



## COVERSHEET

<b>Minister</b>	Hon Erica Stanford	<b>Portfolio</b>	Immigration
<b>Title of Cabinet paper</b>	Delivering the Going for Growth International Education Plan	<b>Date to be published</b>	30 March 2026

### List of documents that have been proactively released

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
February 2026	Delivering the Going for Growth International Education Plan	Office of the Minister of Immigration
16 February 2026	Delivering the Going for Growth International Education Plan CAB-26-MIN-0040 Minute	Cabinet Office

### Information redacted

**YES** / **NO** (please select)

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Some information has been withheld for the reason of confidential advice to government.



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Delivering the Going for Growth International Education Plan

**Portfolio**                      **Immigration**

On 16 February 2026, following reference from the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee, Cabinet:

- 1        **noted** that in June 2025, Cabinet approved the Going for Growth International Education Plan, aiming to double the international education sector's economic contribution to \$7.2 billion by 2034 [ECO-25-MIN-0099];
- 2        **noted** that in June 2025, as part of the Going for Growth International Education Plan, Cabinet agreed to introduce a short-term work visa of up to six months to support some international graduates, not otherwise eligible for post-study work rights, to seek employment and transition to the Accredited Employer Work Visa [ECO-25-MIN-0099];
- 3        **noted** that growth in international education brings both benefits and risks that need to be carefully managed;
- 4        **noted** that permissive immigration settings can risk education quality and labour outcomes, but the changes below are more targeted and include safeguards to prevent a repeat of issues that emerged under previous settings;
- 5        **agreed** to the introduction of the six-month Short-Term Graduate Work Visa with the following design settings:
  - 5.1      applicants must have completed at least 30 weeks of full-time study at New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework Levels 5-7 at an approved New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) provider;
  - 5.2      English Language (ESOL), foundation programmes, and micro-credentials courses are excluded from eligibility;
  - 5.3      no work rights for partners and any dependents will be treated as international students for study purposes;
  - 5.4      grant of open work rights for the six-month duration of the visa;
  - 5.5      no eligibility for a subsequent Short-Term Graduate Visa on expiry of the first Short-Term Graduate Work Visa or subsequent Short-Term Graduate Visa following further study;
  - 5.6      provision to apply for a second student visa if the applicant is pursuing a higher-level qualification that qualifies for a Post-Study Work Visa;

- 5.7 applicants must apply for the Short-Term Graduate Work Visa within three months of their student visa expiring;
- 5.8 applicants must provide evidence of \$5,000 in funds to demonstrate they can financially support themselves during their stay in New Zealand and complete a health check; and
- 5.9 applicants must meet standard health and character requirements;
- 6 **agreed** that the fee for the Short-Term Graduate Work Visa will be set at \$320, and the levy will be set at \$1,350;
- 7 **agreed** to extend Post-Study Work Visa eligibility to Graduate Diploma holders to support growth in the international education sector;
- 8 **agreed** to the following safeguards to manage risks associated with extending Post-Study Work Visa eligibility to Graduate Diploma holders:
  - 8.1 limit Post-Study Work Visa eligibility for Graduate Diplomas to applicants who hold a bachelor's degree;
  - 8.2 visa duration to align with current Post-Study Work Visa settings, matching the length of the applicant's course;
  - 8.3 require the entire Graduate Diploma to be completed entirely in New Zealand on a valid Student Visa;
  - 8.4 no cross-crediting from lower-level qualifications;
- 9 **directed** the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE), NZQA, and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to provide six-monthly reports to the Minister of Immigration, Minister of Education, Minister for Universities, Minister for Social Development and Employment, and Minister for Vocational Education on responses to the changes in paragraphs 5 and 7 above, highlighting any emerging concerns for early intervention;
- 10 **directed** MBIE and MSD to undertake a review of the Short-Term Graduate Work Visa and extension of Post-Study Work Visa eligibility to Graduate Diplomas at 12-months from implementation with a view to policy and operational changes, if required;
- 11 **noted** that the Minister of Immigration has directed MBIE officials to progress work on changes to make it easier to apply for multi-year visas, Confidential advice to Government

12 Confidential advice to Government

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Diana Hawker  
for Secretary of the Cabinet