

**2022**  
EDITION

PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
**WORK PERMIT**  
FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW





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# Work Permit information

## Facts you need to know

A non-citizen who intend to work in Papua New Guinea in the private sector must be in possession of a valid Work Permit. Work Permit is regulated and issued by the Papua New Guinea Immigration and Citizenship Authority (ICA). ICA also have extensive regulatory mandate over the management and issuance of employment visa.

Your work permit must be granted by the Chief Migration Officer (CMO) before you can commence employment. It is important to know that your Work Permit is a separate document and is not an employment visa. Your employment visa will be issued separately after your work permit application is approved and issued. You must have in your possession a valid work permit letter, Work Permit ID card and a valid Working Resident Visa before you travel to Papua New Guinea to commence work.

It is the responsibility of your sponsor or employer to apply for a work permit on your behalf. Employers who employ non-citizens who are not in possession of valid work permit are in breach of the Foreign Employment Laws and both will be penalised accordingly.

### Who is required to hold a Work Permit?

All non-citizens who seek employment in the private sector in Papua New Guinea must possess a valid work permit before they can commence employment.

### Work Permit Exemption

Exemptions are given to non-citizen employees to engage in employment if they fall under one of these categories:

- The non-citizen is employed in the Papua New Guinea Public Service;
- The non-citizen is employed by a Diplomatic Corps;
- The non-citizen is appointed as Official Personal Staff;
- The non-citizen is employed by certain Aid Donor Organizations such as AusAID and JICA, and;
- Non-citizens who have been granted Permanent Residency (PR) status.

Locally engaged non-citizen employees of foreign Diplomatic Missions and Aid Donor Organizations in Papua New Guinea are not exempted and must obtain a valid work permit before commencement of employment.

Non-citizen employees of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and Statutory Bodies must, in most cases, possess a valid work permit before undertaking employment.

Certain visa holders who enter PNG for specific, short-term purposes may be exempt from the requirement to hold a work permit. Refer to the website ([ica.gov.pg](http://ica.gov.pg)) for specific information.

### Volunteers

Non-citizen volunteers are required to hold a valid work permit unless they are employed by a specified Aid Donor Organization which has been formally recognized by the Government.

Dependents of work permit holders may wish to engage in informal voluntary activities during their stay in Papua New Guinea. This could include activities such as fundraising for charities i.e. sausage sizzle, selling raffle tickets, serving at the school canteen or providing meals to hospital patients. A work permit is not required in these circumstances as long as the voluntary activity occurs on an irregular basis, the volunteer has no employment contract and receives no remuneration (either in cash or kind) and the activity does not deprive a citizen of an opportunity for employment.

## **Types of Work Permit**

The Papua New Guinea Government through Immigration and Citizenship Authority (ICA) issues three types of work permits.

### **1. General Work Permit**

A general work permit is granted where the employment contract between the employer and employee is for work of a commercial nature. The law defines commercial work as employment performed entirely or mostly for financial (i.e. money) rewards.

### **2. Volunteer Work Permit**

A volunteer work permit is granted where the employment contract between the employer and employee is for work of a voluntary nature. The law defines voluntary work as employment performed entirely or mostly for other than financial rewards. A decision as to whether an employee qualifies for a Volunteer Work Permit requires careful consideration of factors such as: (1) Salary, (2) allowances, (3) nature of the activities engaged in, and (4) the history of the organization in PNG. Non-citizens who are granted volunteer work permit may not engage in work which is of a commercial nature.

### **3. Bridging Work Permit**

Bridging work permit applies where a non-citizen is changing employment and has applied for a new work permit but their current work permit is due to expire within 2-3 months' time before the new work permit can be granted. Bridging also applies to a non-citizen who is promoted within the same company to a new position.

## **Duration of Work Permit**

- A short term work permit is valid for up to six months from the date it is granted.
- A long term work permit is valid from one year up to three years from the date it is granted (or 5 years for Good Corporate Citizens).
- A Bridging Work Permit is valid for sixty days from the date it is granted.

