



GLOBAL IMMIGRATION TRENDS – AUGUST 2024

Introduction

This global migration summary provides an overview of the latest updates and trends in immigration policies, highlighting shifts in various regions across the world and how it affects Nigerians that intend to apply for immigrant and non-immigrant visas.

Asia

Malaysia

MALAYSIA INCREASES VISA PROCESSING FEE FOR EXPATRIATES AND DEPENDENTS

Effective September 1, 2024, Malaysia increased its visa processing fees, as announced by the MYXpats Centre, the Centre which manages immigration services for expatriates under the Expatriate Services Division (“ESD”) of the Immigration Department.

The increase in visa processing fees will affect key visa categories such as the Employment Pass, Dependent Pass, Long-Term Social Visit Pass and Professional Visit Pass.

Employment Pass

The fee for the Employment Pass (“EP”) is set to rise significantly from Eight Hundred Malaysian Ringgit (MYR 800) (approximately **US\$183**) to Two Thousand Malaysian Ringgit (MYR 2,000) (approximately **US\$457**), excluding the eight percent (8%) Sales and Service Tax (“SST”). The EP is a crucial pass for foreign professionals to work in Malaysia and is often sought by companies to bring in specialized skills that are not readily available in the local market. The significant fee hike may signal the government’s intent to encourage local hiring or limit expatriate employment to highly critical roles.

Dependent Pass and Long-Term Social Visit Pass

The Dependent Pass (“DP”) and Long-Term Social Visit Pass (“LTSVP”) fees are likely to increase from Four Hundred and Fifty Malaysian Ringgit (MYR 450) (approximately US\$103) to Five Hundred Malaysian Ringgit (MYR 500) (approximately US\$114). The DP allows spouses, children under 18, and children with disabilities to join an expatriate in Malaysia, while the LTSVP extends this privilege to Common Law spouses, older children aged 18-25, and parents or parents-in-law.

Professional Visit Pass

The Professional Visit Pass (“PVP”), typically issued to foreign nationals for short-term professional assignments in Malaysia, is set to increase from Eight Hundred Malaysian Ringgit (MYR 800) (approximately US\$183) to One Thousand Two Hundred Malaysian Ringgit (MYR 1200) (approximately US\$274). The PVP is often used for training local staff or overseeing projects and is crucial for temporary stays. It is important to note that certain positions, such as Invited Lecturers, Invited Professors, Visiting Professors, and Visitor Lecturers, are exempted from this fee increase.

Transfer of Endorsement Fee

A new fee of One Hundred and Fifty Malaysian Ringgit (MYR 150) (approximately US\$34) will be introduced for the Transfer of Endorsement (“TOE”) service, which was previously offered free of charge.

The TOE service allows expatriates to transfer their visa endorsement from one passport to another, typically due to a passport renewal.

Fee Exemptions and Refunds

Public universities and government institutions will be exempt from these new fees. Additionally, if an application is unsuccessful, a seventy-five (75%) refund is available, but no refunds will be given for appeals.

The fee increment by MYXpats, and the Malaysian government appear to be aimed at balancing high-quality service with the practical demands of managing a growing expatriate community. The additional revenue is set to improve MYXpats Centre’s infrastructure, expedite processing times, and strengthen online services, including the new Xpats Gateway and the expanded Expatriate Satellite Centre (“ESC”) at Kuala Lumpur International Airport. These enhancements are part of a broader initiative to streamline processes for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Critical Sector companies, demonstrating Malaysia’s focus on supporting key industries and investments.

MALAYSIA SIMPLIFIES THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL VISIT PASS (PVP) APPLICATION

In a bid to simplify the expatriate application process, Malaysia’s Expatriate Services Division (“ESD”) has reduced the required documents for Professional Visit Pass (“PVP”) applications from thirteen (13) items to six (6). Previously, obtaining a PVP required submitting an extensive list of thirteen (13) documents, including various bonds, letters, and certificates, which often made the process more complicated and time-consuming.

