

---

A GUIDE TO  
RESIDING IN NEW ZEALAND

---

*PARRY FIELD LAWYERS*



ParryField  
Lawyers

To the heart of what matters.



*I am writing to express my deepest gratitude for your exceptional assistance and guidance throughout my resident visa application process. Please also extend my gratitude to your team, as such successes often result from a collaborative effort. I am impressed by the high standard of service and care provided by your firm, and I will not hesitate to recommend your services to others who may need legal assistance.*



---

# A GUIDE TO RESIDING IN NEW ZEALAND

---

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Who Needs a Resident Visa</b>	1
Green List Straight to Residence (STR) Visa	
Green List Work to Residence (WTR) Visa	
Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) Resident Visa	
<b>When You Need to Apply</b>	1
<b>What You Need to Prepare</b>	1
STR Visa	
WTR Visa	
SMC Resident Visa	
<b>How to Apply</b>	5
<b>Tips</b>	5

## About Parry Field Lawyers

We are a New Zealand owned company that has been serving our clients since 1948. Our aim is not only to provide sound legal advice, but to also find solutions which deliver the best practical outcome for those we represent.

### Our History

In 2023 we celebrated 75 years in practice. Our founder, Glynn Parry, was joined in partnership by Brian Field in the early 1950s. Since the later 1970s, Peter van Rij, Ken Lord, and Grant Adams have each led the firm into a new period of growth. Today we have grown to 11 partners, around 100 staff and operate from five locations. Parry Field Lawyers incorporated as a company under the Companies Act 1993 on 1 July 2021.

### To The Heart Of What Matters

We see our clients in a rounded way and wanted to help them with 'what really matters', for legal services and beyond, where appropriate. With our growing team, we are excited by what the future holds and look forward to continuing to provide exceptional legal services to our valued clients.

Find out more at [parryfield.com](http://parryfield.com)

Compiled by the Parry Field Lawyers Immigration Team

[parryfield.com](http://parryfield.com)

© 2025 Parry Field Lawyers  
July 2025

Disclaimer: material published is true and accurate to the best knowledge of Parry Field Lawyers. It should only be used as a guide and not as a substitute for legal advice because special considerations apply to individual fact situations. Therefore, no liability is assumed by Parry Field Lawyers for any losses suffered by any person relying directly or indirectly on this booklet.

**PARRY FIELD LAWYERS**

---

## A GUIDE TO RESIDING IN NEW ZEALAND

---

The Immigration team at Parry Field Lawyers have experience in all aspects of immigration law and offer professional, reliable, and comprehensive legal advice and assistance with your immigration needs.

We understand the confusion that can arise when faced with many different immigration categories and policies. Our goal is to serve you in a professional and efficient way by assessing your immigration status, giving you realistic options and preparing your applications, in consultation with you.

A resident visa is essential for individuals who wish to live, work, or study in New Zealand permanently. It provides long-term rights and access to benefits such as public healthcare and education.

Our team are here to guide you through the process and offer tips to make your application as smooth as possible.

NGĀ MIHI NUI



VIV ZHANG

[VivZhang@parryfield.com](mailto:VivZhang@parryfield.com)



REBECCA CARRUTHERS

[RebeccaCarruthers@parryfield.com](mailto:RebeccaCarruthers@parryfield.com)



ADA ZHANG

[AdaZhang@parryfield.com](mailto:AdaZhang@parryfield.com)



JOANNE LI

[JoanneLi@parryfield.com](mailto:JoanneLi@parryfield.com)

## Who Needs a Resident Visa

People often apply for a resident visa through the following pathways:

### 1. Green List Straight to Residence (STR) Visa

If you are currently working for, or have a job offer from, an accredited employer and your role is listed in Tier 1 of the Green List, you may be eligible for the STR Visa.

### 2. Green List Work to Residence (WTR) Visa

If you currently work for, or have a job offer from, an accredited employer and have worked in a Tier 2 Green List role for 24 months, you may qualify for the WTR Visa.

### 3. Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) Resident Visa

If you currently work for, or have a job offer from, an accredited employer and meet the requirement of six points for your skills and work experience in New Zealand, you may be eligible for the SMC Resident Visa.

If you wish to sponsor your partner, children, or parents with a resident visa, please refer to our *"Guide to Reuniting with Family"* for further information.

For further information about employer accreditation, please refer to our *"Guide to Employing Migrants"*.

## When You Need to Apply

Generally speaking, you can submit your application under the following conditions. If you are unsure about your eligibility, please feel free to contact us for a preliminary assessment.

- **STR Visa:** You can submit your application as soon as you receive a job offer from an accredited employer.
- **WTR Visa:** You can submit your application once you meet the 24-month work requirement.
- **SMC Resident Visa:** You can submit your application after receiving an Invitation to Apply.

