

Skills and Resources Migrants Bring to New Zealand

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Skills and Resources Migrants Bring to New Zealand

What skills, qualifications, and work experience do migrants bring to New Zealand?

4.1 Introduction

Migrants bring with them a range of skills, work experience, and talents that contribute to New Zealand's economy and enrich its cultural diversity. Skilled migrants are selected on the basis of their skills and work experience, yet little information has been collected about the skills of their partners (secondary applicants) or of migrants approved through the Family or Pacific categories. This chapter examines some of the skills that particular groups of migrants bring to New Zealand, including their educational experience, previous employment experience, and occupational classification of work in their previous country.

Key findings

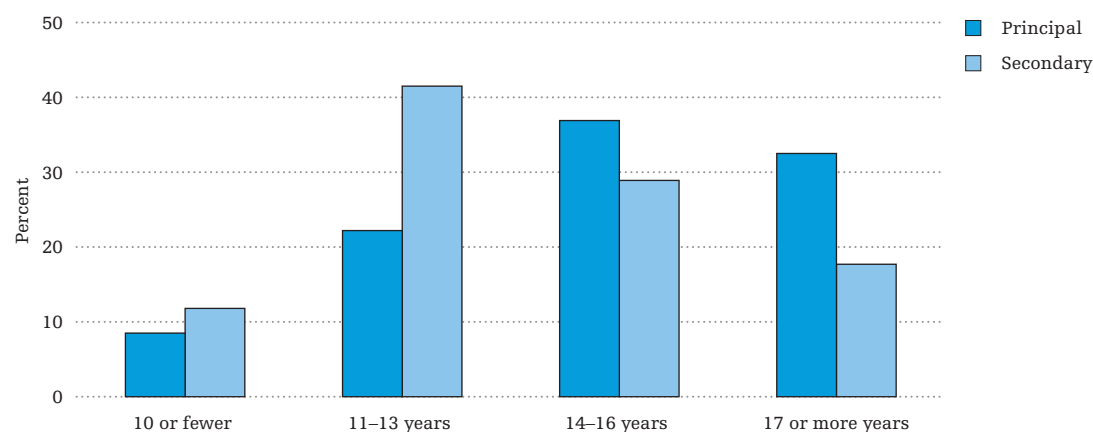
- Migrants are well educated – 62 percent had spent 14 years or more in full-time education, including 82 percent of Skilled principal migrants.
- Sixty-seven percent of all migrants held a post-school qualification.
- Forty-seven percent held an advanced vocational qualification or university degree.
- About two-thirds of migrants were in full-time employment in their previous country and 40 percent worked as professionals.
- More than half (53 percent) of migrants had 10 or more years of work experience and over a quarter (26 percent) had 20 or more years.

4.2 Education

4.2.1 Years of education

Sixty-two percent of all migrants had completed 14 or more years of full-time education before residence approval and over a quarter had completed 17 years or more.²⁹ Principal applicants had generally spent much longer in full-time study than had secondary applicants. Sixty-nine percent of principal applicants had studied full-time for 14 years or more compared with 47 percent of secondary applicants. (See Figure 4.1.)