## **New Work Permit application**

Application for new work permit and short term work permit must be completed using the prescribed application form: *Form 1 – Green Form*. Applications submitted on incorrect or out-of-date forms will not be accepted under any circumstances. The application form can be downloaded on the website [www.ica.gov.pg](http://www.ica.gov.pg)

A Work Permit applicant must be outside of Papua New Guinea at the time the work permit is granted. However, a non-citizen may be granted a work permit (new or renewal) while they are in Papua New Guinea if the non-citizen already holds a valid work permit.

## **Requirements for new Work Permit**

These are the requirements for a new Work Permit Application.

- Copy of Passport bio data page (Passport must be valid for more than 6 months);
- Copy of the updated Curriculum Vitae;
- Copy of the job description;
- Certified evidence of education qualifications;
- Copy of employment contract signed and dated by both employee and the employer;
- Company organizational structure;
- Two recent passport size photograph of employee (must be clear and in colour);
- Evidence of membership of Professional Association (where relevant);
- Evidence of English Language Proficiency (where relevant);
- Employer's Certificate of Incorporation from the Investment Promotion Authority (IPA) – Form 4 and 5;
- Evidence (receipt) of payment of fee (non-refundable).

## **Renewal of Work Permit**

Renewal of work permit must be done 3 months prior to the expiration of your current permit. A renewal only applies if the application is for the same position in the same company.

An application for the renewal of a work permit must be made on *Form 2: Application for Renewal of Work Permit*. Requirements for renewal can be found on the checklist on the same form.

## **Requirements for renewal of existing Work Permit**

The following documents must be provided as requirements for renewal of an existing work permit.

- Copy of existing work permit;
- Updated Curriculum Vitae;
- Copy of employment contract signed by both employee and employer;
- Two recent passport size photograph of employee (must be clear with colour);
- Copy Passport bio data page;
- Evidence of membership of Professional Association (where relevant);
- Evidence of training and development of PNG citizen workers (company training report accompanied by company's succession plan and copies of certificates issued to citizen trainees);
- Justification letter why the Authority should renew your work permit;
- Copy of employee Tax Identification Number (TIN) certificate from Internal Revenue Commission (IRC).

## **Certifying and Translating documents**

It is a requirement that all supporting documentation submitted as part of a work permit application must be certified as true and correct by a Justice of the Peace or other notary.

### **Translation**

All documents which are not in English language must be accompanied by a translation into English. The translation must be accompanied by a statement in English from the translator setting out:

- The translator's full name, address and occupation;
- The translator's qualifications, and;
- A statement that the translation is true and correct.

## **Conditions**

Work Permit is granted subject to certain conditions. Where a work permit is granted subject to a condition, the conditions will be clearly stated on the work permit. An employer and the employee who breaches the conditions of a work permit is guilty of an offence.

## **Limitations of Work Permit**

Work Permit can be issued:

- To a specified employer;
- For a specified non-citizen, and;
- For a specified occupation.

A work permit is not transferable i.e. it may not be used by another non-citizen employee. A non-citizen employee may not move from one position to another position within the same company (or another company) without making an application for a new work permit.

An employee who works in a different position or different company to that of which his or her work permit was granted, commits an offence.

A work permit may be granted to a non-citizen for the purpose of providing consultancy or business services. However, these services must be limited to a specific area of the PNG economy (for example: Legal services or Financial Services).

## **Language requirements**

Non-citizens are required to share their knowledge and experience with their Papua New Guinea counterparts. It is also important that non-citizens who come to work here are able to communicate with Papua New Guinea citizens within the community.

For this reason, it is mandatory that all non-citizens must prove that they are proficient in English language, *Tok Pisin* or *Motu* before they can be granted a work permit.

### **Proof of Language Proficiency?**

An applicant may prove his or her proficiency in English language if the applicant:

- + Has an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Certificate with a score of at least Band 4 in the General or Academic Module;
- Has a certificate from a recognised English Language Instruction Institution which confirms that the applicant is Proficient in English;
- Has completed at least 5 years of secondary education at a school or schools that taught in English;
- Has completed a 3 year tertiary qualification that was taught in English;
- Can otherwise show that they are proficient in English.

