

Immigration Department reminds public that special arrangement for applications for extension of stay due to pandemic will be discontinued next January 1

The Immigration Department (ImmD) today (November 1) reminded the public that the special arrangement under the pandemic for Hong Kong non-permanent residents outside Hong Kong to apply for an extension of stay will be discontinued on January 1, 2024. In other words, for extension of stay applications reaching the ImmD on or after January 1, 2024, the applicants are required to be physically present in Hong Kong, namely both at the time of application and at the time of collection of the "e-Visa" for the extension of stay.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ImmD allows 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. Such a special arrangement has been in place since April 8, 2022. Taking into account that society has resumed normalcy in full, and the steady recovery of cross-boundary and international travel, the ImmD announced on June 29, 2023, the discontinuation of the abovementioned special arrangement on January 1, 2024 (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202306/29/P2023062900637.htm), so as to allow ample time for eligible non-permanent residents who intend to apply for an extension of stay to make suitable arrangements.

Under the special arrangement which is to be discontinued, 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:

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.

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. The said special arrangement is set out on www.immd.gov.hk/eng/ext/npr.html.

For enquiries, please call the ImmD enquiry hotline 2824 6111, or send enquiries to the ImmD by fax at 2877 7711 or by email at enquiry@immd.gov.hk.