

**DRAFT**

IN CONFIDENCE – NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY

# Trades and Technician Pathway

---

Consultation: 25 November – 4 December 2025



# Disclaimer

---

This material is being shared with you **in confidence** to inform advice on the detailed design of the Trades and Technician Pathway under the Skilled Migrant Category.

While this can be distributed to your members to inform a collective submission **it is not for broader distribution or publication.**

The proposals outlined in this paper are not Government policy nor guaranteed to become Government policy. They are drafts for engagement and feedback.

# Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Overview and objectives
3. Discussion of proposed list of eligible trades and technician roles
4. Wrap up and next steps – including opportunity for written submissions (by 4 December)

## What we are seeking from you

- Feedback on the proposed list of eligible trades and technician roles, including:
  - Working definition
  - Key criteria
- Additional roles/ occupations that you consider meet the criteria
- Whether the sub-degree pathway is appropriate for the eligible occupations
- Whether there are training opportunities to support employers to prioritise and recruit New Zealanders
- Any other matters you'd like to raise



DRAFT

# Context and objectives

---



# Context and objectives

- In September 2025, changes to the Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) were announced, including **two new residence pathways**:
  - A Skilled Work Experience Pathway
  - A Trades and Technician Pathway

## Trades and Technician Pathway

- The Pathway is designed to provide a clear residence pathway for skilled trades and technician roles with relevant and valued sub-degree qualifications
- It is intended that this pathway is only available for migrants who must:
  - be working in New Zealand in a specified skilled trade or technician's role; and
  - have a relevant sub-degree qualification at Level 4 or higher on the New Zealand Qualifications Credentials Framework (NZQCF) (e.g. a trade certificate or diploma) of at least 120 credits; and
  - have at least 4 years of post-qualification skilled work experience, with at least 1.5 years of skilled experience in New Zealand paid at least the medium wage.
- We are now **consulting on the eligible list of occupations**



DRAFT

# Working definition and criteria for selecting eligible occupations

---



# Working Definition of Trades and Technicians

- To determine the eligible occupations for inclusion in the Trades and Technician pathway, we have used a working definition
- Adapted from ANZSCO and NOL in consultation with Statistics NZ

Technicians and trades workers perform a variety of skilled tasks, applying broad or in-depth technical, trade or industry specific knowledge, in support of a wide variety of sectors and specialisations that include:

- health; science; engineering; ICT; manufacturing (including textiles, metal, wood, glass, chemical, electrical and electronic); construction (including housing, furniture, and fittings); transport (including motor vehicles, bicycles, air and marine craft); printing; animal care and veterinary assistance; plant propagation, cultivation, and horticulture; sports; power generation operation and equipment; and creative and artistic exhibitions and performances (including television, film and media).

What are your thoughts on this working definition?

# Role requirements – Criteria

This pathway is only meant to be only available for a specified list of eligible roles. The following are the proposed criteria that a role must meet to be included on this pathway.

## REQUIREMENT

There is a history of migrant recruitment for the occupation

AND

The occupation has an appropriate sub-degree pathway of NZQCF Level 4 or higher of at least 120 credits

AND

The occupation has relevant ANZSCO code, skill group, and represents appropriate sector

AND

There is genuine and widespread use of sub-degree qualification in the labour market in New Zealand

AND

The occupation is on at least one comparator country's trade and technicians' pathway.

## RATIONALE

Intended to capture the demand for migrant workers in the occupation, where employers have consistently been unable to meet their labour demands locally.

This criteria has been agreed by the Cabinet to help mitigate the risk of low standard qualifications. Recognising these qualifications will help attract and retain migrants with important skills, noting that the sub-degree is available in New Zealand.

To ensure that the roles represent skilled trades and technician occupations which are officially recognised, consistently classified, appropriate skilled and aligned to labour market needs. It provides a transparent framework for assessing eligibility of the roles.

To ensure that the sub-degree identified for assessment of eligible occupations are commonly used in the labour market in New Zealand as it indicates that it is genuinely relevant to the occupation. Widespread use of a particular qualification also signals industry consensus that it represents the minimum standard.

