



Student Visa Guide New Zealand

New Zealand Student Visa Guide **Essential Information for International Students**

TYPES OF NEW ZEALAND STUDENT VISAS

1. **Fee Paying Student Visa**
 - Definition: The standard visa for international students who have paid the full tuition fees for their course
 - Duration: Matches the length of your course plus additional time (up to 3 months for courses under 1 year, up to 4 months for longer courses)
 - Requirements: Acceptance into a recognized educational institution, payment of tuition fees, and sufficient funds for living expenses
 - Benefits: Allows part-time work during term and full-time work during scheduled holidays
2. **Exchange Student Visa**
 - Purpose: For students participating in approved exchange programs
 - Requirements: Acceptance in an exchange program recognized by New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) or Universities New Zealand
 - Duration: Matches the length of the exchange program
 - Key Feature: Typically does not require tuition payment as part of an exchange agreement
3. **Foreign Government Supported Student Visa**
 - Purpose: For students whose studies are supported by foreign government scholarships
 - Requirements: Confirmation of scholarship and support from the relevant government
 - Duration: Covers the period of the scholarship program
 - Key Feature: Requires documentation proving foreign government financial support
4. **Pathway Student Visa**
 - Purpose: Allows study of up to three consecutive courses on a single visa
 - Requirements: Acceptance into eligible consecutive programs at qualifying institutions
 - Duration: Covers the combined length of all programs plus additional time after final program
 - Key Feature: Eliminates the need to apply for new visas between related courses
5. **Post-Study Work Visa**
 - Purpose: Allows graduates to work in New Zealand after completing their studies
 - Duration: Up to 3 years depending on level and location of study

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- Requirements: Successful completion of a qualifying New Zealand qualification
- Work Rights: Full unrestricted work rights throughout New Zealand

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for a New Zealand Student Visa, you must:

1. Have an offer of place from a New Zealand education provider that is:
 - A registered university, institute of technology, polytechnic, or wānanga (Māori education institution)
 - A registered private training establishment
 - A school that is registered and accredited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)
2. Meet the genuine intent requirements
 - Demonstrate genuine intention to study in New Zealand
 - Show intent to leave New Zealand after completing studies
 - Assessment based on ties to home country, travel history, and personal circumstances
3. Financial requirements
 - Demonstrate access to:
 - Full tuition fees for the first year of your course
 - NZ\$20,000 per year for living expenses if studying for more than 36 weeks
 - NZ\$1,667 per month for living expenses if studying for less than 36 weeks
 - Funds for outward travel (minimum NZ\$2,000 or pre-purchased ticket)
 - Additional funds for dependents if applicable
4. English language proficiency
 - IELTS Academic score of at least 5.5 with no band less than 5.0
 - Other accepted tests: TOEFL, Cambridge English, PTE Academic
 - Some programs may require higher scores
 - Exemptions for students from English-speaking countries or with previous study in English
5. Health requirements
 - Medical certificates required for stays over 6 months
 - Chest X-ray certificate for stays over 6 months
 - No significant medical conditions that would impose excessive costs on the New Zealand health system
 - Full medical examination may be required based on risk factors or medical history

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6. Character requirements
 - Police certificates from all countries where you have lived for 5 years or more since age 17
 - No serious criminal convictions
 - No deportation history
 - No association with groups involved in criminal activities
7. Accommodation requirements
 - Suitable accommodation arrangements, particularly for students under 18
 - Proof of homestay, boarding arrangement, or designated caregiver if under 18
8. Valid passport with at least 3 months validity beyond your intended departure date

APPLICATION PROCESS

Step-by-Step Guide

1. Receive an offer of place from a New Zealand educational institution
 - Apply directly to the institution or through an education agent
 - Receive unconditional offer of place
 - Accept the offer and pay tuition fees
 - Receive confirmation of enrollment and receipt for fee payment
2. Prepare documents for visa application
 - Offer of place from educational institution
 - Receipt for payment of tuition fees
 - Proof of sufficient funds for living expenses
 - Evidence of accommodation arrangements
 - Medical certificates and chest X-ray results (if required)
 - Police certificates (if required)
 - Passport-sized photographs
 - Passport (must be valid for at least 3 months beyond intended departure)
3. Create a REALME account on the Immigration New Zealand website
 - Register for a new account
 - Verify your identity
 - Link your account to Immigration Online
4. Complete the online application form
 - Sign in to your Immigration Online account
 - Select the appropriate student visa category
 - Fill out all required sections accurately
 - Upload supporting documents
5. Pay the application fee

