



Human Resources and  
Social Development

# **Guidelines for Classification of Work Permits by Skill Categories**

**Issued by Ministerial Resolution No. (4602) dated  
(10/1/1447AH)**



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# 1-Introduction:

Based on the Ministry's commitment to regulating the labor market and enhancing human competencies, and with reference to Ministerial Resolution No. (4602) dated (10/1/1447AH) concerning the classification of work permits by skill categories, this document aims to raise awareness among labor market stakeholders (establishments/non-Saudi workers) regarding the segmentation of work permits based on skill categories, in alignment with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030.

The Ministry seeks to establish a new mechanism and develop a regulatory framework for the recruitment of non-Saudi workers into the labor market by classifying work permits according to skill categories. These categories have been identified based on the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations (primary occupational groups and job codes) and specific classification criteria, including:

- Educational qualifications,
- Professional experience,
- Professional skills,
- Wages, and
- Age.

This initiative aims to foster an attractive labor market and empower human competencies within a professional and sustainable work environment.

The ministerial decree aims to achieve several strategic objectives, including:

1. Enhancing the performance of workers and transferring expertise to the Saudi labor market by attracting high skills workers.
2. Building an environment that supports innovation and invests in the future through the recruitment of talented individuals.
3. Strengthening compliance with the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations\* and ensuring that non-Saudi workers possess the skills required to meet the demands of the Saudi labor market, in accordance with Cabinet Resolution No. (195) dated 04/04/1443H.
4. Implementing best practices for attracting high-level talents and skills.
5. Developing mechanisms for verification and understanding the distribution rates of skill categories among non-Saudi workers in the Kingdom, enabling entities to manage them more effectively.

The provisions outlined in this guide will be implemented in two key phases. The first phase will commence on Wednesday, July 5, 2025, and the second phase on Tuesday, August 3, 2025, as detailed under the implementation stages later in this document.

*[\\*Link to the General Authority for Statistics website containing the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations.](#)*

## 2-Definitions

<b>The Ministry</b>	The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development
<b>The Entity</b>	Every entity managed by a natural or legal person that employs one or more workers for any type of remuneration.
<b>The Non-Saudi Skilled Worker</b>	Any non-Saudi natural person who works for an employer and under their management or supervision in return for remuneration, even if not under their direct oversight.
<b>Skill Categories</b>	A classification of work permits according to the following categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High-Skilled</li> <li>2. Skilled</li> <li>3. Basic</li> </ol>
<b>Work Permit Classification Criteria</b>	Base criteria through which work permits are classified for the specified <b>Skill Categories</b> , are as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Educational Qualifications</li> <li>2. Professional Experience</li> <li>3. Professional Skills</li> <li>4. Remuneration</li> <li>5. Age</li> </ol>
<b>Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations</b>	Based on <b>Cabinet Resolution No. (660)</b> dated 24/10/1441H, occupations are divided into nine (9) main occupational groups as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Managers</li> <li>2. Specialists</li> <li>3. Technicians and Associate Professionals</li> <li>4. Clerical Support Workers</li> <li>5. Service and Sales Workers</li> <li>6. Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, and Fishery Workers</li> <li>7. Craft and Related Trades Workers</li> <li>8. Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers</li> <li>9. Elementary Occupations</li> </ol>
<b>Professional Accreditation</b>	A program aimed at verifying the qualifications and skills of workers and their alignment with the requirements of the Saudi labor market. <b>Professional Accreditation</b> is based on two main components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Qualification Verification:</b> Focuses on verifying the validity of the qualifications and experience of the <b>Non-Saudi Skilled Worker</b> in line with the professional requirements of the labor market. (<i>Qualification Verification applies to the main occupational groups 1 to 3</i>).</li> <li>• <b>Skills Verification:</b> Ensures that the <b>Non-Saudi Skilled Worker</b> possesses the necessary skills by performing a practical and theoretical test in their field of specialization. (<i>Skills Verification applies to the main occupational groups 4 to 8 and to some of the occupations in the group 9</i>).</li> </ul> <p>According to the <b>Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations</b>, approved under Cabinet Resolution No. (660) dated 24/10/1441H.</p>

### 3- Mechanism for Classifying Work Permits by Skill Level

Work permits will be classified according to skill levels (**High-Skilled**, **Skilled**, and **Basic**) as explained below:

#### 3.1 Criteria for Classifying Work Permits:

- **Educational Qualifications:** Determining the suitability of the educational level to the requirements of the profession.
- **Professional Experience:** Verifying the required years of professional experience according to the specific requirements for each skill level.
- **Professional Skills:** Meeting the requirements of the Professional Accreditation Program, based on the nature of the profession.
- **Remuneration:** The wage thresholds set by the Ministry for each skill level, depending on the economic activity.
- **Age:** The age group specified for each profession according to its nature and requirements.