By its reduction to six (6) documents, the ESD’s new policy is a move towards making the application process easier, smoother and faster. This new policy, became effective on August 16, 2024.

According to the ESD, the key documents now required are:

1. **Copy of Applicant’s International Passport** – It must include all pages of the passport and a minimum of six (6) blank pages must be available.
2. **Application Letter from Malaysian Sponsor** - This serves as a formal request for the PVP and confirms the sponsor’s endorsement of the applicant’s visit.
3. **Bonds** - There are two categories of bonds required for the visa processing process namely:
 - A. **Personal Bond:** This is required for citizens of all nationalities except China and Bangladesh. This acts as a financial guarantee that the applicant will adhere to Malaysian laws.
 - B. **Security Bond:** This is only required for applicants from China and Bangladesh, it serves as a financial assurance of compliance.
4. **Letter of Award (“LOA”) or Contract** -This shows proof of the applicant’s employment or project agreement.
5. **Memorandum of Understanding (“MoU”)** - This details the agreements between the employer and the employee.
6. **Supporting Documents:** Specific documents may be required from the applicant depending on the applicant’s role.





For example, if the applicant's position involves machinery installation, mining expertise, or aeroplane simulator testing, additional documentation related to these functions will be needed. By virtue of this new policy, the bank guarantee, offer letter, acceptance letter, job description, working schedule, academic certificates, updated resume which formed part of the required documents are no longer needed.

Africa

Nigeria

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA INCREASES PASSPORT FEE

Effective from September 1, 2024, the Federal Government of Nigeria has approved an upward review of Nigerian Passport fee. This approval grants the Nigerian Immigration Service ("NIS") the right to implement the new price increment.

The Thirty-two (32) page passport with five (5) years validity which was Thirty-five Thousand Naira (N35,000) (approximately \$21) will now be issued at Fifty Thousand Naira (N50,000) (approximately \$30); while the Sixty-four (64) page passport with ten (10) years validity which was Seventy Thousand Naira (N70,000) (approximately \$42) will now be issued at One Hundred Thousand Naira only (N100,000) (approximately \$60).

The NIS through a press release dated August 21, 2024 noted that the decision to increase the passport fee was taken in order to maintain the quality and integrity of the Nigerian Standard Passport.

While the Passport fees have increased for applicants within Nigeria, the fees remain unchanged for Nigerian applicants in the Diaspora.

Find More: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2024/08/22/fg-increases-passport-fees/>

Oceania

New Zealand

NEW ZEALAND INCREASES VISA CHARGES

Effective from October 1, 2024, New Zealand will implement significant increases in visa charges across nearly all visa categories, marking a significant shift in its immigration fee structure. The primary objective of this adjustment is to enhance the efficiency, sustainability, and self-funding of the country's immigration system. The new visa charges, which include both fees and levies, are aimed at aligning the costs associated with processing visas and the benefits received by users of the immigration system.

It is important to note that the fee structure varies depending on where the application is made, the fees are categorised between Band A, B and C. Band A fees apply to applicants who are in New Zealand when making their application. For Pacific country citizens Band B fees apply. Whereas Band C fees apply to citizens from the rest of the world. Some of these increases include the following:

The Skilled Residence Visa fees-

- a. An increase from **One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty New Zealand Dollar (NZD1,880) (approximately US\$1,153) to Two Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty New Zealand Dollar (NZD 2,880) (approximately US\$1,766)** for Band A.
- b. An increase from One Thousand Six Hundred and Ten New Zealand Dollars (NZD1,610) (**approximately US\$987**) to One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty New Zealand Dollars (NZD1,860) (**approximately US\$1,140**) for Band B.
- c. An increase from Two Thousand Four Hundred and Eighty New Zealand Dollars (NZD2,480) (**approximately US\$1521**) to Three Thousand Five Hundred and Seventy New Zealand Dollars (NZD3,570) (**approximately US\$2,189**) for Band C.

The Immigration Levy also increases from Two Thousand Four Hundred and Ten New Zealand Dollars (NZD2,410) (**approximately US\$1478**) to Three Thousand Five Hundred and Seventy New Zealand Dollars (NZD3,570) (**approximately US\$2189**).