## What You Need to Prepare

### Generic documents:

#### Identity

Ensure your passport is valid for at least three months after your planned departure date.

#### Age

Must be aged 55 or younger at the time you apply.

#### Health

Must meet acceptable standards of health, which are stricter than the criteria for a temporary visa.

#### Character

Must be in a good character and provide a police certificate from all countries you are a citizen of, and any other country you have stayed in for 12 months or more over the last 10 years.

#### English language

Either through:

- your citizenship;
- where you studied and the qualification you gained; or
- an acceptable English language test.

#### Family members

You can include your partner and children in your application.

#### Relationship with you

Aside from the generic documents, your family members must provide evidence of a genuine relationship with you. Please refer to the relevant section on evidence of partnership in our *"Guide to Reuniting with Family"*.

#### English language

Family members must meet the English language requirements outlined in the generic documents. Alternatively, they may purchase an English language course to fulfil this requirement. Dependent children aged 16 or younger are exempt from this requirement.



## STR Visa

### 1. Green List requirements

- You must meet all qualification, registration or work experience requirements for your role as listed on the Green List.
- You must be paid the median wage or at a specific rate required for your role. An International Qualification Assessment (IQA) may be needed for any overseas qualifications.

### 2. Acceptable employment

- Your employer must be accredited.
- Your role must be listed in Tier 1 of the Green List. Your employment must be full time and genuine.
- Your role must be either permanent, fixed term for at least 12 months, or based on a contract for services of at least six months.

## WTR Visa

### 1. Green List requirements

- Aside from meeting the Green List requirements for STR Visa, you must hold a work visa or a Critical Purpose Visitor Visa that allows you to work.
- You must be working full time in a role listed in Tier 2 of the Green List.
- You must have worked in your role for at least 24 months within the 30 months before you apply.
- You can calculate your 24 months' work any time from 29 September 2021.

### 2. Acceptable employment

- Your employer must be accredited.
- Your role must be in Tier 2 of the Green List.
- Your employment must be full time and genuine.
- Your role must be permanent or fixed term for at least 12 months.

## SMC Resident Visa

This application has two stages: submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI) and applying after receiving an Invitation to Apply (ITA).

### Express of Interest (EOI)

At this stage, you do not need to provide any evidence or supporting documents until you receive an ITA and submit your application.

- You must currently have a skilled job or a job offer.
- You must qualify for points from one skill category - income, qualification or registration - for at least three points.
- If you are not able to claim six points from one skill category - income, qualification or registration - in addition, you must qualify from the skilled work experience category for the remaining points.

### Invitation to Apply (ITA)

At this stage, you must provide all supporting evidence for the claims made in your EOI.

#### 1. Acceptable skilled employment - must be:

- A full-time job (at least 30 hours per week).
- Paid at or above the median wage for a level 1-3 skilled role in the ANZSCO list, or paid at or above 1.5 times the median wage for a level 4-5 skilled role.
- Offered on a permanent contract, a fixed-term contract for at least 12 months, or a contract for services lasting at least six months.
- Suitably qualified for the role through a relevant qualification, or work experience as described in ANZSCO, and any required registrations for the role.



## How to apply

### Online

The quickest and easiest way to apply is online via the Immigration New Zealand website. We highly recommend you apply online.

### Paper Application

You can also submit a paper application at a New Zealand Visa Application Centre. The details of the receiving centre are based on the country you live.

Please ensure you upload or attach all necessary documents when submitting your application.

## Tips

### Green List requirements

If you are applying for an STR or WTR Visa, having a job or job offer with a title matching an occupation on the Green List is not sufficient. You must meet the specific qualifications, work experience, remuneration, or registration requirements listed in the Green List. If you do not meet these criteria, you may consider applying under the SMC category instead.

### An accredited employer

For STR or WTR applications, your employer must be an accredited employer at the time your residence application is submitted or decided.

### 24-month work and remuneration

The required 24 months of work experience must be completed within a 30-month period. This means you can hold multiple jobs during this period and even have gaps between jobs.

If you change jobs, ensure your wage does not fall below the median wage or the rate specified in the Green List for your role.

### SMC Visa

At the EOI stage for an SMC visa, applicants are not required to submit supporting evidence. This often leads to applicants who complete the EOI themselves lacking sufficient or appropriate evidence to justify their claimed points. As a result, they may later face concerns from Immigration New Zealand (INZ) about their qualifications, skilled work experience, or skilled employment, which can lead to delays and the risk of the application being declined.

To save time and resources, we recommend having a qualified professional (such as an immigration lawyer) conduct an assessment at the outset. This ensures your understanding of income, qualifications, skilled work experience, and skilled employment aligns with INZ's criteria.



*Other free guides at [parryfield.com/publications/](http://parryfield.com/publications/) include:*





To the heart of what matters. 



ParryField   
Lawyers