Figure 4.1: Years of education of migrants by applicant type

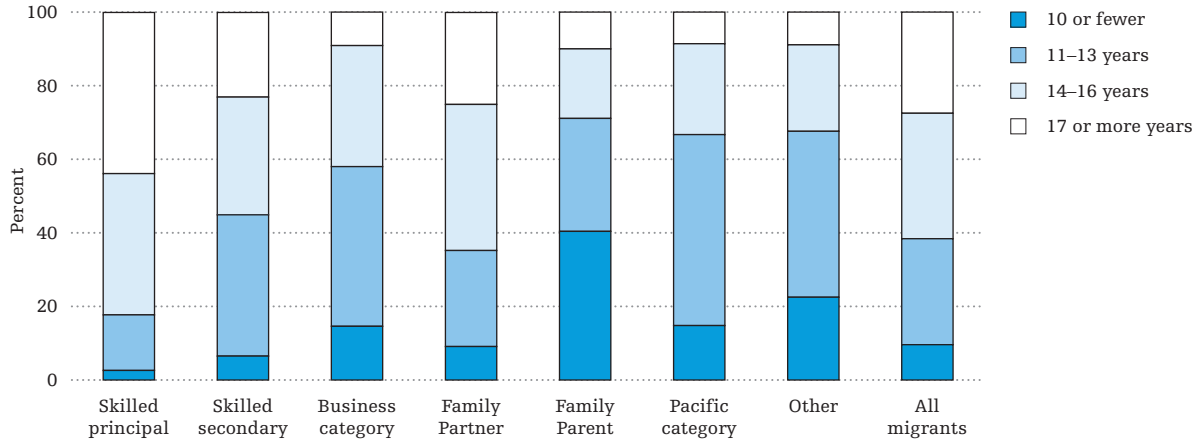


Comparing the amount of time studied by immigration approval category, 82 percent of Skilled principal migrants had studied full-time for 14 years or more compared with 55 percent of Skilled secondary migrants (see Figure 4.2). This difference may be influenced by the point structure of the Skilled Migrant Category since the more qualified person in a migrant couple may choose to apply as the principal applicant.

The difference between years of education for principal and secondary migrants was also apparent in other categories. For Pacific category migrants, 43 percent of principal migrants had studied full-time for 14 years or more compared with 21 percent of secondary migrants. For Business migrants, the figures were 54 percent for principal migrants and 34 percent for secondary migrants.

²⁹ Generally, completing secondary school would account for about 13 years of full-time education.

Figure 4.2: Years of education of migrants by immigration approval category



Note: Excludes missing responses.

4.2.2 Highest qualification

Sixty-seven percent of all migrants held a post-school qualification and nearly half of all migrants (47 percent) held an advanced vocational qualification or university degree. Most Skilled principal migrants held some form of post-school qualification (92 percent). Sixty-three percent of Skilled secondary and 66 percent of Family Partner migrants held a post-school qualification. This compares with 39 percent of the Business, 35 percent of the Family Parent, and 27 percent of the Pacific category migrants who held a post-school qualification.

Sixty-nine percent of Skilled principal migrants held an advanced vocational qualification or university degree, as did 47 percent of Family Partner and 42 percent of Skilled secondary migrants. This compares with 22 percent of Business, 26 percent of Family Parent, and 12 percent of Pacific category migrants who held an advanced vocational qualification or university degree.

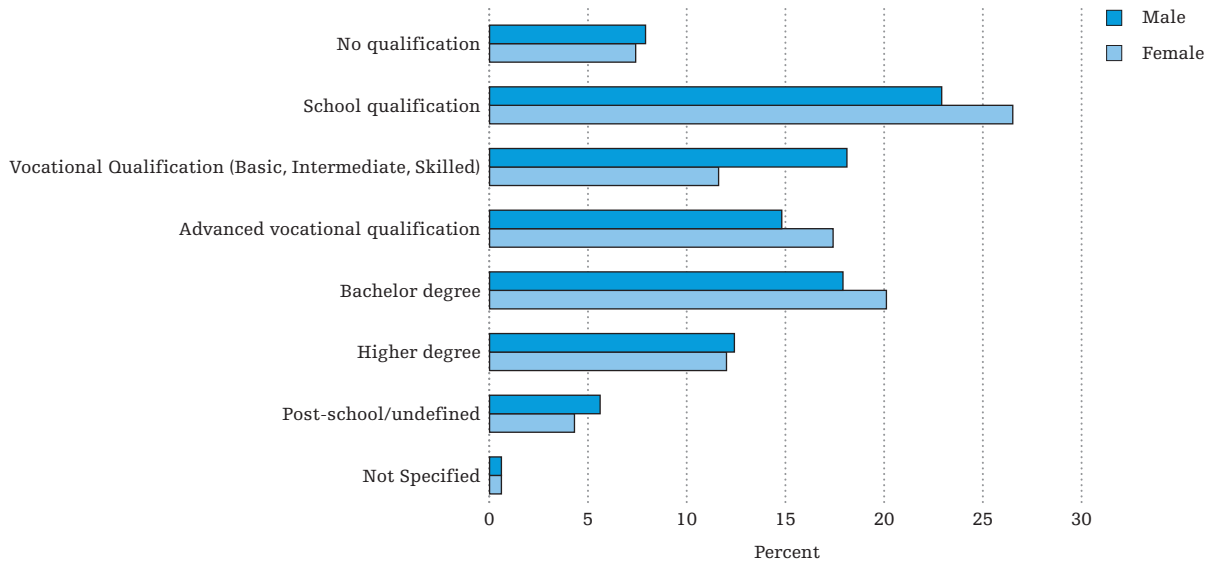
Males were more likely to hold a vocational qualification (18 percent) than were females (12 percent), particularly male Skilled principal migrants (22 percent compared with 8 percent) (see Figure 4.3). Female Skilled principal migrants were more likely to hold a bachelor degree (35 percent) than were male Skilled principal migrants (23 percent), while similar proportions of male and female Skilled principal migrants held higher degrees.