The Entrepreneur Residence Category -

- a. An increase from Three Thousand Seven Hundred and Ten New Zealand Dollars (NZD3,710) (approximately US\$2,275) to Eleven Thousand Three Hundred and Twenty New Zealand Dollars (NZD 11,320) (approximately US\$6,943) for Band A,
- b. An increase from Three Thousand Seven Hundred and Ten New Zealand Dollars (NZD3,710) (approximately US\$2,275) to Five Thousand Six Hundred and Ten New Zealand Dollars (NZD5,610) (approximately US\$3,440) for Band B,
- c. An increase from Three Thousand Seven Hundred and Ten New Zealand Dollars (NZD3,710) (approximately US\$2,275) to Fourteen Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety New Zealand Dollars (NZD14,890) (approximately **US\$9,132**) for Band C.

The Immigration Levy will also increase from Three Thousand One Hundred and Fifty New Zealand Dollars (NZD3,150) (**approximately US\$1932**) to Three Thousand Five Hundred and Seventy New Zealand Dollars (NZD3,570) (**approximately US\$2,189**).

The Active Investor Plus Category -

- a. An increase from Four Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty New Zealand Dollars (NZD4,750) (approximately US\$2,913) to Twelve Thousand and Seventy New Zealand Dollars (NZD12,070) (approximately US\$7,403) for Band A,
- b. An increase from Four Thousand Six Hundred and Thirty New Zealand Dollars (NZD4,630) (approximately US\$2,839) to Six Thousand One Hundred and Ninety New Zealand Dollars (NZD6,190) (approximately US\$3,796) for Band B,
- c. An increase from Four Thousand Six Hundred and Thirty New Zealand Dollars (NZD4,630) (approximately US\$2,839) to Twelve Thousand and Seventy New Zealand Dollars (NZD12,070) (approximately US\$7,403) for Band C.

The Immigration Levy increases from Three Thousand One Hundred and Fifty New Zealand Dollars (NZD3,150) (approximately US\$1,932) to Fifteen Thousand Four Hundred New Zealand Dollars (NZD15,400) (approximately US\$9,445).

Family Category -

- a. An increase from One Thousand Two Hundred New Zealand Dollars (NZD1,200) (approximately US\$736) to One Thousand Nine Hundred and Forty New Zealand Dollars (NZD1,940) (approximately US\$1,189) for Band A,
- b. An increase from One Thousand Two Hundred New Zealand Dollars (NZD1,200) (approximately US\$736) to One Thousand Three Hundred and Ninety New Zealand Dollars (NZD 1,390) (approximately US\$852) for Band B,
- c. An increase from Two Thousand Sixty New Zealand Dollars (NZD2,060) (approximately US\$1,263) to One Thousand Nine Hundred and Forty New Zealand Dollars (NZD1,940) (approximately US\$1,189) for Band C.

The Immigration Levy will increase from One Thousand Five Hundred and Fifty New Zealand Dollars (NZD1,550) (**approximately US\$950**) to Three Thousand Four Hundred and Twenty New Zealand Dollars (NZD3,420) (**approximately US\$2,099**).

The increase in visa charges comes as a response to several factors. First, it aims to address the need for cost recovery by aligning the charges with the actual expenses involved in visa processing, managing high-risk applications, and maintaining compliance and security measures. The new charges will cover various aspects of the immigration process, including the costs of visa processing and assessment, compliance and security measures, and the maintenance and upgrading of immigration systems.

The table of changes to fee and levy rates is available on New Zealand's Immigration website link below.

