

# General Work Visa

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Direct Hire up to 5 years.

## Preface

All visa categories are regulated under the South African Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002 (as amended) ("**the Act**") and its associated Regulations, as published in Government Gazette No. 37679 (22 May 2014), No. 42071 (29 November 2018), and No. 50675 (20 May 2024).

## Overview

In accordance with Section 19(2) of the Immigration Act, the General Work Visa authorises the employment of suitably qualified foreign nationals by South African employers in instances where no suitably qualified South African citizen or permanent resident is available to fill the position. The applicant is required to qualify within the framework of the points-based evaluation system, thereby ensuring a transparent and merit-based assessment of eligibility.

This visa category is ideally suited for direct employment within South Africa, provided that the applicant meets the criteria prescribed under the new Points-Based System. The applicant must satisfy all stipulated requirements and achieve a minimum score of one hundred (100) points. This visa may be issued to a foreign national who does not qualify under the Critical Skills Work Visa category and who intends to undertake employment with a South African company, business, or organisation.

## Eligibility Criteria

Criteria	Description	Weight
Qualifications:	NQF levels 9 -10	50
	NQF levels 7-8	20
Offer of employment (Mandatory):	Above ZAR 968,184.00 per annum	50
	Above ZAR 645,456.00 per annum	20
Work experience:	10+ years	30
	5-10 years	20
Employment status:	Offer from trusted employer	20
Language skills	Proficient in at least one official language	10

## Advantages

- Legal authorisation is granted to the visa holder to **engage in employment** with a specific, duly approved employer within the Republic of South Africa.
- Provides a recognised **pathway towards permanent residence** upon completion of the prescribed qualifying period of lawful employment.
- **Promotes the transfer of knowledge** and technical skills to the South African workforce, thereby supporting national development objectives.

- **Employer participation** in the process serves to reduce the administrative burden placed upon the applicant.
- **Family Inclusion:** Visa holders are permitted to be accompanied by their immediate dependants (spouse and children) for the duration of their lawful stay in South Africa.

## Disadvantages

- The operation of the **points-based system may result in the exclusion** of otherwise qualified applicants whose scores fall below the prescribed threshold.
- **Employer-Tied Visa:** Employment authorisation is restricted to the approved employer, and engagement with any alternative employer requires prior approval from the Department of Home Affairs (DHA).
- **Administrative Requirements:** Applicants are required to submit a comprehensive suite of supporting documentation, including but not limited to:
  - Evaluation of foreign qualifications by the South African Qualifications Authority ([SAQA](#)) to confirm alignment with the [National Qualifications Framework](#) (NQF) level and authenticity;
  - Police clearance certificates from all countries of residence within the preceding five (5) years;
  - Medical reports as prescribed; and
  - Proof of qualifications and relevant professional experience.
- **Dependants' Employment Rights:** Dependants accompanying the primary visa holder are not authorised to undertake employment unless independently approved under an appropriate work visa category, in strict compliance with the provisions of the Immigration Act.

## Visa Validity and Renewal Process

The General Work Visa may be issued for a period not exceeding sixty (60) months (five years) and is renewable, subject to continued compliance with all prescribed visa conditions. Renewal applications shall be lodged no later than sixty (60) days prior to the date of expiry of the current visa.

## Accompanying Family Members

**Spouses** may apply for a **Dependent's Visa** (referred to as a Visitor's Visa in terms of Section 11(1)(b)(iv) of the Immigration Act) to accompany the holder of a General Work Visa.

- **Purpose:** Spouses are permitted to sojourn in the Republic of South Africa as accompanying dependants of a General Work Visa holder. They are not authorised to engage in employment or formal studies under the conditions of a Visitor's Visa.
- **Validity:** The visa may be granted for a period not exceeding three (3) years and may be renewed, subject to continued compliance with the conditions attached thereto.

**Minor Children (not of school-going age)** may apply for a **Dependent's Visa** (referred to as a Visitor's Visa in terms of Section 11(1)(b)(iv) of the Immigration Act) to accompany their parents and the holder of a General Work Visa.

- **Purpose:** Minor children are permitted to sojourn in the Republic as accompanying dependants of a General Work Visa holder. They are not authorised to undertake study or attend formal schooling under the provisions of a Visitor's Visa.
- **Validity:** The visa may be granted for a period not exceeding three (3) years and may be renewed, subject to full compliance with the prescribed visa conditions.

