

Employment Visa for Non-Local Graduates of Hong Kong Universities

(Fresh Graduate Converting to IANG from Visitor)

VisaGeeza .Ai

You Are a Fresh Graduate Converting to IANG from a Visitor Visa?

In 2008, a new visa type was introduced for individuals from outside Hong Kong who have obtained a degree or higher qualification from a full-time, locally-accredited program in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). This visa type was established to attract and retain highly skilled professionals, contributing to Hong Kong's competitive edge as an international business hub.

Under the Immigration Arrangements for Non-Local Graduates (IANG), non-local graduates can apply for an employment visa under a liberalized approvability test.

This test has two categories, which depend on the time elapsed since the applicant's graduation.

(1) Fresh Graduates: Non-local graduates who submit applications to the Immigration Department within six months of their graduation date, as indicated on their graduation certificates, are classified as "fresh graduates." Fresh graduates who seek to work in Hong Kong after completing their studies are not required

to secure a job offer as part of their application to change from student visa status to employment visa status. This change is approved almost as of right, which means the approval is almost guaranteed, provided that the applicant meets the necessary criteria.

(2) Returning Graduates: Non-local graduates who submit applications after six months of their graduation date are classified as "returning graduates." These returning graduates must secure a job offer in Hong Kong to obtain an employment visa. The applications are "favourably considered" as long as the job is "suitable," and the remuneration package is set at market levels.

Approvability Test: For fresh graduates, the approvability test requires the production of proof of graduation within the six-month limit. Returning graduates must provide proof of graduation with no time limit and an offer of employment in Hong Kong that is commensurate with their education level and offers a remuneration package set at market levels.

Submitting Your Application: The application for an employment visa under IANG can be submitted to the Immigration Department (ImmD) through several methods: (3) Online via ImmD's online application submission portal (4) Via post from overseas or in person at the Receipt & Dispatch Unit of the Immigration HQ. (5) As part of an application to change status or visa category if the applicant is currently in Hong Kong as a resident or visitor. (6) Through the nearest Chinese diplomatic mission in the applicant's country of domicile.

The Consideration Process: After submitting the application, the consideration process primarily occurs through email and/or fax. Occasionally, the Hong Kong Immigration Department may communicate with the applicant via post. The processing time typically ranges between four to six weeks. Once the application is approved, the ImmD will send a notice informing the applicant of the positive outcome and invite them to complete the approval formalities. These formalities will take the form of the issue of a QR code Approval Letter.

Once Approved: Upon approval, the initial period of stay under the employment visa granted through IANG is 24 months. This period is then extendable, following the new 2-3-3 year pattern of visa grant. The 2-3-3 year pattern means that after the initial two-year period, the visa can be extended for three years, and then another three years, provided that the applicant continues to meet the necessary criteria.

Holders of employment visas issued under IANG can change employers without needing to seek prior approval from ImmD. However, they must demonstrate that they are currently employed or engaged in a business when applying for an extension. This flexibility allows visa holders to explore different career opportunities and contribute to Hong Kong's diverse workforce.

Refusal & Appeal: In the event that an application is denied, applicants can elect to start the appeal process with a formal request for Reconsideration.

All Applicants should provide the following:

- Application form ID990A,
- A recent photograph affixed to the form,
- A copy of passport details page and current visa/period of stay if presently in Hong Kong,
- A photocopy of PRC resident ID card if a PRC national not holding a travel document of any kind,

- A photocopy of HKID card if available, photocopies of all graduation certificates/proof of academic qualifications/transcripts showing graduation and date from a Hong Kong tertiary education institute,
- A letter of consent from the present working unit or relevant Mainland authority if a PRC national currently resident on the Mainland,
- Copies of documents showing third country immigration status and limit of stay if a PRC national currently resident overseas, and a copy of Macau ID card if a Macau resident.

Returning Graduates should also ensure the sponsor completes their part of the online application process, include an offer of employment letter detailing work role and emoluments, a copy of the employing company's business registration certificate, latest audited financial statements, management accounts or profits tax return, and a detailed business plan if the employing company is less than 12 months old.

Applicants admitted under IANG can bring their spouse, partner, or unmarried dependent children under 18 to Hong Kong under the prevailing dependent policy. The IANG visa holder will be the sponsor for accompanying dependents. All applications for residence visas which accompany a main visa application should include (a) passport photograph of all family members (b) passport bio details page copy, (c) marriage certificates and (d) birth certificates - as appropriate. Please ensure the supporting family documents are in the correct state of preparation. High quality scan marriage and birth certificates need to be in English or Chinese or otherwise provided as official certified translations. A dependent's application may be approved if there's proof of a genuine relationship, no detrimental records, and the sponsor can provide financial support and suitable accommodation. The dependent's length of stay is linked to the sponsor's, and dependents are required to leave Hong Kong when the sponsor leaves. Dependents are allowed to work in Hong Kong under existing policy.

Please note that the fact of you being in Hong Kong as a visitor does not in any way enhance or detract from the consideration exercise in the grant of your IANG and dependant visas. However, you are not permitted to work under any circumstances or configuration until and unless your new visas have been approved. Moreover, children are not permitted to attend school under their visitor permissions. If a fresh graduate holds a student visa but has not yet formally graduated, they must wait until they receive their degree or higher qualification from a full-time, locally-accredited program in Hong Kong. Once they have proof of graduation, they can apply for an employment visa under the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG).

As a fresh graduate, the individual will have six months from the date of graduation (as shown on the graduation certificate) to submit the application to the Immigration Department. If the application is submitted within this period, the applicant does not need to secure an offer of employment as part of the application to change from a student visa status to employment visa status. The application is generally approved as a matter of course. However, the applicant must wait until they have their degree or higher qualification before applying. Without proof of graduation, their application for an employment visa under IANG may not be considered or approved.

Potential non-local recent graduates planning to apply for staying and working in the HKSAR under IANG but have not yet received their graduation results can request an extension of stay with student status while awaiting their results. The institution's sponsorship requirement is waived in this case.

Mainland non-local recent graduates can apply for interim extension of stay through the Quality Migrants and Mainland Residents Section, while other non-local recent graduates can apply to the Extension Section. Applicants should fill out the application form ID91 and provide their valid travel documents and Hong Kong identity cards as supporting documents.

Useful Resource 1	The IANG Visa
Useful Resource 2	Application Plan
Useful Resource 3	The Bona Fides of a Hong Kong Employer
Useful Resource 4	Extended Limits of Stay
Hong Kong Visa Handbook Contents	
Visa Information	
Preparing Your Case	
Pre-submission Checklist	
Application Templates	
Online Forms	
Completing The Forms	
How To Apply	
Apply Online	
Quick Summary	
Podcast Discussion	