

Immigration Department accepts applications for extension of stay from Hong Kong non-permanent residents outside Hong Kong under pandemic

The Immigration Department (ImmD) today (April 7) announced that in view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a new facilitation measure will be implemented with effect from tomorrow (April 8), namely that eligible non-permanent residents who are outside Hong Kong may apply for an extension of stay. Tentatively, the validity of the new measure will expire on December 31, 2022. Depending on the development of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ImmD will review whether to extend the measure in due course.

At present, persons applying for an extension of stay are required to be physically present in Hong Kong both at the time of application and collection of the "e-Visa" (or the traditional label) for an extension of stay. As the fifth wave of the epidemic is severe and is expected to last for some time, the ImmD has been exploring how to further facilitate Hong Kong non-permanent residents who are outside Hong Kong and are unable to return to Hong Kong in time to apply for an extension of stay under the pandemic. The ImmD has now prepared the arrangements and will implement the new measure with effect from tomorrow.

With effect from April 8, eligible non-permanent residents who are admitted into Hong Kong under the following immigration policies/schemes and whose limit of stay is about to expire (generally within four weeks) but are presently outside Hong Kong may apply for an extension of stay under the new measure:

1. General Employment Policy (including both employment and investment as entrepreneurs);
2. Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals;
3. Quality Migrant Admission Scheme;
4. Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates;
5. Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents;
6. Technology Talent Admission Scheme;
7. Capital Investment Entrant Scheme;
8. residence as dependants; and
9. students enrolled in full-time study programmes.

Eligible applicants may submit the applications online (www.immd.gov.hk/eng/evisaonline.html) or through their sponsors/authorised representatives in Hong Kong in accordance with the prevailing application procedures for an extension of stay. If the applicant concerned continues to meet the eligibility criteria under the relevant immigration policy/scheme and the ImmD is satisfied that his/her circumstances are a continuation of

his/her previous residence in Hong Kong, the ImmD may approve his/her application for an extension of stay. Successful applicants may download the "e-Visa" for an extension of stay upon payment of the fee. Applicants will be able to complete the whole process and activate the "e-Visa" for an extension of stay from outside Hong Kong.

The new measure will replace the temporary measure announced by the ImmD on December 31, 2020, in respect of non-permanent residents outside Hong Kong applying for returning to Hong Kong due to the pandemic (for details, please refer to www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202012/31/P2020123100764.htm). The transitional arrangements for changing from the original temporary measure to the new measure are set out at www.immd.gov.hk/eng/ext/npr.html.

Non-permanent residents are reminded that the approval of an extension of stay does not constitute any implication or acknowledgement from the ImmD that they can fulfil the ordinary residence requirement under the relevant provisions of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) for acquiring the right of abode. Even if their applications for an extension of stay are approved, whether they can fulfil the seven-year continuous ordinary residence requirement for acquiring the right of abode in Hong Kong will have to be assessed by the ImmD at the time when they apply for verification of eligibility for a permanent identity card.

For details, please visit the homepage of the ImmD: www.immd.gov.hk. For enquiries, please call 2824 6111, or send enquiries to the ImmD by fax at 2877 7711 or by email at enquiry@immd.gov.hk.