To help validate that the sub-degree pathway is widely recognised as a skilled trade or technician role internationally. It provides an external reference point confirming skill threshold, qualification requirement and occupational standards.

What do you think of these criteria?

DRAFT

# List of Eligible Trade and Technician Roles

---



# Eligible Roles

<b>Transport</b>
Automotive Electrician
Boat Builder and Repairer
Panel beater
Small Engine Mechanic
Vehicle Body Builder
Vehicle Painter
Vehicle Trimmer
<b>Construction and Infrastructure</b>
Airconditioning and Mechanical Services Plumber
Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanic
Architectural Draftsperson
Architectural, Building and Surveying Technicians nec
Building Associate
Building and Engineering Technicians nec
Building Inspector
Business Machine Mechanic
Civil Engineering Draftsperson
Construction Estimator
Fibrous Plasterer
Fitter (General)
Fitter and Turner
Fitter-Welder
Floor Finisher
Furniture Finisher
Glazier
Joiner

Lift Mechanic
Metal Fabricator
Metal Fitters and Machinists nec
Metal Machinist (First Class)
Painting Trades Worker - High AEWV volumes
Solid Plasterer
Stonemason
Wall and Floor Tiler
Waste Water or Water Plant Operator
<b>Manufacturing</b>
Butcher or Smallgoods Maker
Electrical Engineering Draftsperson
Electronic Equipment Trades Worker
Electronic Instrument Trades Worker (General)
Electronic Instrument Trades Worker (Special Class)
Fire Protection Equipment Technician
Hardware Technician
Industrial Spray painter
Jeweller
Mechanical Engineering Draftsperson
Paper Products Machine Operator
Plastics Technician
Roof Tiler
Saw Doctor
Sheetmetal Trades Worker
Toolmaker
Wood Machinist and Other Woods Trades Workers NEC
Welder

Do you have any feedback on these eligible roles?  
Are there any roles which you think should be included or excluded?

# Eligible Roles

<b>Health and Science</b>
Medical Technicians NEC
Agricultural Technician – excluding sheep scanner, animal pregnancy scanner
Chemistry Technician
Life Science Technician
Precision Instrument Maker and Repairer
Science Technicians nec
Surveying or Spatial Science Technician
<b>Creative and Artistic</b>
Performing Arts Technicians nec
Light Technician
Sound Technician
Camera Operator (Film, Television or Video)
<b>Printing</b>
Printing Machinist
Screen Printer
Signwriter
Small Offset Printer
<b>ICT</b>
Radiocommunications Technician
Telecommunications Field Engineer
Telecommunications Linesworker / Telecommunications Line Mechanic
Telecommunications Technician - High AEWV volumes
Telecommunications Technical Officer or Technologist
<b>Animal Care</b>
Farrier
Veterinary Nurse

## Others

Technicians and Trades Workers nec – noting that the following roles only meet the criteria: Airborne Electronics Analyst; Canoe maker; Fibre Composite Technician; Irrigation Designer; Kayak Maker; Pearl Technician; Surfboard Maker

Do you have any feedback on these eligible roles?  
Are there any roles which you think should be included or excluded?

## Eligible Roles – Maybe List

<b>Transport (automotive)</b>
Tyre Fitter
<b>Manufacturing</b>
Cabinetmaker
Canvas Goods Fabricator
Chemical Plant Operator
Crane, Hoist, or Lift Operator
Furniture Finisher
Knitting Machine Operator
Metal Casting Trades Worker
Metal Polisher
Pressure Welder
Wood Machinist
<b>Health and Science</b>
Diver
Pharmacy Technician
<b>Printing</b>
Print Finisher
<b>ICT</b>
Telecommunications Cable Joints
<b>Animal Care</b>
Blacksmith
<b>Other</b>
Meat Inspector
Safety Inspector

Do you have any feedback on these “maybe” roles?  
Are there any roles which you think should be included or excluded?

## Wrap up and next steps

- Stakeholders who wish to can provide any written feedback by **5pm 4 December 2025**.
- Once consultation closes, MBIE will report back to the Minister of Immigration on the final list of eligible roles by 11 December 2025.
- This new pathway is scheduled to go live in August 2026.

