

Immigration Alert:

The cost of talent is increasing

MBIE has released a host of changes related to employer-assisted visas. The changes will be implemented over the next 18 months in stages but **changes to Talent (Accredited Employer) work visas take effect from 7 October 2019**. If you are Accredited or thinking of becoming Accredited, it's time to consider your options.

In brief

Changes that take effect from 7 October 2019 include:

- Increasing the remuneration threshold for the Work to Residence – Talent (Accredited Employer) visa category from **\$55,000 to \$79,560 per annum**.
- Removing the ability to obtain a permanent resident visa when an applicant applies for residence at the end of 24 months (applicants will only be granted residence).
- Limiting the duration of Accredited Employer status to 24 months on any new applications made after 7 October 2019.

Points to consider following the change to Talent Visa salary thresholds

Do any of your employees who earn less than \$79,560 hold a Talent Visa that is only valid for 24 months?

If so, you should consider whether they should apply for a further Talent Visa now, before 7 October 2019, in order to protect their ability to apply for residence when their current visa expires.

Do you understand your options and obligations as an employer under the Essential Skills visa instructions?

If the new salary threshold will limit your options for recruiting foreign workers, now is the time to upskill on the Essential Skills visa instructions and align your recruitment process with immigration policy.

Are you in the midst of making any offers to candidates who earn more than \$55,000 but less than \$79,560?

They must lodge a complete application before 7 October 2019 to be issued with a Talent Visa under the current salary threshold.

If you are in the process of becoming Accredited or considering whether to re-apply, will you be able to meet the new salary threshold and/or regardless of that would it benefit you to becoming or remaining Accredited?

While you may not have many candidates who will meet the new threshold, if you employ more than 5 migrants in a 12 month period you may wish to apply or maintain your status in order to transition to accredited status in 2021.

The detail

- All applications lodged to Immigration New Zealand for processing from 7 October 2019 will need to meet the new salary threshold of \$79,560 per annum.
- The new salary threshold represents 150% of the current New Zealand median salary.
- Employers who apply for Accredited employer status or renew their status after 7 October 2019 will only be issued with accredited status for 24 months because once further policy changes are made this policy will no longer exist in its current form.
- Any employees who currently hold a Talent Visa will not be impacted by these changes. The conditions and length of their visa will not change. They will only need a salary of \$55,000 or more when they apply for residence at the end of 24 months.

A summary of the Talent Visa salary threshold changes, including time frames, can be found [here](#).

Watch this space for more information about the further suite of changes being made to temporary work visas. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.



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