



NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION MEDIA RELEASE

Immigration NZ adopts NZISA's recommendations in recent post-study work rights changes

While current and future students studying at Level 7 (graduate diploma/degree) or higher benefit from changes, those studying at Level 4-6 (general certificate/diploma) may still be vulnerable to exploitation

The New Zealand International Students' Association ("NZISA") is happy to announce that the Minister of Immigration, Hon Iain Lees Galloway, has adopted our key recommendations in the Ministry's recent changes to post-study work rights for international students. Proposed changes were finalized following a month of careful public consultations with international students as key stakeholders.

In relation to the removal of 'employer assisted' post-study work visa, the Ministry has adopted NZISA's proposal for the changes to **extend to existing students and graduates**. Prior to our submission, the proposed change would only apply to students studying in New Zealand in 2019. NZISA has highlighted that the original proposal would create an uneven playing field in terms of seeking employment for current students. NZISA submitted that, "risks created by the 'sponsorship requirement' in the current regime is suspected to be creating a resistance among employers to employ international students, especially in the private sector." NZISA emphasised that international students are bridges of connectivity between New Zealand and other parts of the world. The value international students bring cannot and must not be measured by economic indicators.

With the new regime kicking in on 26 November 2018, students studying at degree Level 7 or above qualifications can look forward to three-year open work visas. Students studying at Level 4-6 and non-degree Level 7 qualifications will enjoy varying length of work visas depending on location and duration of study. Current graduates can seek to extend their existing open work visa after 26 November.

Equally important is the change outlining a two-year minimum study requirement for students studying at Level 4 to Level 6 qualification before gaining post-study work rights. NZISA cautioned that following this change, providers may artificially inflate the duration of study to attract students and generate profits unethically. Essentially, students studying for a low-level qualification will likely spend *double the time* and *double the money* for *essentially a one-year qualification*.

The recent spate of institution shut-downs in Auckland have shown that education providers often slip through the cracks when vetted by NZQA. The lack of a safety net for these students means that they often have no recourse when they are exploited by unethical education agents and providers.

In the Minister's own words, the purpose of these immigration changes is to "kill the business of private education firms in providing people with a pathway to residency rather than higher quality education".

A higher quality education cannot be achieved solely by immigration policies. NZISA strongly recommends NZQA to make inquiries into providers that abruptly increase the qualifications they offer from one-year to two-year. Providers must be required to show why the change in duration is made and how the change improves quality of education for students.

Overall, NZISA is pleased that Immigration NZ is taking a stride towards improving the quality of international education.

Acknowledgment

NZISA would like to thank our international student voice from Auckland University, Auckland University of Technology, Waikato University, Otago University and Victoria University of Wellington for their invaluable opinions and insights.

About NZISA

NZISA is the peak international student body and advocate of all international students in New Zealand. We enhance communication and cooperation between the international student communities and the education sector in New Zealand. NZISA aims to explore new standards and to review existing best practice when accommodating, educating and advocating for international students in New Zealand.

Stay connected with NZISA on our Facebook page @NZISA2017 and email us at info@nzisa.co.nz.