Table of changes to fee and levy rates (immigration.govt.nz)

Europe

United Kingdom

UNITED KINGDOM ANNOUNCES INCREASE IN FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

The United Kingdom (UK) has announced an increase in the proof of funds requirement for foreign students effective by January 2, 2025. Under this new policy, international students intending to study in London,





will be required to provide evidence of One Thousand Four Hundred and Eighty-Three pounds (£1,483) per month for living expenses, while those intending to study in other cities in the UK must show proof of One Thousand One Hundred and Thirty-Six Pounds (£1,136) per month. This marks an increase from the previous requirements of One Thousand Three Hundred and Thirty-Four Pounds (£1,334) for London and One Thousand Pounds and Twenty-Three Pounds (£1,023) for cities outside London.

This updated financial maintenance requirement was introduced to align the financial requirement with the updated maintenance loans available to domestic students and reflect the current cost of living in the UK.

Belgium

BELGIUM INTRODUCES NEW WORK PERMIT REGULATIONS

The Flanders region of Belgium has announced significant changes to its immigration policy, particularly relating to foreign workers. These changes, effective from October 1, 2024, include updated work permit regulations, restrictions on shortage occupation and labour market testing rules, relaxed educational requirements for EU Blue Card holders and intra-company transferees among others.

One of the key developments is the introduction of a unified single permit system for non-European nationals employed by Brussels-based employers. This new system replaces the previous requirement of separate applications for work and residence permits, simplifying the process for foreign nationals seeking employment in Brussels.

The revised regulations also feature a points-based system to evaluate work permit applicants. Applicants must meet a minimum points threshold to qualify for a work permit. This is aimed towards attracting highly skilled workers to address critical shortages in key sectors like technology, healthcare, and engineering.

Additionally, the work permit categories have been redefined. The former work permit B will now be classified as either a **"short-term work authorisation"** or a **"long-term work authorisation,"** depending on the duration of employment. Short-term authorisations will cover periods up to ninety (90) days, while long-term authorisations will apply to periods exceeding ninety (90) days.

For work authorisations valid for more than one (1) year, the process has been simplified. Annual checks would be automated as employers will no longer need to submit documents for annual checks. Employees who have resided and worked continuously in the Brussels Capital Region for thirty (30) months will be eligible for unlimited work authorisation, provided they meet all other necessary requirements.

The new regulations also require additional documentation for certain visa categories, such as job descriptions and company organisation charts, to better assess applications. However, job market analyses will not be required for critical functions, and existing procedures will continue for non-critical roles.

In line with the updated EU Blue Card Directive, the new regulations ease educational requirements for IT sector professionals, allowing experience to replace formal qualifications. Blue Card holders will also benefit from simplified procedures.

South & North America

United States of America (U.S.)

U.S. EMBASSY IN ABUJA AND CONSULATE GENERAL IN LAGOS TRANSITION TO NEW VISA SERVICE PROVIDER

On August 26, 2024, the U.S. Embassy in Abuja and U.S. Consulate General in Lagos transitioned from using ustraveldocs.com (the **"previous service provider"**) as its visa service provider to www.usvisaappt.com (the **"new service provider"**). This change aims to streamline and simplify visa processing services for immigrants.

With the introduction of the new service provider, all visa applicants are now required to create an account on www.usvisaappt.com for booking visa appointments or contacting customer support.

The new website features an integrated payment method, replacing the previous system of paying visa fees in cash at the bank. As of August 8, 2024, cash payments for visa fees at the bank have been discontinued.

U.S. VISA CATEGORIES REACH ANNUAL LIMIT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024

The U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (the "INA") sets an annual limit on the number of employment-based immigrant visas that can be issued by the United States. The U.S. State Department has announced that the visa quotas for the Employment-Based Third Preference (EB-3), Other Workers (EW), and Employment-Based Fifth Preference (EB-5) categories for the Fiscal Year 2024, have been fully allocated.

The EB-3 visa category is an employment-based immigrant visa that enables U.S. employers sponsor foreign employees for permanent residence, while the EB-5 visa enables foreign investors to obtain a green card by investing a required amount in a U.S. business that creates or preserves at least ten (10) full-time jobs for U.S. workers.

For each fiscal year, a maximum of Twenty-eight-point six percent (28.6%) of the worldwide employment-based visa can be issued to the EB-3 visa category and only Seven point one (7.1%) of the employment-based visa can be issued to the EB-5 visa category.