### **Application Forms**

Work Permit application forms can be downloaded on the website [www.ica.gov.pg](http://www.ica.gov.pg)

*Form 1 - Green Form:* For New and Short-Term Work Permit application;

*Form 2 - Application for Renewal of Work Permit:* For renewals.

### **Lodgement days**

Work Permit applications are lodged on Tuesdays and Thursdays only at the counters inside Central Government Office (CGO) in Waigani from 9am-12 midday. Status followups are on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9am-12 midday. Clients can email [clientservice@immigration.gov.pg](mailto:clientservice@immigration.gov.pg) to follow-up on the status of the work permit.

### **Processing time**

Work permit applicants can expect to receive their work permit within a month if all requirements are provided.

### **Fee**

A detailed fee schedule can be found at the back of this document. The fee schedule is also available on the immigration website [www.ica.gov.pg](http://www.ica.gov.pg)

## **Good Corporate Citizens**

Certain employers can be declared as Good Corporate Citizens of Papua New Guinea. Good Corporate Citizenship is based on the belief that businesses that 'do the right thing' should be rewarded. In other words, it is an initiative to recognize those members of the business community in Papua New Guinea who make an outstanding contribution to the development of Papua New Guinean workers.

### **What are the requirements?**

Good Corporate Citizens must be able to demonstrate a sound track record of:

- + Recruiting and training Papua New Guinean workers;
- + Complying with all Papua New Guinea Laws and Regulations;
- + Sound employment, industrial relations and occupational safety and health practices.

Business will not be able to demonstrate good corporate citizenship by providing a one-off monetary gift. The good behaviour must be sustained. There must be evidence of a real, long-lasting commitment to the ideals of Good Corporate Citizenship.

### **Benefits**

Good Corporate Citizens may be given the following benefits:

- + 5 year work permits;
- + Priority processing of new applications and renewals;
- + Public recognition through the displaying of the Good Corporate Citizen Logo.

### **Application:**

The Chief Migration Officer (CMO) may, from time to time, call for applications for Good Corporate Citizenship. These applications will be considered by the CMO who shall make a recommendation to the Minister for Immigration and Border Security. Good Corporate Citizenship is awarded by the Minister and the names of recipients are published in the National Gazette.

Good Corporate Clients have a separate guidelines outlining the application and approval process to be followed for those companies who wish to be recognized as Good Corporate Citizens.

## **Professional Registration**

It is necessary for certain non-citizen employees in Papua New Guinea to register with a Professional Body before taking up employment. For example, registration is required by the following Professional Bodies:

- Institute of Engineers PNG Inc.
- Certified Practicing Accountants of PNG
- Nursing Council of PNG
- Maritime Safety Authority
- Pharmacy Board of PNG
- Law Society of PNG
- Medical Board of PNG
- Papua New Guinea Association of Surveyors
- Papua New Guinea Institute of Architects
- Civil Aviation Authority
- PNG Human Resource Institute
- National Fisheries Authority

It is a mandatory requirement that all applicants must provide proof of registration with the relevant Professional Body before submitting an application for a work permit. It is the responsibility of the employer and the non-citizen to ensure they are registered with the appropriate Professional Association. The Authority will not be able to process an application until written proof of registration is provided.



## **Qualifications, Age and Professional Registration requirements**

Non-citizens who come to work in Papua New Guinea must have evidence of educational qualification, skills and experience in the job they have applied for. A non-citizen employee must possess a University Degree or Tertiary qualification relevant to their field of employment. Applications should also demonstrate ample work experience in the field you applied for.

## **Refusal of Work Permit applications**

Where an application is refused by the Chief Migration Officer, written notification outlining the reasons for the decision will be provided to the applicant.

### **Appeal**

Where an applicant is aggrieved with the Chief Migration Officer's decision, then an appeal in writing may be made to the Minister for Immigration and Border Security. In such cases the appeal must:

- Be made within 14 days of receiving the notification of refusal;
- Be in writing;
- Clearly specify the grounds for the appeal;
- Be accompanied by evidence of payment of the prescribed non-refundable fee.

