



## IRELAND'S NEW EMPLOYMENT PERMIT ARRANGEMENTS

On 1 February 2007, Ireland implemented new economic and employment permit arrangements which catered to highly skilled workers under Employment Permits Act of 2003 and 2006. The employment arrangement replaced the work visa/work authorization system introduced in 2000.

The new arrangement reflected a shift in the economic regulation policy of Ireland, to help the country meet its objective of becoming an innovation-driven and knowledge-based economy.

The new categories of employment permits under the Irish Employment Permits Act are:

- **The Green Card Scheme** is intended for occupations where Ireland has strategically important high level skills shortages. The scheme is available for an extensive list of occupations with annual salaries of €60,000 and above, and for a specified list of occupations with salaries between €30,000 and €60,000. The list includes professional and associate professional occupations such as information and communications technology, health care, construction, engineering, financial services, and research sectors. The green cards are issued initially for 2 years and normally lead to the granting of permanent or long-term residence.
- **The Work Permit Scheme** is mainly for non-green card occupations in the €30,000 to €60,000 annual salary range. It can be granted in exceptional circumstances for occupations with salaries below €30,000. Work permits are granted initially for a period of 2 years and then for a further period of up to 3 years.

- **The Intra-Company Transfer (ICT) Scheme** is designed to facilitate the transfer of senior management, key personnel, and trainees who are foreign nationals from an overseas branch of multinational corporations to its branch in Ireland. The duration of the ICT permit is 24 months and may be extended up to a maximum stay of 5 years.
- **The Spouse/Dependent Scheme** is intended for spouses and dependents of all employment permit holders who are entitled to reside in Ireland to apply for work permits in respect of all occupations. In addition, the duration of work permit for spouse and dependents is valid up to the expiry of the employment permit holder.
- **The Graduate Scheme** is an additional scheme intended to provide opportunity to foreign nationals who have completed third level studies in Ireland to seek employment and apply for either green card or work permit.

Current visa holders are not affected by the new arrangements and can continue to work on their existing visas and may renew the same. However, the changes are not clear on the status and rights of the following:

- Dependent children of the old work permit holders who have reached the age of 18 in Ireland and who were given student visas.
- Undocumented workers.
- Workers who charge employers within the initial 12 months in case of employers fault or in the event of redundancy and similar circumstances.

Source: **POLO United Kingdom**  
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