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More than two thirds of
migrants hold a post-school
qualification.

Figure 4.3: Highest qualification of migrants by sex

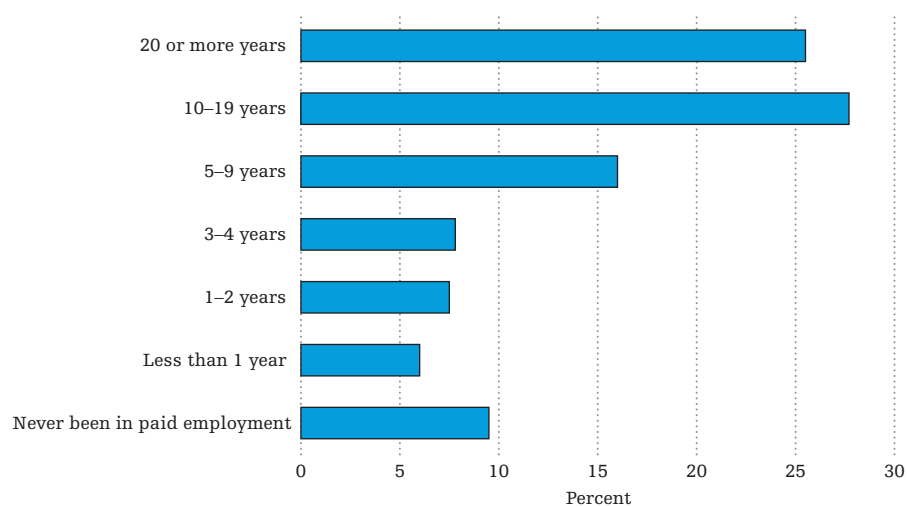


4.3 Work experience

Over half (53 percent) of all migrants reported 10 or more years of paid work experience before residence approval, with about a quarter (26 percent) reporting 20 years or more (see Figure 4.4). About one-third of Skilled principal (35 percent) and Skilled secondary (31 percent) migrants and a quarter of Family Partner and Pacific category migrants reported having 10–19 years of paid work experience. Nearly 10 percent of all migrants had never been in paid work.³⁰ Secondary applicants were more likely than principals to have never been in paid work.

³⁰ This included any paid work of one hour a week or more that they had done since leaving college or secondary school.

Figure 4.4: Years of paid work by migrants before residence approval



Note: Excludes don't know responses and response refusals.

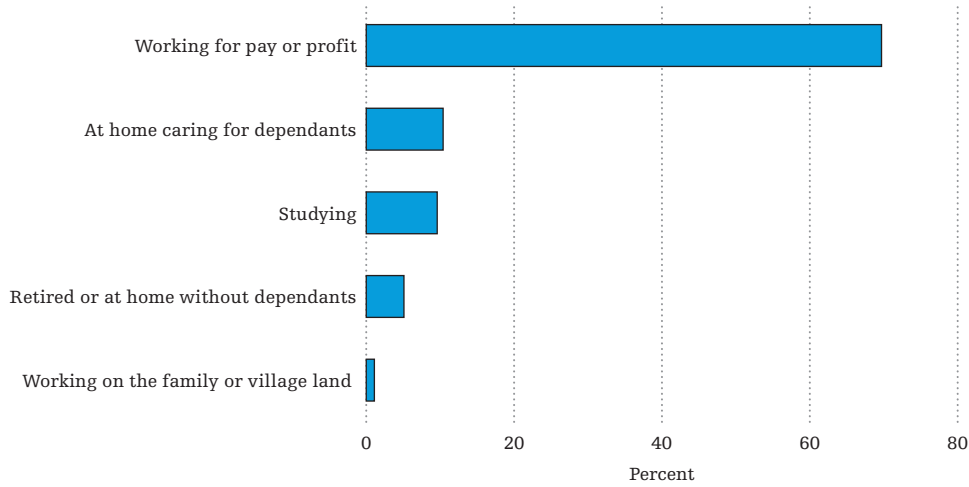
The amount of paid work experience a migrant had related to their age, which is in part influenced by immigration policy. Business and Parent category migrants were, on average, older than other migrants. Not surprisingly, Family Parent migrants reported the most years of paid work experience, with 67 percent reporting 20 or more years experience. Thirty-four percent of Business migrants reported 20 or more years paid work experience.

