

Chinese visitors are now eligible for visas-on-arrival in the UAE

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In an effort to strengthen relations with China and boost tourism and trade, the UAE now permits holders of Mainland China passports to avail a 30 day visa-on-arrival upon entry. Although the announcement (which was first circulated on Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid al Makhtoum's official Twitter account) was made earlier this year, implementation was varied with some reports suggesting that immigration officials at the country's various ports-of-entry were not formally notified of the update.

Prior to the announcement, 47 nationalities (including Hong Kong) were eligible for a visa-on-arrival. The addition of China to the list is expected to greatly increase the number of Chinese visitors entering the country - according to figures released by Dubai Tourism, the number of Chinese nationals visiting the UAE this year has increased by 29% from 2015.

Although Chinese nationals are eligible for a 30 day visa-on-arrival, this can also be extended once in-country for an additional 30 day period. This differs from the visas issued to other non-EU nationalities on the list in that the latter are issued 40 day visas with the option to extend in-country for an additional 20 days.

The takeaway

Although this development is primarily meant to boost trade and tourism, employers in the UAE looking to host business visitors from Mainland China no longer need to sponsor them for visas or complete any formalities prior to entry. Ultimately Immigration officials at the port of entry still hold discretion in the issuance of such visas, the eligibility criteria is fairly straightforward and applicants are simply required to present a valid passport with at least six months left until expiry and at least two blank visa pages situated side-by-side.

Let's talk

Please do not hesitate to reach out to your usual PwC contact for further details.

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