Consequently, the issuance of new visas in these categories will be suspended until the commencement of the new fiscal year on October 1, 2024.

Employers and applicants planning to apply in these categories for the next fiscal year should prepare their documentation in advance and apply early to enhance their chances in the competitive visa process.

Find more: <https://www.boundless.com/blog/eb-3-and-ew-visa-categories-reach-annual-cap/#~:text=Annual%20Limits%20and%20Their%20Impact&text=W ithin%20this%20allocation%2C%20no%20more,limits%20have%20already%20been%20reached>

U.S. ANNOUNCES COMPLETION OF ITS SECOND RANDOM SELECTION OF H-1B REGISTRATIONS FOR YEAR 2025.

On August 5, 2024, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ("USCIS") announced the successful completion of the second random selection (the **"Selection"**) from previously submitted H-1B registrations for the fiscal year ("FY") 2025. This selection was necessary due to the high volume of registrations and the unmet statutory cap of eighty-five thousand (85,000) H-1B visas, including those set aside for the advanced degree exemption, commonly known as the master's cap.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant work visa that allows U.S. employers to hire foreign workers with specialized skills to work in the United States for a specific period. Typically, the roles require a bachelor's degree or equivalent. Occupations that qualify for the H-1B visa are typically in fields such as technology, finance, engineering, architecture, or more.

There are two different H-1B visa caps, depending on a person's highest earned degree. Qualified international talents with job offers and a bachelor's degree in a related field are subject to the regular cap of sixty-five thousand (65,000) visas annually. On the other hand, there are only twenty thousand (20,000) visas per year for the master's cap. To qualify, an applicant must have a relevant master's degree or higher (i.e. Ph.D.) from a US institution and a job offer that requires that degree. In addition to the regular cap, the H-1B program also includes provisions for cap-exempt petitions, which are not subject to the annual limit.

This selection provides an additional opportunity for petitioners who were not selected in the initial round, which took place in March 2024.

This additional random selection is particularly significant for many international workers and their employers, who view the H-1B visa as a crucial pathway to gaining valuable work experience in the United States. The USCIS emphasized the importance of following all guidelines and deadlines associated with the H-1B petition filing process. Thus, Employers are advised to ensure that all information provided in the petitions is accurate and complete to avoid delays or denials.





The completion of the second lottery also signals the final stages of the FY 2025 H-1B visa process. Petitioners who have been selected are to prepare and submit their petitions, as the filing window is limited. Successful applicants will be able to begin working in the U.S. as early as October 1, 2024, which is the beginning of the coming fiscal year.

Find more: <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/second-random-selection-from-previously-submitted-registrations-complete-for-fy-2025-h-1b-regular>

Canada

CANADA INTRODUCES PERMANENT RESIDENCE FOR FRENCH-SPEAKING AFRICANS.

On August 26, 2024, the Canadian city, Ottawa, commenced the Francophone Minority Communities Student Pilot (the "FMCS") which is a new and direct permanent residency pathway targeted at French speaking-foreign students, in partnership with designated French-language and bilingual post-secondary institutions.

The FMCS is a key Francophone immigration measure of the Policy on Francophone Immigration, released earlier this year by the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, to increase Francophone population outside Quebec. A maximum of Two Thousand Three Hundred (2,300) applications would be accepted in 2024 through the FMCS.

Essentially, the FMCS is made to address the continuous threatened bilingual status of Canada. Given the high number of Francophone students in Africa and the Middle East, the country seeks to attract and retain the students towards creating the needed balance to effectively ensure and maintain the country's bilingual status. Thus, the FMCS seeks to generally make Canada's International Student Programme more equitable, especially for the Francophone Africans, Middle East and Americans.

Under the FMCS, to improve applicants' approval rates, some immigration rules have been relaxed. For example, the students and their families will be exempt from proving they will leave Canada at the end of their temporary stay. Also, the students will only need to meet seventy-five percent (75%) of the low-income cut-off for their community, rather than showing proof of funds of Twenty-thousand, Six hundred and Thirty-five Thousand Canadian Dollars (20,635) in their bank accounts.

