



Understanding the Difference Between Business & Work

When sending employees abroad internationally, it is important to understand the difference between work and business visas. Each country has its own body of governing rules that regulate the difference between work and business activities. However, having a baseline understanding of the differences can save you from significant non-compliance risks (which also vary by country).

To conduct a self-evaluation of your specific scenario, there are several questions that you can use to assess your particular situation:

1. Will the activities require a signatory authority?
2. Will you be performing your same activities in the host country (foreign country) that you currently perform in your home country?
3. Will you be there long term (longer than 3 months)?
4. Will you be conducting technical services?
5. Will you be receiving direct compensation from the host company?
6. Will you be conducting meetings?
7. Will you be conducting negotiations?
8. Will you be attending a seminar or conference?
9. Will you be attending a fact finding trip?
10. Will you be conducting market research?

If you answered “yes” to questions 1-5 then chances are good that you are conducting “work” while in the foreign country; while “yes” answers to questions 6-10 constitute a “business” trip.

Characteristics of a Work Permit versus a Business Visa

Work Permit	Business Visa
Economic activity	Meetings (e.g. meeting new clients face to face) / Negotiations / Seminars / Conference
Long term (typically longer than 3 months)	Short term visit of a few days
Performing same job in host country as in home country	-
Earning Income	-
Signatory authority / “using a pen”	-