

Ireland

Update on recent immigration developments

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If any of these changes impact your business or employees, please contact a member of our Global Immigration Services team.

Increase in Moratorium for Employment Permit Holders Made Redundant

An employment permit holder who has been made redundant is entitled to remain in Ireland to seek alternative employment. The period of time such workers are entitled to remain in Ireland has increased from 3 months to 6 months for an individual who has held an employment permit for less than 5 years.

Individuals who have held a work permit for more than 5 years and are subsequently made redundant may be granted permission to remain in Ireland for 12 months to seek alternative employment without the requirement to obtain a further employment permit.

Changes for Long Term Work Permit Holders

The holder of a work permit for more than 5 years who is still in

employment will also be entitled to work legally without the requirement to obtain a further employment permit. The individual will be issued with permission for a 12 month period which may subsequently be renewed. This replaces the previous entitlement to an "unlimited" work permit after holding 5 consecutive work permits.

Fees for Long Term Residency

From 7 September 2009, a fee of €500 has been introduced for non-EEA nationals who are granted Long Term Residency.

A person granted Long Term Residency is entitled to work legally in Ireland without the requirement to hold an employment permit. An individual granted Long Term Residency as the dependant of the principal applicant will be entitled to live legally in Ireland but will continue to require an employment permit should they wish to work in Ireland.

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Proposed Changes to Immigration Regime for Overseas Students

The Government has recently announced proposals which, if implemented, will see a reform of the Irish immigration regime for full-time non-EEA students. Proposed changes include the introduction of a student immigration system on a "2 tier basis", a cap on the length of time a student may stay in Ireland and a provision for internships or work placements as part of a third-level course.

Change to Entry-Visa Requirements - Taiwan

As of 1 July 2009, nationals of Taiwan are no longer required to obtain an entry-visa prior to travelling to Ireland.

Romanian & Bulgarian Nationals

Romanian & Bulgarian nationals who have graduated from an Irish 3rd level institution are exempt from the requirement to obtain an employment permit post-graduation provided they have worked for a period of 12 months since 2007 on the basis of being a student.

Changes Affecting Foreign Doctors

Revised immigration arrangements for non-EEA doctors, registering for the first time with the immigration authorities, have been implemented from 1 July 2009. While non-EEA doctors, who are registered as trainees with the Irish Medical Council, continue to be entitled to work without the requirement to hold an employment permit, they will now be issued with the same immigration permission as doctors working in Ireland under employment permit conditions.

On-line System for Visa Applications

The on-line visa application system AVATS is now available worldwide and all visa applications must be submitted using the on-line application form.

Employment Permit Processing Times

The current processing time for Green Card and Intra-Company Transfer permits is approximately 4 weeks having risen

considerably during the summer months. Longer processing times continue to apply in respect of all other employment permits.

Ireland Opt's Out of EU Blue Card Scheme

The EU Blue Card, which will allow for the free movement of non-EEA workers within certain EU member states, is expected to come into force in mid-2011. Ireland however has opted out of the EU Blue Card scheme and non-EEA nationals will continue to require Irish employment permits to enable them to work legally in Ireland.

NERA Inspections

Inspectors for the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) have been authorised to carry out employment permit compliance checks from 1 July 2009 as part of their company inspections.

To date in 2009, NERA have carried out over 10,000 inspections, with breaches of legislation identified in approximately 18% of cases.

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The PwC Global Immigration Services group, part of the Human Resource Services group, is the largest provider of immigration services globally. In Ireland, our dedicated team of immigration specialists provides immigration advisory and processing services to organisations in relation to all entry, employment and residence permit requirements. In bringing our experience and knowledge of the immigration system to bear, we ensure that our clients comply with their immigration obligations. We also ensure that the interaction of the employment permit with employment law, social security, taxation and pension requirements is not overlooked.