Upon approval, participants would initially be given temporary residence. However, after successfully completing their studies, the temporary residence would be transitioned into a permanent residence, among other benefits.

Also, to enhance seamless and fast-tracked integration into local Canadian communities, participants are also given access to settlement services during their studies. It is expected that with both Canadian education and a proficiency in French language, the francophone foreigners would be able to enrich the Francophone Minority Communities ("FMCs") in the country, while also contributing to the Canadian work force.

Lastly, the spouses or Common law partners of principal applicants may also come to Canada under the FMCS and eventually apply for permanent residence.

Find more: <https://businessday.ng/news/article/canada-introduces-direct-pr-pathway-for-french-speaking-students-from-africa-others/>

CANADA COMMENCES NEW PILOT PATHWAY FOR CARE GIVERS

The Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada ("IRCC") announced a new caregiver pilot pathway that further enables caregivers to migrate into the Country. This pathway is a part of the 2024-2026 Immigration Levels Plan to grant permanent residence to fifteen thousand (15,000) caregivers towards meeting the home care needs of Canadians. With this pathway, caregivers can easily connect with employers and have a smooth and easy sail into the country's permanent residency.

The pathway comes with a number of perks. On arrival to the country, caregivers are given permanent residence ("PR") to stay in the country. There is also a wide scope of employment opportunities for the caregivers. They are permitted to not only work in private homes but also for organisations providing parttime care for semi-independent individuals recovering from illness or injury.

For an applicant to be eligible, the applicant must have received an offer for a full-time home care job. Also, the applicant is required to fulfil the below requirement:

- meet a minimum of level 4 proficiency in English and French which are Canadian Language Benchmarks ("CLB"). This means that at least, an applicant must be able to communicate in both languages.
- have credible and relevant work experience. A formal work experience or internship is what is required, and not a routine, informal experience such as giving of care to sick grandparents.
- have a qualification that is equivalent to a Canadian high school diploma.

Find more: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/06/canada-announces-new-pilot-programs-to-support-caregivers-and-canadian-families.html>

CANADIAN AUTHORITIES IMPLEMENT MEASURES TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN TEMPORARY WORKERS

In August 2020, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, pursuant to Section 25.2 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, made a temporary public policy that enables visiting foreign nationals to apply for work permit from inside the country. This was to allow visitors trapped in the country due to COVID-19 and its attendant restrictions seek gainful employment in the country. The policy was applicable to foreign nationals with valid temporary resident status and also allowed eligible former temporary foreign workers to work while there is a pending decision on their work permit application.

Furthermore, it exempted eligible foreign nationals from the requirement that a work permit can not be issued if the applicant has not complied with certain temporary resident conditions.

This policy, which was slated to end on February 28, 2025, was abruptly terminated by the IRCC on August 8, 2024.

Notably, applications submitted, pursuant to the extinct public policy, prior to August 28, 2024, would nevertheless be considered by the IRCC. The decision was made towards preserving the integrity of the Canadian immigration system, recalibrating the number of temporary residents in Canada, and curbing foreign nationals from working in the country without the necessary authorisation.

Similarly, on August 26, 2024, the Employment and Social Development Canada ("ESDC") announced that beginning from September 26, 2024, it would pause the processing of some Labour Market Impact Assessment ("LMIA") applications under the Low-Wage Stream of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program ("TFWP"). This will apply to applicants in Census Metropolitan Areas with an unemployment rate of six percent (6%) or higher.

Furthermore, for workers employed through the Low-Wage stream, the maximum duration of employment has been reduced by a whopping fifty percent (50%), particularly from two (2) years to one (1) year. Also, employers will not be allowed to employ above ten percent (10%) of their total workforce through the TFWP. However, seasonal and non-seasonal jobs in construction, healthcare, and food security measures will be generally exempted.

