



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Finland - Introducing D Visa and Fast Track Processing for Specialists, Start-Up Entrepreneurs

Starting on 1 June 2022, Finland's immigration rules governing "specialists" and "start-up entrepreneurs" took effect.¹ Changes recently introduced will also affect the ways applications are processed by the Finnish Immigration Service, Migri.

WHY THIS MATTERS

As a result of the new rules, swifter entry of specialists and start-up entrepreneurs into Finland is expected. Migri has adapted an automated application processing system for qualifying applications. Moreover, a D visa has been introduced, effective 1 June. Consequently, certain individuals should be able to commence work in Finland within approximately two to three weeks from lodging their applications with the Immigration Service. Family members of the specialists and start-up entrepreneurs can also benefit from these two changes.

Specialists and Start-Up Entrepreneurs: Expedited Entry into Finland

The automated application processing and issuance of a D visa allows specialists, start-up entrepreneurs, and their family members to benefit from faster entry to Finland. The term *specialist* covers applicants who successfully apply for the residence permit for persons employed as a specialist, EU Blue Card, or EU Intra-Corporate Transfer ("ICT") permit as a specialist.²

Fast-Track Service

Fast-track processing has gone live in June 2022. Fast-track service is based on automated application processing. Applicants can benefit from the fast-track processing when they:

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- qualify for one of the four targeted permits (residence permit for a start-up entrepreneur/the residence permit for persons employed as a specialist/EU Blue Card/ EU ICT permit as a specialist);
- submit their application online and pay the application fee online;
- submit their complete application and all the necessary attachments have been uploaded.

The applicant will receive automated messages from the online application system, and the promised maximum two weeks' processing.

In comparison to normal procedures where the application processing starts only after the applicant has submitted his/her biometrics, Migri informs³ that the processing of specialist and start-up entrepreneur residence permit applications will start immediately, if they contain all necessary information and attachments. Applicants are promised to receive identification and biometrics appointments with the Finnish mission abroad or the accredited VFS centre within five days from initial contact with the VFS centre or the embassy.

In addition, fast-track service requires action from the employer's side. The employer must add the terms of employment to the employee's application in "Enter Finland for Employers" within two working days after the employee has submitted his/her application.^{4, 5}

D Visa

As a further effort to shorten the immigration process timeline, the national D visa has been added to the Finnish Aliens Act. Specialists, start-up entrepreneurs, and their dependent family members who have been granted a residence permit are no longer required to wait for their physical residence permit cards to be sent to the country in which they applied for the residence permit; but can instead receive a D visa which allows them to enter Finland and collect their residence permit cards in-country.⁶ The D visa is not required for nationals of countries that are part of the visa-free regime.

The D visa for start-up entrepreneurs, specialists, and their family members is valid for a maximum of 100 days from the date of issuance.⁷

Although the latest amendment of the Aliens Act limits the use of the D visa to third-country nationals who have been granted a residence permit for a start-up entrepreneur, the residence permit for persons employed as a specialist, the EU Blue Card, or the EU ICT permit as a specialist and their family members, further applications of the new visa category are being mapped. According to the Finnish Ministry of the Interior, a legislative project has been started to investigate the possibility of extending the D visa to cover students and researchers as well.⁸ The D visa may also become available to the employees of certified employers in future.

KPMG NOTE

The series of changes aimed at improving the immigration formalities for skilled workers reflect a wider objective of increasing employment-based immigration to Finland.⁹ (See Sisäministeriö Inrikesministeriet, "[Sisäministeriö valmistelee pitkääikaista D-viisumia tutkijoille ja opiskelijoille](#)" (15/12/2021).)

KPMG in Finland will endeavour to continue monitoring further developments with the aim of keeping *GMS Flash Alert* readers informed, such as the prospect of making the D visa available also for successful applicants of other categories of applications.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 See Maahanmuuttoviraston Migrationsverket/Finnish Immigration Service (in English), "[You can be granted a residence permit in two weeks if you apply via the fast track service.](#)" Also see (in Finnish) Finlex, "[Laki ulkomaalaislain muuttamisesta](#)" 121/2022.
- 2 See (in Finnish) Finlex, "[Laki ulkomaalaislain muuttamisesta](#)" 121/2022.
- 3 See Maahanmuuttoviraston Migrationsverket/Finnish Immigration Service (in English), "[You can be granted a residence permit in two weeks if you apply via the fast track service.](#)"
- 4 See Maahanmuuttoviraston Migrationsverket/Finnish Immigration Service (in English), "[You can be granted a residence permit in two weeks if you apply via the fast track service.](#)" Also see Maahanmuuttoviraston Migrationsverket/Finnish Immigration Service (in English), "[Progress in the preparation of fast track service – specialists’ and start-up entrepreneurs’ move to Finland to become quicker](#)" (also available in Finnish (Suomi)).
- 5 See the Finnish Immigration Service’s information leaflet to selected applicants (in English). Available upon request from the authors.
- 6 See Maahanmuuttoviraston Migrationsverket/Finnish Immigration Service (in English), "[Progress in the preparation of fast track service – specialists’ and start-up entrepreneurs’ move to Finland to become quicker](#)" (also available in Finnish (Suomi)).
- 7 See (in Finnish) Finlex, "[Laki ulkomaalaislain muuttamisesta](#)" 121/2022.
- 8 See the Finnish Immigration Service’s information leaflet to selected applicants (in English). Available upon request from the authors. And see (in Finnish) Sisäministeriö Inrikesministeriet, "[Sisäministeriö valmistelee pitkäaikaista D-viisumia tutkijoille ja opiskelijoille](#)" (15/12/2021). Also see, Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö Arbets- och näringsministeriet/Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, "[Amended law to ease entry and retention of international students in Finland](#)" / "[Lakimuutos helpottaa kansainvälisten opiskelijoiden maahantuloa ja Suomeen jäämistä](#)" (13 April 2022).
- 9 See (in Finnish) Sisäministeriö Inrikesministeriet, "[Sisäministeriö valmistelee pitkäaikaista D-viisumia tutkijoille ja opiskelijoille](#)" (15/12/2021). Also see (in Finnish) Valtioneuvoston Julkaisuja, "Koulutus- ja työperusteisen maahanmuuton tiekartta 2035" (in .pdf) at: https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163408/VN_2021_74.pdf .

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