



GLOBAL IMMIGRATION TRENDS – NOVEMBER 2024

Introduction

This global migration summary provides an overview of the latest updates and trends in immigration policies, highlighting shifts in various regions across the world and how it affects Nigerians that intend to apply for immigrant and non-immigrant visas.

South & North America

Canada

CANADA DISCLOSES NEW IMMIGRATION PLANS FOR 2025 - 2027

Canada's Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada ("IRCC") has announced new immigration plans for the year 2025 to 2027. The plans include an overall decrease of one hundred and five thousand (105,000) immigrant admissions in 2025 and a decrease in the number of temporary residents to five percent (5%) as forty percent (40%) of the temporary residents will be considered for permanent residence admission in 2025. This is aimed to give advantage to those already part of Canada's education or workforce.

Additionally, the IRCC's plans include reuniting families as nearly twenty four percent (24%) of the overall permanent resident admission is intended to be allocated to family class. Also, the IRCC aims to strengthen Francophone immigration by eight-point five percent (8.5%) in 2025, nine-point five percent (9.5%) in 2026 and ten percent (10%) in 2027.

Finally, the immigration admission target is set to focus on skilled workers in high demand sectors and will introduce stricter criteria for admission of international students. It is envisaged that this the IRCC's plans will cause a zero-point two percent (0.2%) decline in marginal population in 2025 and 2026, and a zero-point eight percent (0.8%) growth in 2027.

Find more:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/10/20252027-immigration-levels-plan.html>

CANADA REVIEWS AUTOMATIC TEN (10) YEARS MULTIPLE ENTRY VISAS

Canada has revised its visa policy to no longer automatically issue 10-year multiple-entry visas to visitors. Previously, the multiple-entry visa allows the holder to seek entry from any country as often as necessary during the visa's period of validity and has a maximum validity period of up to ten (10) years or the expiration date of either the travel document or biometrics, whichever comes first.

The new development now allows officers to exercise their judgement in deciding the validity period of the visa which may be for a term shorter than the maximum ten (10) years.

The factors to be considered in determining the validity period of the multiple-entry visas include:

- a. Is there a short-term purpose for the visit, for example, a business visitor providing after-sales support as part of a warranty or sales agreement?
- b. What is the applicant's status in their current country of residence? Will their ties to their country of residence and to Canada change over time?
- c. Are economic or political conditions in the applicant's home country unstable?

Find more:

https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/temporary-residents/visitors/three-types-visas.html#_Multiple-entry_visa

CANADA UPDATES THE POST GRADUATE WORK PERMIT ELIGIBILITY PROGRAM

The IRCC released an updated program eligible for the Post Graduate Work Permit ("PGWP") to facilitate the alignment of educational pathways with national labor market needs.

The PGWP allows international students to gain Canadian work experience after completing their studies. It is reported that students who already hold study permits before the new regulations take effect will still be eligible for a PGWP under the existing rules. However, those applying on or after the effective date of the new rule will face stricter requirements, including the necessity to pursue specific fields of study to qualify for the PGWP.

The IRCC have released a list of eligible academic programmes to this effect which all fall under the categories of:

- a. agriculture and agri-food,
- b. healthcare,
- c. science,
- d. technology,
- e. engineering and mathematics (STEM),
- f. skilled trades, and
- g. transportation.

According to the updated guidelines, only students graduating from these specified areas of study at the college level will be eligible for the work permit. Also, to qualify for a PGWP, students must meet several criteria:

- a. They must have completed a program at a designated learning institution (DLI) in Canada.
- b. The program duration must be at least eight (8) months, leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate.
- c. Students must maintain full-time status throughout their studies, except for the final academic session.
- d. They must apply for the PGWP within one hundred and eighty (180) days of completing their program.

Find more:

<https://businessday.ng/news/article/canadas-new-work-permit-rules-may-disqualify-67000-international-grads/>

Europe

United Kingdom

CHANGE OF COMMERCIAL PARTNER VISA APPLICATION SERVICES

The United Kingdom ("UK") has announced a transition in the commercial partners managing its visa application centres on behalf of UK Visas and Immigration ("UKVI").





Timeline and Transition Details

From September 2024 to January 2025, the following changes will occur:

1. Within the UK:
 - The visa application service provider will transition from Sopra Steria to TLScontact.
2. Outside the UK:
 - The service provider will shift from TLScontact to VFS Global in the following regions:
 - Africa
 - Europe
 - The Middle East
 - Central Asia

While this change requires applicants to engage with new commercial partners during the application process, it has been reported that there will be no changes to the decision-making process for applications and the processing times for obtaining visa decisions will remain unaffected.

Find more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-commercial-partner-visa-application-services/changes-to-the-commercial-partner-visa-application-services>

THE UNITED KINGDOM INTRODUCES E-VISA, AN ONLINE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

The UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) has disclosed the development of a digital immigration system to replace physical documents, which will show online record of immigration status. The following documents will now be accessible as digital records:

- a. biometric residence permits,
- b. biometric residence cards,
- c. passport endorsements and
- d. vignette stickers in passports.

The e-visa shows an online record of immigration status and conditions of permission to enter or stay in the UK. To benefit from this development, individuals must create a UKVI account, enabling access to their digital immigration records and streamlining immigration-related processes.

This initiative is part of the UK's broader move towards a more efficient and secure digital immigration system.

Find more:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/online-immigration-status-evisa>

UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES FORTY-FIVE THOUSAND (45,000) SEASONAL WORKERS VISA 2025

The UK government has announced plans to issue forty-five thousand (45,000) seasonal worker visas in 2025. This initiative is part of a broader effort to address labor shortages in the agricultural and poultry sectors and ensure adequate food production during peak demand periods.