These changes were made to address the increasing six-point four percent (6.4%) Canadian unemployment rate, prioritize Canadians workers and eliminate the misuse of the TFWP by foreign workers. The TFWP is one of the viable immigration pathways in Canada. It is to cater for the Canadians needs that can be met by foreign workers.

Find more: <https://www.cicnews.com/2024/08/breaking-visitors-no-longer-allowed-to-apply-for-work-permits-from-within-canada-0846114.html/amp>

CANADA ANNOUNCES UPDATED PROCESSING TIMELINES FOR IMMIGRATION APPLICATIONS

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada ("IRCC") has announced new processing timelines for various immigration applications, providing applicants with clearer perspective regarding their applications.

Canada offers various immigration entries into the country such as business immigration, temporary residency, permanent resident ("PR") cards, and citizenship applications. Various factors influence processing times such as the type of visa, the applicant's country, internal decisions within the IRCC amongst others.





According to Immigration News Canada, IRCC's updates occur weekly, especially for temporary residency applications, while citizenship applications, family sponsorships, and economic immigration times have been updated monthly since May 2024.

The processing times for visitor visas vary significantly based on the country of origin. For example, applicants from India can expect a processing time of seventy-six (76) days, while those from Nigeria face a significantly longer wait of one hundred and Seventy-two (172) days. Study permit processing time also differs by region, with Indian applicants waiting around five (5) weeks and applicants from United States of America up to twelve (12) weeks. Work permit processing times vary across different countries. In India, the processing time is now (Twenty-six) 26 weeks, which marks an increase of six (6) weeks since mid-August. Nigeria's processing time has decreased to fourteen (14) weeks, down by one (1) week since late August. In the United States, the current processing time is sixteen (16) weeks, up by one (1) week since August 27.

Similarly, for economic immigration, the IRCC updates occur both monthly and weekly depending on the program. The Express Entry programs, including the Canadian Experience Class ("CEC") and Federal Skilled Worker Program ("FSWP"), maintain a five (5) month processing time, while the FSWP remains unchanged.

Non-Express Entry Provincial Nominee Program ("PNP") applicants can expect a Twelve (12)-month processing time, an increase of one (1) month since July. The Quebec Skilled Workers program takes nine (9) months, while the Quebec Business Class process remains lengthy at forty-seven (47) months.

IRCC constantly updates immigration processing times for various applications. Hence, applicants are advised to always check the official IRCC website for the most accurate and up-to-date processing times and also seek professional advice for their cases.

Middle East

United Arab Emirates

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES IMPLEMENTS GRACE PERIOD FOR VISA/PERMIT VIOLATIONS

The United Arab Emirates ("UAE") Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs, and Port Security ("ICP") has announced a significant update to its residency visa regulations.

On September 1, 2024, a two (2)-month amnesty period was implemented, offering an opportunity for foreign nationals who have overstayed their visas or violated residency laws to either regularize their residency status or leave the country without incurring penalties. The amnesty covers all types of visas, including tourist and residency visas.

The introduced grace period for visa overstay varies by visa type and category. For standard residence visas, the grace period now ranges from sixty (60) to one hundred and eighty (180) days, offering residents additional flexibility to secure new employment or arrange departure without penalties. Specifically, skilled professionals may receive up to one hundred and eighty (180) days, dependents are typically granted sixty (60) days, and general residency holders usually get between sixty (60) and ninety (90) days.

CONCLUSION

Global immigration trends continue to evolve as countries increasingly adopt policies aligned with their national interests. These measures often include increased fees, visa caps, or other strategies aimed at enhancing the country's appeal to foreigners. While some nations are currently encouraging immigration, others implement stricter regulations for foreign nationals.

It is essential to recognize that immigration policies, whether restrictive or relaxed, are shaped by public policy considerations reflecting each country's current priorities. Therefore, applicants are advised to stay informed about these trends and seek professional guidance where necessary.

This alert is for general information only. It is not offered as advice, on any particular matter, whether legal, procedural or otherwise.

For additional information, please contact Bloomfield LP Email- immigration@bloomfield-law.com or your usual contact at Bloomfield LP.