealand (NCNZ) has updated their competency assessment requirements for internationally qualified nurses applying for registration in New Zealand, effective 4 December 2023, with further refinement to the criteria taking effect from 1 July 2024.

Before applying to the NCNZ for registration, all internationally qualified nurses need to have their documents, including evidence of English language competency, verified and authenticated by the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS).

Applicants who are required to complete a test of competence receive two letters of invitation from the NCNZ, as evidence of their eligibility to undertake the registration process. The first letter will invite them to undertake an online theoretical exam, which can be completed in one of several international locations. Once an applicant has successfully completed their theoretical examination, they will receive a second letter of invitation from the NCNZ to attend the Objective Structural Clinical Exam (OSCE) and a preparation course in person in New Zealand. Applicants will now receive these letters via email, instead of as PDF attachments as they did previously.

In consultation with Immigration New Zealand (INZ), the NCNZ has revised their OSCE invitation letter template to include a statement confirming that the applicant meets the English language requirements. All OSCE invitation letters issued from 15 October 2024, must include this statement, "you have met enrolment requirements, including the English language requirements".

INZ has confirmed that the NCNZ, through CGFNS, is verifying English language competency as part of the registration process. Therefore, unless any concerns identified during the assessment of the application, INZ can accept this letter as evidence that the English language component of immigration instruction [V3.45.1\(b\)](#) has been met, without further verification.

### Action

Please discuss with your teams.

Contact	<b>s 9(2)(g)(ii)</b>
Publish on Visa Pak Database	Yes
Publish on INZ website (publicly available)	No
Visa Pak issue date	13 December 2024
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