

# Business Visas vs. Work Permits

Assessing whether an employee can travel internationally simply on a business visa or whether they require a work authorization is an age-old question in global mobility. While business visas are often faster and less expensive than an arduous (and possibly expensive) work authorization process, misuse of these visas can have serious consequences for the foreign national and their employer alike. To make these assessments even more complicated, each country has its own set of "permissible business activities" that can vary greatly from country-to-country.

This reference sheet will arm you with a better understanding of what constitutes "business" vs. "work" activities and provide a baseline of what to ask potential business travelers.

*This reference sheet has been brought to you by Pro-Link GLOBAL.*

### Business Activities

The activities listed to the right are generally considered to be acceptable for business travelers in most countries. However, specific regulations will vary per country.

If your employee will engage in any activities outside of the ones listed here, please provide a full job and trip description to your Pro-Link GLOBAL immigration specialist for a case-specific assessment.

### Characteristics: Trip or Travel?

The table below provides overall characteristics of business vs. work travel. Use these comparisons as a general tool to assess whether your employee's activities and conditions of stay are considered appropriate for business or whether they may require work authorization.

### Generally Accepted Business Activities... \*

- Conducting discussion-style meetings
- Observation-only of company operations
- Fact-finding (i.e., only gathering of information)
- Attending a general conference or business seminar
- Conducting pre-sales contract negotiations
- Certain post-sales activities (e.g., follow up meetings to discuss client concerns)

\* This content is provided for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice or final guidance for any immigration matter. You should provide your Pro-Link GLOBAL specialist with the specifics of your situation to assess whether work authorization or a business visa is needed.

## General characteristics of travel

### Business Trip

may need business visa ONLY

- Staying in a hotel
- Salary is paid from outside destination country
- Round-trip airline ticket to return to home country
- Single country destination (e.g., Short trip to single EU destination country)
- Max stay not to exceed 90 days. Preferable stay not to exceed 5-10 days.
- Unaccompanied by spouse/children
- Not keeping regular business hours in host company site/not having a dedicated office or cubicle at host company site
- Not presenting any business cards or having correspondence that would indicate employee is working on behalf of host company

VS

### Work Travel

is likely to need work authorization

- Staying in a corporate apartment (may trigger local registration requirements)
- Salary is paid from within destination country
- One-way airline ticket to host country
- Trips to multiple countries within a limited region (i.e., multiple travel within Schengen Area)
- Stays exceeding 90 days (signs lease agreement for residence)
- Spouses/children accompanying (ships furniture/ housing goods, children attending schools)
- Host company provides a dedicated desk or work space/host company connects calls directly to employee/employee on site for most of work day
- Contracts executed in the name of the host company and being signed by employee/employee's e-mail signature or business card having host address