
INDEPENDENT REGULATORY BOARD FOR AUDITORS

AMENDMENT TO THE IRBA'S CRITICAL SKILLS SUPPORT LETTER REQUIREMENTS

Johannesburg / 19 July 2021

Dear Stakeholders

BACKGROUND

The Critical Skills Work Visa (CSWV) facilitates access to skilled labour for the South African economy. The Critical Skills work visa is issued in accordance with the critical skills list. The list was developed in conjunction with the occupations in high demand and the scarce skills lists of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

The main objective of the critical skills work visa is to assist the government to realise the achievement of the National Infrastructure Project, the Strategic Infrastructure Projects and Key National Strategic Projects in support of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Section 19(4) of the Immigration Act, 2002 set the requirements for a Critical Skills Visa. According to Section 19(4) of the Immigrations Act of 2002, applicants are required to submit, in support of their application:

A confirmation, in writing, from the professional body, council or board recognised by SAQA in terms of section 13(1) (0 of the National Qualifications Framework act, or any relevant government department confirming the skills or qualifications of the applicant and appropriate post qualification experience, (if not attached, VFS official to check directive 22 of 2014).

The IRBA is the recognised 'professional body'/statutory body by SAQA and is the custodian of the External Auditor qualification with SAQA. The External Auditor is recognised by Home Affairs as a critical skill in South Africa under the Business, Economics and Management Studies subject matter.

OVERVIEW OF IRBA PROCESS TO DATE

The IRBA has, in terms of the Auditing Profession Act of 2005, granted full accreditation to the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA). The IRBA has accredited SAICA based on the following programmes and has thus been issuing Critical Skills visa support letters that relate to these SAICA programmes. Alongside the list is the supporting document of proof that the applicant is on the SAICA programme.

- a) Academic programme (Post Graduate Diploma in Accounting);
- b) Core assessment programme (Initial Test of Competence); and
- c) Professional development programme (SAICA's training contract, professional programme and the Assessment of Professional Competence).

Having completed the above programmes with SAICA, candidates are then eligible to register with the IRBA on the Audit Development Programme (ADP). This programme is for a minimum of 18 months and develops the professional competence that is required of a Registered Auditor. Upon

completion of the ADP, candidates are then eligible to register with the IRBA as Registered Auditors.

REVIEW OF THE PROCESS

On review of the IRBA process in conjunction with the legislative requirements, the IRBA has concluded that the scarce skill is the External Auditor. For the IRBA, this translates into the Registered Auditor designation, and IRBA is recognized by SAQA to quality assure this specific designation only.

In the past, letters have been issued based on applicants that are in the SAICA CA(SA) programmes. These applicants, however, can choose various career paths and cannot be directly linked to the External Auditor designation if the applicant is not currently registered on the External Auditor training programme which is the Audit Development Programme (ADP).

As a result of this assessment, the IRBA has resolved that it will only issue critical skills letters if the applicant is on the IRBA Registered Auditor programme. This means that the applicant must be registered as a Registered Candidate Auditor (RCA) on the ADP. Applicants and firms that are affected by this change are advised to contact the Department of Home Affairs to determine their visa related options. The Department of Home Affairs has also been notified of this change.

AMENDMENT TO THE REQUIREMENTS

To avert the risk of issuing critical skills letters to applicants that are not pursuing the Registered Auditor designation, **effective 01 September 2021 the IRBA will only be issuing critical skills letters if the applicants are registered on the Audit Development Programme.** The IRBA will be finalising the old process by processing letters for applications received up to **13 August 2021.**

Yours sincerely,

Nadine Kater

Director: Education and Transformation Department

About the IRBA

The objective of the IRBA is to endeavour to protect the financial interests of the South African public and international investors in South Africa through the effective and appropriate regulation of audits conducted by registered auditors, in accordance with internationally recognised standards and processes.