4.3.1 Main activity in previous country

Respondents were asked about their main activity during the last 12 months in their previous country.³¹ Overall, migrants were more likely to have been working for pay or profit than doing any other activity in their previous country (70 percent). Most of those working for pay or profit were in paid employment (64 percent), while 6 percent were self-employed and 3 percent employed others. Other main activities included studying and caring for dependants (Both 10 percent). (See Figure 4.5.)

³¹ This question was asked only of those migrants who had lived in their previous country in the two years before their residence approval in New Zealand (65 percent of all respondents).

Figure 4.5: Main activities of migrants in previous country



Notes: Includes migrants who had lived in their previous country within the two years before gaining residence. Migrants could give multiple responses, so percentages may not add to 100 percent.

Skilled principal migrants were the most likely to have been in paid work (94 percent), followed by Family Partner (72 percent), Skilled secondary (64 percent), and Pacific category (61 percent) migrants. Overall, 1 in 10 migrants had been studying in their previous country and this was highest for the Business (30 percent) and Other category (35 percent) migrants. Half of the Family Parent migrants were retired or had been at home without dependants in their previous country.

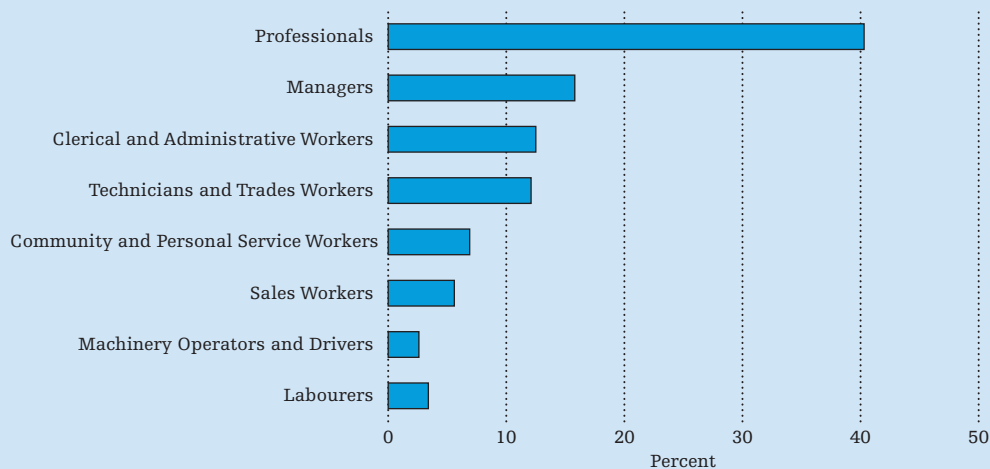
Feature box 4.1 *New Zealand attracts professionals*

Migrants to New Zealand are more likely to have worked in professional occupations in their previous country than in other types of jobs (see Figure 4.6). Not surprisingly, Skilled principal migrants were most likely to bring their professional skills (54 percent) to New Zealand. Around one-third of Skilled secondary and Family Partner migrants also brought professional experience to New Zealand. Nearly half (46 percent) of Business migrants had worked as managers in their previous countries.

Insights

- Ninety-two percent of Skilled principal migrants held some form of post-school qualification.
- Sixty-nine percent of Skilled principal migrants held an advanced vocational qualification or university degree, as did 42 percent of Skilled secondary migrants.

Figure 4.6: Occupation in previous country



Notes: Excludes missing responses. Includes migrants who had lived in their previous country in the two years before residence approval and who had been employed there in the 12 months before leaving that country (47 percent of all respondents).

