

# Hon David Cunliffe

Minister of Immigration



24 October 2007

## Media Statement

### Policy Changes to attract more international students

International students will find it easier to work in New Zealand and remain here as permanent migrants, said Immigration Minister David Cunliffe today.

From late November many international students will be able to stay in New Zealand for up to 12 months, instead of six, on a job search permit while they look for skilled work.

"There is increasing competition for skilled graduates and we need to allow them enough time to find a job in their area of expertise here in New Zealand, and not run the risk that they will go elsewhere," said Mr Cunliffe. Current graduates on a six month permit will be given an extra six months.

"As well, architecture and accounting graduates, who need three years practical experience to achieve professional registration, will be allowed to stay and work in New Zealand for three years without the need to reapply for a work permit."

Mr Cunliffe said the third change being made next month will give more flexibility to English language students who want to work in New Zealand while they study.

Feedback from the export education sector has been positive and education providers believe these changes will help to sell New Zealand as an education destination.

"It is important that we facilitate residence for qualified international graduates who have experience of living here while they study. In many cases, these are precisely the type of skilled workers we need in New Zealand," said Mr Cunliffe.

"These changes set out an easier pathway for students to gain residence. I will also be releasing details next month of the Skilled Migrant Category policy changes that I announced earlier this year.

"This will include a refined definition of skilled employment and some adjustments to the recognition of qualifications at the lower-end of the quality scale. This will ensure that our skilled residence policies focus on those migrants with an appropriate level of skill and expertise."

Mr Cunliffe said the latest changes will help ensure that New Zealand can compete in a global marketplace for the skills and talent needed for economic transformation.

"I would like to recognise the constructive contribution of Education New Zealand and other international education groups to the development of this policy."

**ENDS**