**Minor Children (school-going-age)** may apply for a [Study Visa](#) (in terms of Section 13 of the Act) to accompany parents and the holder of a general work visa.

- **Purpose:** Minor children are permitted to sojourn in the Republic as accompanying dependants of a General Work Visa holder and are authorised to attend recognised educational institutions under a valid [Study Visa](#).
- **Eligibility:** Pre-enrolment at a registered South African school is a prerequisite. The applicant is required to maintain valid medical cover, renewed annually, for the duration of study with a medical scheme duly registered in terms of the Medical Schemes Act.
- **Validity:** The Study Visa may be granted for the full duration of study as per the enrolment confirmation issued by the school, and for as long as the passport remains valid. The visa may be renewed, provided that all compliance and visa conditions continue to be met in full.

## Application Process

1. All foreign qualifications must be submitted to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for evaluation to determine their equivalent National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level in accordance with the prescribed requirements for the relevant occupation. Documents not presented in English must be accompanied by a sworn English translation. The estimated processing period with SAQA, from the date of submission, is three (3) to four (4) months or longer. Expedited services are not available.
2. The General Work Visa application (together with any associated applications for accompanying family members) shall be lodged at the nearest [South African Foreign Mission Abroad](#) (hereinafter referred to as the “Embassy”) or at a **Visa Facilitation Centre** in the applicant’s country of usual residence or origin.
3. The estimated processing period, from the date of submission to the Embassy, is eight (8) to twelve (12) weeks, subject to variation depending on the specific Embassy, the volume of applications, and staff capacity. Applicants may be required to attend an interview to verify professional intentions, experience, and compliance with employment obligations.
4. Additional documentation may be requested at the discretion of the consular officer presiding over the application in the country of submission.

## Employment and Occupation Compliance

- **Work for the nominated employer only:** The visa is employer-specific; changing employers requires prior DHA approval.
- **Occupation-specific:** The visa is tied to the job role approved by DHA; material changes to duties may require notification.
- **Labour Law Compliance:** Adhere to all South African labour laws, including contracts, remuneration, and working conditions.
- **Reporting and Documentation:**
  - Maintain valid passport and visa at all times.
  - Update DHA of any changes in contact details, residential address, or employment status.
  - Provide documentation on request, such as proof of employment or continued eligibility under the Points-Based System.
- **Tax and Statutory Compliance:** Visa holders are required to register with the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and remain fully compliant with all tax obligations. Employers shall ensure adherence to labour legislation, including (**Unemployment Insurance Fund**) UIF and (**Pay As You Earn**) PAYE contributions, in respect of foreign employees.

- **Residence and Permanent Residence Considerations:** Upon the successful completion of five (5) consecutive years of lawful employment under this visa category, holders may be eligible to apply for permanent residence in accordance with Section 26(a) of the Immigration Act. Applications will be adjudicated with due regard to continuous lawful residence and a verifiable history of compliance, reflecting the applicant's sustained contribution to the Republic's workforce stability and development.
- **Employer Obligations:** Employers are mandated to retain verified copies of employees' valid visas, confirm legal work authorisation prior to employment commencement, and report any employment cessation to the DHA. Such measures uphold the integrity of South Africa's immigration system and ensure adherence to the Immigration Act and Employment Services Act regarding the employment of foreign nationals.
- **Conduct and Legal Compliance:** Visa holders are expected to maintain full observance of the laws of the Republic of South Africa. Any breach of the law, including criminal conviction, misrepresentation, or submission of fraudulent documentation, may result in immediate visa revocation and deportation in accordance with due legal process.

## Expert Assistance for Immigration Compliance

Engaging qualified professionals can help ensure that visa and immigration applications meet all regulatory requirements, minimizing delays and the risk of rejection.

[Wesgro's](#) services include facilitation of visa processes for prospective investors and local businesses. Foreign applicants can also consider seeking assistance directly from a member of the **Forum of Immigration Practitioners of South Africa (FIPSA)** for guidance on compliance with procedural requirements. Attorneys and recognized Immigration Specialists may also assist with documentation and ensuring that applications meet all regulatory obligations. Obtaining professional advice can help reduce the likelihood of delays or rejections by ensuring submissions align with legislative criteria.

## About Relocation Africa

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### Contact

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