#### 3.2 Methodology Used for Classification:

The above mentioned criteria for classifying work permits will be adopted to build a balanced methodology for classifying work permits for non-Saudi workers into three categories, as follows:

##### 1. (High-Skilled) Level:

Work permits for the **High-Skilled Level** will be classified according to the following criteria:

- a. The profession must fall within one of the main occupational groups (1 to 3) as per the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations.
- b. The worker's total wage must not be less than the minimum threshold for the High-Skilled Level, as determined by the Ministry for the economic activity.
- c. The worker must meet the requirements of the Professional Accreditation Program defined by the Ministry for the main occupational groups (1 to 3).
- d. The worker must pass the points-based system set by the Ministry for this level, which is based on three main criteria: educational qualifications, Professional experience, and wage.

##### 2. (Skilled) Level:

Work permits for the **Skilled Level** will be classified according to the following conditions:

- a. The profession must fall within one of the main occupational groups (4 to 8), as per the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations.
- b. The worker's total wage must not be less than the minimum threshold for this level, as determined by the Ministry.
- c. The worker must meet the requirements of the Professional Accreditation Program defined by the Ministry for the main occupational groups (4 to 8).
- d. The profession may fall within one of the main occupational groups (1 to 3) if the worker does not meet the minimum wage threshold set for the High-Skilled Level.

##### 3. (Basic) Level:

Work permits for the **Basic Level** will be classified according to the following conditions:

- a. The profession must fall within the main occupational group (9), as per the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations.
- b. If applicable for the profession, the worker must meet the requirements of the Professional Accreditation Program defined by the Ministry for the main occupational group (9).
- c. The age of the non-Saudi worker must not exceed 60 years.
- d. The profession may fall within one of the main occupational groups (1 to 8) if the worker does not meet the minimum wage threshold set for the Skilled Level.

## 4-Implementation Stages

The Ministry has ensured a smooth and gradual implementation of this methodology, which will be launched in two main phases:

- **Phase 1: Classification of work permits for workers currently employed in the Kingdom**

(Effective from July 5, 2025)

This phase targets non-Saudi workers who are currently employed in the Kingdom. The skill level of these workers will be assessed based on their professions and wages.

- **Phase 2: Classification of work permits for incoming workers to the Kingdom**

(Effective from August 3, 2025)

This phase involves classifying the work permits of workers entering the Kingdom for the first time, in accordance with the work permit classification mechanism outlined in Section 3.

The classification process for both phases will be automated, with the skill level of work permits appearing directly through the establishment's account on the Ministry's systems (Qiwa Platform). Workers whose skill level is not accurately classified can submit a request to correct their skill level. If they meet the specified criteria for the desired skill level, their classification will be updated accordingly.



## 5-Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1- What are the different skill levels introduced? What changes will occur in the labor market after implementing the classification of work permits by skill levels?

After implementing this mechanism, every non-Saudi worker, whether currently employed in the labor market or newly arriving in the Kingdom, will have their work permit classified according to skill levels. The classification will be displayed through the establishment's account on the Ministry's systems (Qiwa Platform).

The skill levels will be classified as follows:

- High-skilled
- Skilled
- Basic

### 2- How does the points-based system work for applicants seeking high-skilled work permits, and what criteria are considered?

The points-based system evaluates applicants based on three main criteria: academic qualifications, professional experience, and wages. A specific number of points are allocated to each criterion based on the applicant's performance. If the total points earned by the applicant exceed a certain threshold set by the Ministry, they will qualify for a high-skilled work permit.

This system is characterized by flexibility, allowing applicants to compensate for not meeting some criteria with stronger performance in others. For example, if an applicant has extensive experience but does not meet the education/experience requirements, they can still qualify for a high-skilled work permit based on their performance in the remaining criteria.

### 3- Will the new classification criteria apply to the current expatriate workforce in the Kingdom?

The classification will apply to all expatriate workers currently employed in the Kingdom. The classification can be corrected by verifying and ensuring that job titles are accurately reflected in the documented work contract on the Qiwa platform.

### 4- Will work permit holders be allowed to change their skill level?

Yes, work permit holders will have the flexibility to change their skill level, provided they meet the specified criteria for the desired skill level they wish to transition to.

