

When you need a visa — and when you don't

You can travel to China "on business" on three different visas — M, Z and R. But short trips are now covered visa-free, and mixing up the regimes is risky: the wrong status can lead to deportation.

30 days

— visa-free since 15 September 2025. It covers business trips, visits to close relatives and transit: you can now fly in for talks or a trade fair on your passport alone.

A visa is required if you:

- ✓ stay longer than 30 days
- ✓ come to work as an employee
- ✓ plan frequent, long visits
- ✓ carry out activity deemed to be work

Visa-free isn't universal

it only covers short trips. Overstaying the 30-day limit without a visa is a violation, so when in doubt it is better to arrange a visa in advance.

Three business visas

M — meetings, Z — work, R — talent.

Three visas, one decision

The choice comes down to two questions: how long you will stay and whether you will work as an employee. Compare the visas by their key parameters.

Visa	Purpose	Employment	Length of stay	Work permit
M (meetings & talks)	meetings, talks, trade fairs	✗ Not allowed	30–90 days	not required
Z (employment)	formal employment	✓ Allowed	contract + residence	required
R (talent & specialists)	talent, niche specialists	✓ Allowed	residence 5–10 yrs	required

How to choose

- 🔍 Short trip, no work → visa-free or M
- 📁 Employment → visa Z
- ★ High qualification, relocation → visa R

Visa M in detail

M is the main visa for commercial visits without employment.

M · Subtypes & validity window

- ✓ Entries — single, double, multiple
- ✓ Window — 3 / 6 / 12 / 24 mo
- ✓ Stay — 30 / 60 / 90 days

M-3-30/60/90: a 3-month window — you may enter on any of its days, while the consulate sets the exact length of stay.

M · Documents & invitation

- ✓ Passport, application form, photo
- ✓ Invitation from a Chinese commercial company
- ✓ Proof of business purpose: contracts, letters, meeting plan

The stated purpose must match the real one — it is checked at the border. A multiple-entry visa is granted if you have used a visa within 5 years and submit biometrics in person.

Visa Z in detail

Z is the only lawful way to work officially in China.

Z · How it's arranged

- 1) The employer obtains a work permit via MOHRSS and a Notification Letter
- 2) The Z visa is issued
- 3) Within 30 days of entry — a residence permit

The Z visa itself is not extended — a residence permit for the contract term replaces it. You also need a medical certificate, a legalised diploma and a criminal-record clearance.

Z1 — work over 90 days, then a residence permit; Z2 — short-term work up to 3 months. 2–3 mo — allow for the whole processing chain.

Visa R

R (talent & specialists)

For top-tier specialists and outstanding talent. Candidates are scored on a points system — the assigned category sets the residence-permit term. Categories: A — top priority, B — specialists, C — by quota.

Category A grants:

- ✓ Fast-track processing and simplified legalisation
- ✓ a residence permit up to 5 years on first application, visa up to 10 years
- ✓ a residence permit for spouse and children for the same term

Timelines & refusals

Timelines & cost

3 weeks

minimum for a business
M visa

2–3 mo

for a work visa with a
permit

₽18–43k

M visa depending on
type and urgency, plus
consular fee and
biometrics

Common reasons for refusal

- ⚠ Errors in the form, purpose mismatch
- ⚠ No invitation or financial guarantees
- ⚠ Violations on previous visas

Warning

You may not work on an M visa. Working without a Z or R visa is a violation that risks a fine and deportation — and lands the employer on the register of bad-faith employers. The visa type must match the actual activity, not convenience.

CONTACTS

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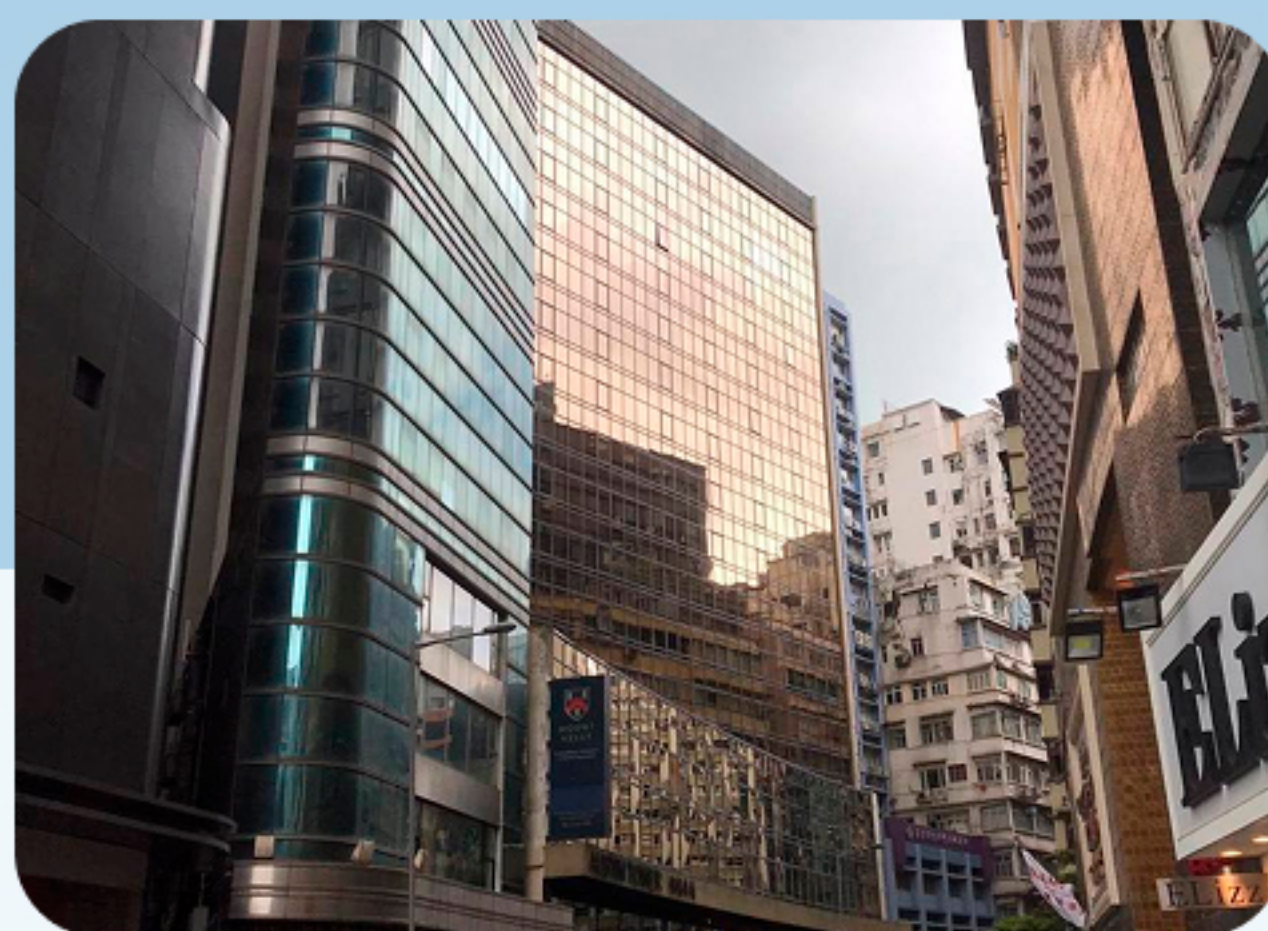
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