



Australia: Migration pathways for Hong Kong SAR and BNO passport holders

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Are there any special visa opportunities for Hong Kong SAR or British National (Overseas) (BNO) passport holders?

Temporary visas

for students:

- Students who are Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and/or British National (Overseas) (BNO) passport holders that are completing eligible tertiary studies in Australia can apply for a five-year Temporary Graduate (subclass 485) visa on the successful conclusion of their studies. They will also have a pathway to permanent residency after their Temporary Graduate visa.
- Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and/or British National (Overseas) (BNO) passport holders who held a Temporary Graduate (subclass 485) visa on 9 July 2020 were given an automatic extension of five years from that date, providing a pathway to permanent residency.
- Students who are Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and/or British National (Overseas) (BNO) passport holders who choose to live and work in regional Australia, will be able to access a pathway to permanent residency after three years.

for skilled applicants:

- Applicants for Temporary Skills Shortage (TSS) (subclass 482) who are Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and/or British National (Overseas) (BNO) passport holders visas will be eligible for a five-year visa with a pathway to permanent residency.
- To meet the requirements for a TSS (subclass 482) visa, applicants must:
 - be nominated by an approved sponsor
 - have a nominated occupation listed on the relevant skilled occupation list
 - have at least two years relevant work experience in the nominated occupation or related field
 - have the relevant skills, qualifications, English language level, and employment background.
- Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and/or British National (Overseas) (BNO) passport holders who held a Temporary Skill Shortage (Subclass 482) or Temporary Work (Skilled) (Subclass 457) visa on 9 July 2020 were given an automatic extension of five years from that date, providing a pathway to permanent residency.

Pathways to Permanent Residency

New permanent pathways

- If you hold one of the above temporary visas the following two new PR pathways will be available to you from 5 March 2022:
 - **Subclass 191 – the Hong Kong (regional) stream** - for applicants who were usually resident in Australia for a continuous period of at least 3 years immediately before applying and who lived, worked and studied exclusively in a designated regional area for that 3 year period, while holding a qualifying visa.
 - **Subclass 189 – the Hong Kong stream** - for applicants who were usually resident in Australia for a continuous period of at least 4 years immediately before applying, and who held a qualifying visa during that period.
- Applicants will **not** be required to meet occupational or skill assessment requirements. They will also not require any ongoing sponsorship, or nomination. However, they will have to meet the usual health, character and security requirements for the grant of a permanent visa.

If the qualifying visa was extended by five (5) years from 9 July 2020, time already spent in Australia on that visa prior to 9 July 2020 counts towards the period required for permanent residency.

Existing pathways for the highly skilled:

- The Australian Government is prioritising visa applications lodged by applicants who are Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and/or British National (Overseas) (BNO) passport holders for certain visa under the Skilled Migration Program, including through the:
 - Business Innovation and Investment Program
 - Global Talent Visa Program. This is a permanent visa program for highly skilled individuals with international reputations for outstanding achievements who can contribute to Australia's economy by transferring skills, promoting innovation and creating jobs. The program includes two pathways:
 - the streamlined Global Talent pathway for individuals who receive an invitation based on achievements in one of the priority sectors. Candidates under the Global Talent pathway first submit an Expression of Interest.
 - the Distinguished Talent pathway for extremely talented individuals who have an internationally recognised record of exceptional and outstanding achievements in either a profession; a sport; the arts; or academia and research, but who have not received an invitation to apply under the Global Talent pathway.

Q: I work for an Australian company in Hong Kong and wish to relocate to Australia. What is the most appropriate visa option for me?

A range of visa pathways are available for this purpose and may be applicable to you depending on your circumstances. These pathways include:

Temporary visa options:

- If you work for a company already operating in Australia, or for a company moving to and setting up operations in Australia, your company may be able to sponsor visa applicants for Temporary Skill Shortage (subclass 482) visas.
- A range of Temporary Activity (subclass 408) visa options are available including visa options to support Australia's COVID-19 economic recovery.

Permanent and provisional visa options:

- There are a range of permanent visas and provisional visas (with pathways to permanent residency) including the:
 - [Employer Nomination Scheme visas](#)
 - [Skilled Independent visa](#)
 - [Skilled Nominated visa](#)
- Other visa pathways to permanent residency are available and may be applicable to you. You can access these options from the Department of Home Affairs' [website](#).
- [Provisional visas](#) for skilled migrants who want to live and work in regional Australia may also provide a pathway to permanent residency.

Q: I do not work for an Australian company in Hong Kong, but would like to relocate permanently to Australia. What is the most appropriate visa option for me?

Even if you are not employed by an Australian company you may be eligible to apply for visa pathways mentioned above. You can check if you meet the relevant visa requirements through the links listed above.

Q: What is the process for applying to migrate to Australia / how do I find more information?

You apply online via the Department of Home Affairs' [website](#).

Q: Will I need to use someone to assist me in applying for a visa?

Engaging the services of a migration agent or a legal practitioner is an option available to you. If you choose to do so you can find further information on the Department of Home Affairs' [website](#).

Q: How fast are visa applications processed?

Visa processing times can vary significantly on a case by case basis. Average processing times for various visa subclasses are published on the Department of Home Affairs' [website](#).

Q: Australia's borders are still closed. If I am granted a visa to travel to Australia will I be able to travel to and enter the country?

Australia's borders are currently closed. Travel to Australia is only available if you are exempt from travel restrictions or you have been granted an individual travel exemption.

Travel restrictions are subject to change in response to the circumstances surrounding COVID-19. Stay informed with the latest updates by checking the [COVID-19 and the border](#) webpage regularly.