The scheme aims to provide a temporary labor force for the food production sector, supporting increased food availability by addressing workforce challenges.

To be eligible for the seasonal workers visa, the applicant must:

- a. Be at least 18 years old
- b. Have a valid sponsorship from a licensed UK employer
- c. meet health and safety standards for their respective roles

Applications for poultry roles close by November 15, while horticulture applications are accepted year-round.

Find more:

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/11/uk-govt-announces-45000-seasonal-worker-visas-for-2025/>

UNITED KINGDOM INCREASES PROOF OF FUND REQUIREMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The UK Home Office has increased the financial savings required for international students to ensure that they have sufficient saving to support themselves for each month of their course for at least up to nine (9) months.

Students planning to study in London will need to show evidence of having One Thousand Four Hundred and Eighty-Three Pound Sterling (£1,483) per month, while those studying outside of London will need to demonstrate One Thousand One Hundred and Thirty-Six Pound Sterling (£1,136) per month. Cumulatively, students studying in London for nine (9) months or more will be required to provide proof of savings totalling Thirteen Thousand Three Hundred and Forty-Eight Pound Sterling (£13,348) when applying for their visa.

It is reported that this development will apply to students coming to the UK on or after January 2, 2025.

<https://studyabroadlife.org/uk-home-office-increases-international-student-maintenance-requirements/>

The North Atlantic

Ireland

IRELAND TRANSFERS RENEWAL PROCESS FOR IRISH IMMIGRATION RESIDENCE PERMISSION TO THE REGISTRATION OFFICE OF IMMIGRATION SERVICES DELIVERY

Ireland has announced the final transfer of responsibility for renewal of Irish immigration residence permissions for persons residing in all countries nationwide from the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) to the Registration Office of Immigration Services Delivery (ISD) of the Department of Justice and this took effect on November 4, 2024.

Additionally, certain applicants have been exempted from paying the Three Hundred Euros (€300) registration fee and they include:

- a. those who have refugee status
- b. those who have subsidiary protection status
- c. those who have leave to remain under section 49 of the International Protection Act 2015
- d. those between the age of 16 and 18, those who are resident based on marriage to an Irish citizen
- e. those who are family members of a European Union citizen, and
- f. those who are Ukrainian citizens and certain foreign nationals' resident as a Beneficiary of Temporary Protection.

Find more:

<https://www.irishimmigration.ie/transfer-of-all-nationwide-renewals-to-the-isd-online-portal/>

Africa

South Africa

SOUTH AFRICA ISSUES DIRECTIVE ON DOCUMENTARY REQUIREMENTS FOR VISITORS VISA APPLICATIONS

On October 8, 2024, the South Africa Department of Home Affairs (DHA) issued a directive titled Port of Entry Visa: Adherence to Requirements (the "Directive") aimed at standardizing consistency in the prescribed documentary requirements for processing South African visitors visa application for a period not exceeding ninety (90) days.

The Directive was issued to remove all discrepancies and inconsistencies being practiced by the officials and e-visa managers pertaining to the request for additional documents that have not been lawfully prescribed. The required documents are as follows:

- a. Passport of the applicant
- b. Statement or documentation detailing the purpose and duration of the visit





- c. A valid return airline ticket or proof of the reservation thereof; and
- d. Proof of sufficient financial means by way of three (3) months bank certified statements.

Asia

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

SAUDI ARABIA INTRODUCES EXPATRIATE WAGE INSURANCE SCHEME

The Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (HSD) and the Insurance Authority have launched a New Wage Insurance Scheme (the "Scheme") for expatriates working in the private business sector in Saudi Arabia. This initiative is aimed at securing and ensuring that expatriates workers can claim unpaid wages where their employee defaults.

The Scheme will be funded by the Saudi Arabia government as the HSD has partnered with an insurance company to manage compensation and claims. Also, the Scheme is reported to cover:

- a. Up to six (6) months of unpaid wages (excluding end-of-service benefits)
- b. A travel ticket home for eligible workers, capped at SAR 1,000
- c. Maximum coverage of SAR 17,500 per worker

Furthermore, to have access to and qualify for the insurance, such an employee must show that:

- a. The employer has delayed wages for over six (6) months
- b. At least eighty percent (80%) of the workforce is facing the same challenge
- c. The delay occurred within the employee's insurance coverage period, which is twelve (12) months from the start date of the Scheme

The Scheme explicitly excludes certain categories of workers from coverage, including:

- a. Workers in fully government-owned establishments
- b. Domestic workers and equivalent professions
- c. Temporary or Seasonal Workers
- d. Family members working solely in family-run establishments
- e. Athletes and their coaches
- f. Agricultural workers
- g. Non-Saudi workers on short-term tasks of less than two (2) months.

Find more:

<https://ksaexpats.com/wage-protection-insurance-system-saudi-arabia/>

CONCLUSION

This Immigration trends seeks to summarise the constant and dynamic changes in policies, regulations, visa and ultimately, migration requirements across the various continents.

Although some of these immigration developments introduce either flexibility or rigidity in the migration process, these changes are borne largely out of consideration for economic, political, commercial and international relations and are issued to meet each country's general objectives and goals.

Conclusively, we encourage applicants to stay alert of these changes and seek professional guidance when necessary.

This alert is for general information only. It is not offered as advice on any particular matter, whether legal, procedural or otherwise.

Foreign currency values are subject to fluctuations, and it is advisable to verify current rates for updated fees.

For additional information, please contact Bloomfield LP Email- immigration@bloomfield-law.com or your usual contact at Bloomfield LP.

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