

Introduction

This country guideline provides general information on the most common corporate immigration processes for Russia. Please note that immigration processes in every country are subject to frequent change, and also that each case is assessed on its own merits. Therefore, this guideline should be taken as providing general information only. Cases for Russia are handled by our global team in London, United Kingdom. For specific, detailed advice, please contact your representative.

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Immigration Categories

A brief description of corporate immigration categories by assignment type follows. The appropriate immigration category or status for your employees will depend on their specific details and on your company. The most common category for corporate transfers in our experience is the Highly Qualified Professional work permit (HQP) process. For details on non-typical categories not listed below (investors, special programs), please contact your representative.

- **Highly Qualified Professional Work Permit (HQP):** Employees must be on a local contract and earn over 167,000 RUB per month as of March 8, 2015. No quota system is required for this permit.
- **Standard Work Permit:** Russia has a quota system, which means that companies wishing to hire foreign nationals must submit, by May 1st each year, a forecast of how many foreigners they wish to hire in the coming year, as well as their nationalities and job descriptions.

Typical Process Overview

The following process overview is applicable for employees applying for the HQP work permit. The approximate overall processing time from the time the first step is submitted to the time the employee is legal to work in Russia is two (2) months. However, note that lead time for document gathering at the start of the process should be factored in, as should processing time for completion of post arrival formalities. In Russia, the document gathering stage of the process is particularly labor intensive, as many documents must be legalized and translated. We can assist with this if required. See the “[Application Materials](#)” section below for further details. Average processing time for each individual step is noted below.

Pre-Application: Labor Contract Signing/Notification to Russian Authorities

Processing Time: Within three (3) business days of signing Labor Agreement

As of January 1, 2015 all foreign nationals working in Russia are required to notify the Federal Migration office upon signing a Labor agreement/contract.

Step One: Highly Qualified Professional (HQP) Work Permit Application

Processing Time: Fourteen (14) to twenty (20) business days

Once all documents have been collected HQP work permit application is submitted to the authorities in Russia. The approved documents are to be collected in person on arrival into Russia.

Step Two: HQP Visa Invitation Application

Processing Time: Fourteen (14) to twenty (20) business days; processed simultaneously to Step One

Submitted simultaneously with the HQP work permit, the invitation letter is filed to the Russian authorities. Once the HQP application is approved the assignee is required to obtain a work visa in their home country or country of legal residency prior to entering Russia. Please kindly note that each accompanying dependent must also obtain their own invitation letter, which will be required as part of the visa application.

Step Three: Work/Dependent Visa Applications

Processing Time: Approximately one (1) to ten (10) days, or as per the consulate’s advised timeline

The assignee (and family) must then use the invitation letters obtained in Step Two (2) to apply for their work (and dependent) visa (s) at the Russian Consulate or Embassy in their country of residence. These visas will be valid for a maximum of three (3) years (but not longer than the passport expiry) and are for multiple entries. Once these visas are obtained, the assignee (and family) can travel to Russia.

Step Four: Work Permit Collection

Processing Time: Same day

Upon entry to Russia, the assignee is required to collect the approved HQP work permit from the authorities. Once the work permit is collected, the assignee can commence working. The Tax Identification Number (TIN)

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cannot be obtained the same day, but the assignee can provide us with the notarized POA the same day, so that we can apply for the TIN on his/her behalf. Processing time is approximately six (6) working days.

Step Five: Address Registration and On-going Notifications

Processing Time: Ongoing

All entrants to Russia must be registered with the Federal Migration Service within ninety (90) days of each entry to their area of residence in Russia. Whenever the assignee (and/or dependents) leaves Russia, the address registration becomes invalid and a new address registration must be completed each time the assignee (and/or dependents) re-enter Russia.

Quarterly salary is also required to be submitted for all HQP work permit holders. There is no action required from the assignee. The Russian employer is required to complete these notifications.

Typical Documents Obtained

Following the application process for employees of limited liability companies as described above will result in the obtention of the following immigration documents. For details on the renewal process, please see the next section, “Renewal.”

- **HQP Work Permit**
- **Work Visa**

Renewal

Renewal is possible and is the same as the initial application process. Renewal processes take approximately two (2) months; please allow four (4) to eight (8) weeks of lead time for document gathering.

Deregistration

To ensure that assignees leave Russia after the expiration of their permission to stay and to monitor the number of foreign workers in the country, the government of Russia requires all applicants to complete the following deregistration process upon departing the country:

1. Work visa cancellation is processed at UFMS (Federal Migration Service) and exit visa is obtained at this stage. If the visa is not cancelled it would automatically become invalid within sixty (60) days from the day of termination of employment.
2. Work Permit is returned to UFMS for deregistration with forms completed by HR. Deregistration notification has to be sent to UFMS within three (3) business days of dismissal order date.

