

The remit of twofour54 is to create a media industry for Abu Dhabi. Among other things, that requires the use of specialists who are not full-time employees recruited on the conventional employment contract terms – people who arrive to work on specific short-term projects.

Internationally, the media business (specifically, film and TV) depends on these freelances. Up to now there has been no formal method of registering yourself as a freelance worker in Abu Dhabi, though it is possible to do so in Dubai (but only at Media City, and only at a cost of AED 24,500 plus fees per year) and Fujairah Creative City (AED 18,000 per year). RAK Media City had a similar freelance programme but that was cancelled this summer.

Definition and restrictions

A twofour54 licensed freelancer is defined as a media professional who has been licensed by the Media Zone Authority – Abu Dhabi to work within twofour54's content creation community on a long term basis.

twofour54 – or more accurately the Media Zone Authority – Abu Dhabi – will sponsor the UAE residence visa of a non-GCC national licensed as a freelancer. Although the freelance licence has to be renewed annually, the residency permit will be a normal three-year visa (12 months for applicants over 60).

Note that ...

twofour54 freelancers will only be able to work with companies registered as twofour54 partners

freelancers will only be able to work inside the designated free zone (which is where the media partners are located). A twofour54 freelancer cannot work elsewhere in Abu Dhabi or in any other Emirate

you cannot be a twofour54 licensed freelancer while sponsored by another UAE company or authority.

If these restrictions are too onerous, it is possible to operate as a short term freelancer at twofour54 without being licensed. In particular, your services can be loaned out by your employer to a twofour54 partner company; or you can work with a twofour54 partner company on a short-term work permit (good for up to three months)

The cost

AED 5,000 for an annual licence, discounted to AED 2,500 for registrations before 31st October 2010

plus a one-off visa fee of AED 1,900 for non-GCC nationals

plus a refundable deposit of AED 15,000

The Process

You need to provide ...

- a completed application form, available online at <http://tinyurl.com/yb2pcoy>
- references from two “relevant” referees to support your experience in each business category for which you are applying (you need to have at least a year’s experience in that category)
- details of any pre-existing arrangements you have made to provide services to a twofour54 company
- an up-to-date CV (in English) – a maximum of two A4 pages
- a high-resolution colour passport photo on a white background
- a colour scan of your passport (and visa, if relevant)
- This information will be reviewed and you may be asked for more details. If your application is approved, it will then be submitted to the Media Zone Authority’s Regulatory Affairs department
- If your application is accepted and if a licence is available, you will be invited to present your passport in person for a final ID check. You’ll then have to pay the fees (AED 2,500 for the licence, AED 1,900 for a visa, AED 15,000 deposit).
- Once the payments have cleared, the Authority will issue you with a one-year sole-proprietor business license.

Freelance business categories

A twofour54 licensed freelancer may be licensed in up to three of these categories (which will be specified on their licence):

- Broadcast graphics designer: Skilled and experienced in the design of 2D and 3D broadcast graphics using software such as Autodesk 2D and 3D products
- Camera assistant: Skilled and experienced in assisting the camera operator in TV productions, either studio-based or location-based
- Camera operator: Skilled and experienced in operating video cameras for TV productions, either studio-based or location-based
- Floor manager: Skilled and experienced in managing studio shooting floors, maintaining the smooth operation of production and providing the link with the director in the gallery and talent on set
- Gaffer: Skilled and experienced as chief electrician on a shoot, responsible for all lighting equipment
- Gallery operator: Skilled and experienced in the operation of CG equipment, VT machines, and/or autocue and video prompting from the production control room
- Hairdresser: Skilled and experienced in Hairdressing for TV Productions
- Lighting assistant: Skilled and experienced in assisting the lighting operator in studio and/or location lighting setup and operation for TV productions
- Lighting operator: Skilled and experienced in studio and/or location lighting setup and operation for TV productions
- Make-up artist: Skilled and experienced in make-up for TV
- Post production sound editor: Skilled and experienced in production sound mixing (using systems such as ProTools) and voiceover recording
- Production engineer: Skilled and experienced in the operation and maintenance of TV studio and gallery technical equipment

- Production sound assistant: Skilled and experienced in assisting the sound engineer in studio and/or location sound recording setup and operation for TV productions
- Production sound engineer: Skilled and experienced in studio and/or location sound recording setup and operation for TV productions
- Set designer: Skilled and experienced in the design of sets for TV studio productions
- Set rigger: Skilled and experienced in the construction / rigging of TV studio sets
- Special effects technician: Skilled and experienced in the design and implementation of studio and location-based special effects
- TV production stylist: Skilled and experienced in contemporary and period styling for TV Productions
- Video editor: Skilled and experienced in linear and non-linear video editing (using systems such as Avid and Final Cut Pro)
- Vision mixer: Skilled and experienced in mixing cameras in the Gallery for studio or outside broadcast TV productions
- twofour54 says additional categories will be added in 2010, including options for creatives, admin and performers.