On receipt of an appeal, the Minister will, within 28 days, obtain the recommendation of the Chief Migration Officer and consider all the information contained in the appeal. The Minister will then:

- Decide whether to grant or refuse the appeal;
- Advise the applicant in writing of the reasons for the decision;
- If the appeal is granted, the Minister will direct the Chief Migration Officer to grant the work permit.

### **Cancellation**

Work permit is automatically cancelled in the following circumstances:

- A work permit becomes invalid if the non-citizen ceases to hold a valid visa. In other words, if a non-citizen's visa becomes invalid his or her work permit is automatically invalid.
- A work permit becomes invalid if a non-citizen's employment is terminated for any reason. In other words, if a non-citizen's employment ends, his or her work permit is automatically invalid.

The Chief Migration Officer may cancel work permit if:

- The work permit holder has not complied with the conditions of the work permit;
- The work permit application contained information that was false or misleading;
- The person who holds the work permit is not a 'fit and proper' person to continue to hold a work permit. For example, a person is not 'fit and proper' if:
  - They have been convicted of a criminal offence or have engaged in criminal activity;
  - They have been assessed by the relevant authority as being a risk to national security;
  - They are physically or mentally unable to continue performing their duties;
  - They have mistreated Papua New Guinean workers;
  - They have breached the Act (Employment of non-citizen Act).

## **Occupations reserved for citizens, Occupations which must be advertised and Occupations open for both citizens and non-citizens**

All employers who employ non-citizen workers must be familiar with the 'list of reserved occupations'. A document guide to the *Foreign Employment Industrial Divisions and Classification of Occupations* that contains the full Classification of Occupations and the rules (if any) regarding the employment of foreigners in these occupations can be accessed through this link [https://www.workpermits.gov.pg/pdfs/Guid\\_Clasi\\_1208.pdf](https://www.workpermits.gov.pg/pdfs/Guid_Clasi_1208.pdf).

## WORK PERMIT FEES

\*Note: All fees are charged in PNG Kina (PGK).

<b>WORK PERMIT APPLICATION</b>	<b>FEE</b>
New General Work Permit Application - 1 year	2,500.00
New General Work Permit Application - 2 years	5,000.00
New General Work Permit Application - 3 years	7,500.00
New General Work Permit Application - 5 years for GCC	12,500.00
New General Short-Term Work Permit Application - 6 months	750 .00
New Volunteer Work Permit Application - 6 months short term)	125.00
New Volunteer Work Permit Application - 1 year	250.00
New Volunteer Work Permit Application - 2 years	500.00
New Volunteer Work Permit Application - 3 years	750.00
New Volunteer Work Permit Application – 5 years for GCC	1,000.00
Renewal of General Work Permit Application - 1 year	4,500.00
Renewal of General Work Permit Application - 2 year	7,000.00
Renewal of General Work Permit Application - 3 year	9,500.00
Renewal of General Work Permit Application - 5 year for GCC	12,500.00
Renewal of Volunteer Work Permit Application - 1 year	350.00
Renewal of Volunteer Work Permit Application - 2 year	600.00
Renewal of Volunteer Work Permit Application - 3 year	850.00
Renewal of Volunteer Work Permit Application – 5 years GCC	1,100.00
<b>Additional Work Permit Related Fees</b>	
Application for Bridging Work Permits	250.00
Change of Employer or Promotion: Applying for work permit whilst in country through Bridging Application country (Addition fees K2000.00)	2,000.00
Express Process Fee (processing of work permit applications within 3 days)	300.00
Reprint of Work Permit (each copy)	250.00
Reprint of Work Permit Card (each copy)	250.00
Lodging an Appeal	250.00
Copy of the Employment of Non-Citizens Guidelines	60.00
Late Lodgement of Renewal of Work Permit applications within 7 days before expiring of work permit - (both General Work Permits and Volunteer Work Permits)	1,000.00
Work Permit Passport Number Amendment Fee	200.00
Copy of File Documents	10.00 per page
Exemption Fees (Addition fees of K1000.00 per application). This fee does not apply to exemption of old age missionaries or volunteers.	1, 000.00





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