



Thailand Immigration Alert

Thailand Implements New Visa Measures to Enhance Tourism, Business Travel, Remote Work, and Undergraduate Student Opportunities

Introduction

The Ministry of Interior of Thailand has recently issued four significant announcements regarding new visa measures. These initiatives aim to strengthen the country's local economy and boost the tourism sector by attracting more international visitors, stimulating economic growth, and supporting local businesses and communities.

What to know?

The four announcements include the introduction of a new visa type for individuals wishing to stay in Thailand for extended periods, an extension of the free visa period for certain nationalities, the inclusion of additional nationalities eligible for visas on arrival, and the introduction of a new student visa allowing undergraduate and higher-level students to stay longer in the country.

Destination Thailand Visa (DTV)

The Destination Thailand Visa (DTV) aims to attract digital nomads, remote workers, freelancers, and those wishing to stay in Thailand for extended periods. This visa also caters to foreigners interested in specific activities such as Muay Thai training, Culinary programs, Sports training, and medical treatments. Additionally, spouses and children under 20 years of age of DTV visa holders can apply for a dependent DTV visa.

The DTV visa is designated for eligible foreigners and is categorized into the following three groups:

- **Workcation** (Digital Nomad/Remote Worker/Foreign Talent /Freelancer)
- **Thai Soft Power Related Activities** (e.g., Muay Thai, Culinary Training, and Medical Treatment)
- **Spouse and Children** (Under 20 Years Old of DTV Visa Holders)

It is advisable to recheck the list of documents with the relevant Thai Embassy or Consulate for any specific requirements.

The DTV visa can be applied for at a Thai Embassy or Consulate overseas and is valid for 5 years upon approval. The approved visa includes a multiple re-entry permit, allowing the visa holder to travel in and out of the country multiple times until it expires. Upon entering Thailand, DTV visa holders will be permitted to stay in the country for up to 180 days per entry. This duration can be extended once in Thailand for an additional maximum of 180 days by providing the required supporting documents to the immigration office. DTV visa holders must report their current address every 90 days if they stay in Thailand consecutively (90-day report).

Extended Free Visa Period

Visitors from 93 specified countries and territories will now benefit from an extended period of visa-free entry to Thailand. With a passport or other type of travel document, individuals from eligible countries can now enter and stay in Thailand for 60 days, with an option to extend their stay once for an additional period of up to 30 days.

This extension applies to tourism or short-term business activities that necessitate an urgent work permit, in accordance with Department of Employment regulations. This new rule aims to make it easier and more attractive for tourists and short-term business travelers from these countries to visit Thailand.

In addition, the list of activities classified as urgent or necessary work or specific work according to the announcement of the Department of Employment are as follows:

- (1) Recruitment of job seekers for overseas job placement;
- (2) Organizing, facilitating, or setting up the conference, training, seminars, exhibitions, or trade fairs;
- (3) Repairing or installation of machinery;
- (4) Electric train technician;
- (5) Aircraft or aircraft equipment system technician;
- (6) Inspection or improvement of the production process
- (7) Quality inspection of products or goods
- (8) Inspection, follow-up, and resolve technical issues
- (9) Occasional internal audits
- (10) Inspection or repairing machinery or electric generator equipment system;
- (11) Movie filming and slide photographing;
- (12) Consulting work on repairing machinery or machinery controlling system
- (13) Events that the authorities support i.e.
 - (a) Mega event, international exhibition;
 - (b) International music or concert
- (14) Technical skill testing for overseas job placement;
- (15) Conducting a special academic lecture;
- (16) Machinery demonstration and testing;
- (17) Aviation supporting works.

In cases, where the visitors intend to engage in urgent or necessary work or specific work, they must inform the Department of Employment by submitting the application before commencing work. The duration of such work must not exceed 15 days initially, with a possible extension of another 15 days, totaling 30 days.

Expanded Visa on Arrival (VOA) Eligibility

The list of nationalities eligible for a visa on arrival has been expanded to 31 countries and territories, allowing more travelers to take advantage of this convenient entry option. Effective 15 July 2024, holders of passports or other types of travel documents from eligible countries who wish to enter Thailand for tourism purposes can apply for a VOA at the Thai border or through the online system before entering the country.

New Student Visa Type for Higher Education Students

Undergraduate and higher-level students studying at or graduating from higher educational institutions in Thailand are now eligible to apply for a new student visa called the Non-immigrant ED Plus.

Eligible students can apply for the ED Plus visa at a Thai Embassy or Consulate overseas, or through conversion from another applicable visa type in Thailand. The visa includes multiple entries. ED Plus visa holders can stay in Thailand for up to 90 days per entry, which can be extended within the country by the representative of their educational institutions. For the extension, undergraduate and higher-level students currently studying can extend their visas for a maximum of one year per extension. Graduating students can extend their visa once, for a maximum of one year, to seek employment opportunities.

Our thoughts

These recent announcements are set to significantly benefit foreigners eligible for these visa measures by simplifying entry conditions and offering longer stays in Thailand. The introduction of the DTV is particularly groundbreaking for digital nomads and remote workers seeking extended stays while adhering to Thai immigration laws. Companies may also find these measures advantageous for their mobility strategies.

However, as these measures have been recently implemented, some practices might still be uncertain and in development. The stance of the Department of Employment regarding work permission for DTV visa holders is also yet to be clarified.

We, at Deloitte, will continue to monitor these developments closely and provide further updates as they become available.

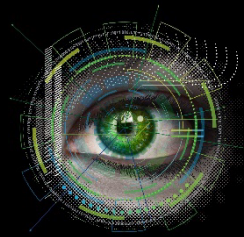
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