Dependants

Dependent immigration status approval depends on the immigration status of the principal applicant. Where the principal applicant is in Russia with a work permit for a limited company, the following rules apply for dependents:

- **Minimum age (spouses):** Not applicable
- **Maximum age (children):** Eighteen (18)
- **Unmarried partners:** No
- **Same sex partners:** No
- **Non-traditional dependents (e.g. parents):** Yes
- **Work authorization granted?** No

Application Materials

Application materials vary depending on the immigration category being applied for and on the specifics of the case. We will advise you in detail regarding your specific case; however, general application materials for individuals seeking the HQP work permit are noted below.

- Personal documents include: passports (valid for a minimum of eighteen (18) months from the date of application for visa), educational diploma, birth and marriage certificates (which must be translated into Russian and legalized), and an extensive array of medical test results
- HQP specialists have to pass a HIV test to apply for a work visa.
- Corporate documents include notarized copies of the following: Regulations of the Company, Registration Certificate from the Tax Administration, Tax Identity Number Certificate, Codes from the State Statistics Committee, Certificate of Incorporation, and Proof of Registration with UFMS.
- Note that the above mentioned documents are examples of what will be required and that additional documentation will certainly be necessary. We can prepare all necessary forms and Powers of Attorney and can advise you of the exact documents required based upon the specifics of your case.
- All documentation must be submitted in Russian, and many items must be legalized. We can assist with translation and legalization requirements.

Business Visitors

- **Name of visa granted:** Commercial Visa
- **Duration of stay:** Most applicants will receive a single or double entry visa valid for thirty (30) or ninety (90) days; those who have had previous Russian visas may be granted up to ninety (90) days out of 180.
- **General activities permitted:** Attending business meetings, negotiations, conferences, seminars, congresses and workshops on trade and economic questions; attending personal professional development and retraining programs; attending auctions, exhibitions, shows and other events which are commercial in nature; technical support visa; If you are unsure whether your assignment may be considered as business or not, please contact your representative.

Change of Status

It is not possible for nationals from countries outside the Commonwealth of Independent States to change from business visitor status to work approved status without leaving Russia.

Salary and Payroll

Salary and payroll requirements vary depending on the immigration category and on the specifics of the case. In Russia, there is a minimum salary requirement in place. Additionally employees must be on local payroll with a local contract and paid in Rubles. Salary should be commensurate with the position. Please contact your representative for more details for your specific situation.

Qualifications

Qualification requirements will vary from case to case and will depend on the immigration category under which the application is made. However, in general, the immigration authorities do expect to see a university-level degree. Please contact your representative for more details.

Red Flags

In our experience, the following points are important to note at the start of the process. If any of the below situations apply to you, contact your representative immediately for further detailed advice.

- Absence of degree will cause problems.
- Company must have submitted labor forecast (for standard work permits only).
- Company must have spaces left on approved quota (for standard work permits only)
- Work permits are only granted to employees with Russian contracts and on Russian payroll.
- Many individuals may find the extensive medical tests very onerous (for standard work permits only); however, these cannot be avoided.
- Processing time is very extensive: allow at least six (6) months for standard work permits and two (2) to three (3) months for HQP.
- Registrations must be carried out every time the assignee and/or family enter their region of residence in Russia.

Penalties for Non-Compliance

The government of Russia takes immigration non-compliance very seriously. Penalties for non-compliance may include fines, deportation, and imprisonment.

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Employee Penalties:

- Failure to complete the required registrations may result in fines for the employee (up to 5,000 RUB). It may also lead to further penalties, such as, detention by the police, fines when departing Russia and deportation. Finally, this may also lead to a five (5) year ban from entering Russia.
- Employees found to be carrying out activities that do not match their current work permit may result in fines of up to 7,000 RUB. The employee may also be subject to deportation from the country.
- Additionally, if there are any changes in terms of the validity of the work permit or the foreign national's personal details, the FMS must be informed within seven (7) working days so that changes can be made to the permit. If changes occur while the foreign national is outside of Russia, the seven (7) working days starts from the date of re-entry. Failure to notify the FMS may result in fines for the employee (up to 5,000 RUB).

Employer Penalties:

- Failure to complete the required registrations may result in fines for the employer (up to 500,000 RUB).
- Failure to submit the notification to the FMS within three (3) business days of signing the Labor Agreement assignment/dismissal may result in fines of up to 1,000,000 RUB.
- Failure to submit the quarterly notifications (tax and salary) may result in fines of up to 1,000,000 RUB.
- Hiring a foreign national without a valid permit to work in Russia may result in fines of 250,000 RUB to 800,000 RUB or the business may be suspended from operating in Russia.
- Employees found to be carrying out activities that do not match the terms defined by their current work permit may result in fines for the employer (up to 70,000 RUB for senior level management and up to 1,000,000 RUB for the company/ legal entity).

For more details, please contact your representative.

Bilateral Agreements

- Russia is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and therefore other members benefit from a simplified procedure to obtain work approval for Russia. Contact your representative for more details.

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