

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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People's Republic of China - Cancellation of the Invitation Letter Requirement

Effective 6 June 2022, foreign nationals who wish to take up employment in the People's Republic of China ("PRC" or "China") can apply for principal and dependent visas with a Chinese Embassy or Consulate abroad without the need of a PU letter. As a result, the lead time for obtaining a work-related visa will be significantly reduced.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Cancellation of the PU letter requirement for application for Chinese work visas will shorten the application process by at least one month.

Context

Since November 2020, foreign nationals applying for Chinese work visas have been required to obtain a special invitation letter, often referred as the "PU letter," issued by the Chinese foreign affairs authorities. Issuance of the PU letter took at least 30 days since its introduction. Effective 6 June 2022, foreign nationals in many jurisdictions can apply to a Chinese Embassy or Consulate abroad for a work visa with a Work Permit Notification Letter and other supporting documentation. PU letters will no longer be required for applying for a Chinese work visa. Meanwhile, accompanying family members are eligible to apply to a Chinese Embassy or Consulate for dependent visas.

More Details

Applications for certain types of visas (noted below) will no longer require a PE letter. Applicants can now lodge their visa applications with a Chinese Embassy or Consulate abroad with standard application documentation.

In the meantime, please note that foreign nationals visiting China for the following purposes are still required to apply for a PU letter, before lodging their applications for a visa with a Chinese Embassy or Consulate abroad:

| Purpose of visit | Applicable visa category |
|---|--------------------------|
| Working in PRC with a Work Permit Notification Letter | Z visa |
| Family members of foreign national working in PRC | S1/S2 visa |
| Study | X1/X2 visa |
| Family reunion | Q1/Q2 visa |
| High-end talent or specialists | R visa |
| Crew members for flight, aviation and shipping | C visa |

Source: KPMG in the People's Republic of China

In the meantime, please note that foreign nationals visiting China for the following purposes are still required to apply for a PU letter, before lodging their applications for a visa with a Chinese Embassy or Consulate abroad:

| Purpose of visit | Applicable visa category |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Business visit | M visa |
| Academic exchanges | F visa |
| Participation in a major project | M/F visa |

Source: KPMG in the People's Republic of China

KPMG NOTE

As the coronavirus pandemic has been gradually brought under control, government authorities have released a series of bail-out packages and tax incentives to facilitate enterprises' efforts to resume production and operations and help them attract talent, with the goal of driving economic recovery and development. It can be argued the cancellation of the invitation letter requirement for foreign nationals entering China serves as one example of the country's efforts to proactively attract foreign investment and talent. In this context, relevant enterprises may consider reviewing and adjusting their assignment policies and talent "allocation" plans.

KPMG NOTE continued:

Based on the changes described above, we have put forward the following summarised recommendations from an immigration perspective:

- In the past week, notices from the Chinese Embassy or Consulate in such countries as Canada,¹ Japan, South Korea, Sri Lanka, United States,² Italy, and New Zealand have been posted on their official websites to announce that PU letters are no longer required for foreign nationals and their accompanying family members to enter China for work purposes. For countries where a Chinese Embassy or Consulate has not made such announcement, we recommend that applicants consider taking the following measures to confirm with the Embassy or Consulate the current policy and process in order to ascertain the impact on their travel plans:
 - Visit the official websites or WeChat accounts of the Chinese embassies to learn what the latest announcements are (e.g., guidance notes on China visa applications);
 - Send an email to the Chinese Embassy to confirm.
- At this stage, foreign nationals traveling to China for business purposes are still required to obtain PU letters before applying for a business visa. We recommend that appropriate arrangements be made in advance, in anticipation of delays which may arise in obtaining a PU letter.

In the future, the KPMG International member firm in the PRC will continue to closely monitor the latest developments in government policies and keep readers of *GMS Flash Alert* updated on the latest relevant changes. If you have a question regarding any of these issues, please do not hesitate to contact your usual immigration counsel or a member of the immigration team (see the Contact Us section).

FOOTNOTES:

1 See, for example, "Notice on new adjustments for Chinese Visa Applications" on the website of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Canada at: http://ca.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/sggg/202206/t20220616_10704018.htm .

2 See, for example, "Notice on the Current Visa Application Procedures" (updated June 13, 2022) on the website of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America at: http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zytz/202206/t20220614_10702581.htm .

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RELATED RESOURCE:

This article is excerpted, with permission, from "China Immigration Policy Updates – Cancellation of the Invitation Letter Requirement for Foreigners Entering China" in *China Tax Alert* (Issue 12, June 2022), a publication of the KPMG International member firm in the People's Republic of China.

Contact us

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