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- Standard student visa application fee: NZ\$330 (online)
 - Additional NZ\$55 immigration levy
 - Fees vary for different countries and visa types
 - Payment methods: credit card, debit card, or electronic transfer
6. Biometrics submission (if required)
 - Some applicants may need to provide biometric information
 - Attend a biometrics collection location
 - Submit fingerprints and digital photograph
 7. Medical examination (if required)
 - Visit a panel physician approved by Immigration New Zealand
 - Complete required tests and examinations
 - Physician will submit results directly to Immigration New Zealand
 8. Interview (if required)
 - Some applicants may be called for an interview
 - Prepare to discuss study plans, financial situation, and future intentions
 - May be conducted in person, by phone, or via video call
 9. Wait for processing
 - Processing times vary from 4 to 8 weeks depending on application volume
 - Check application status through Immigration Online
 - Respond promptly to any requests for additional information
 10. Visa decision
 - If approved, electronic visa will be issued
 - For some countries, a visa label may be placed in passport
 - Receive confirmation email with visa details and conditions

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

Primary Documents

- Offer of place from a New Zealand educational institution
- Receipt for payment of tuition fees
- Valid passport with at least 3 months validity beyond planned departure
- Proof of financial capacity:
 - Bank statements for past 6 months
 - Scholarship letter
 - Financial undertaking by sponsor
 - Education loan approval
- Evidence of accommodation arrangements
- Two recent passport-sized photographs
- Completed application form

Supporting Documents

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- Academic transcripts and certificates from previous education
- English language proficiency test results
- Statement of purpose explaining study plans
- Curriculum vitae detailing education and work experience
- Medical and X-ray certificates (if required)
- Police certificates (if required)
- Evidence of ties to home country (property, family, employment)
- Proof of relationship for any accompanying family members
- Birth certificate or other identity documents

Country-Specific Requirements

Document requirements and processing procedures may vary based on your country of citizenship. Always check the Immigration New Zealand website for country-specific information.

MAINTAINING STATUS & COMPLIANCE

Visa Conditions

As a student visa holder, you must:

- Attend the educational institution specified on your visa
- Make satisfactory academic progress
- Maintain sufficient funds for living expenses
- Not work more than permitted hours
- Maintain approved health insurance for the duration of stay
- Report any changes in circumstances to Immigration New Zealand
- Comply with all New Zealand laws
- Depart New Zealand before visa expiry unless you have applied for a new visa

Work Opportunities

- During term time:
 - Up to 20 hours per week for full-time tertiary students
 - Unlimited hours for research masters and PhD students
 - Up to 20 hours per week for high school students with permission
- During scheduled holidays:
 - Full-time work permitted during summer holidays
 - Full-time work allowed during other scheduled breaks
- Post-Study Work Rights:
 - Open work visa for 1-3 years depending on level and location of study
 - No restrictions on type of work

Compliance Reporting

- Institutions must report to Immigration New Zealand if:
 - You stop attending classes
 - You fail to make satisfactory academic progress
 - You breach visa conditions
 - You change your course or institution

HEALTHCARE & INSURANCE

- Health Insurance Requirements
 - Most student visa holders must have comprehensive health insurance
 - Coverage must be maintained for the entire duration of stay
 - Not covered by New Zealand's public health system except for accidents
- Accident Coverage
 - All persons in New Zealand are covered by the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) for accidental injuries
 - Covers partial costs of treatment and rehabilitation after accidents
 - Does not cover illness, non-accident related medical conditions, or full cost of treatment
- Insurance Options:
 - University/institution health plans
 - Private international student insurance providers:
 - Southern Cross (StudentsNZ)
 - OrbitProtect
 - UniCare
 - Allianz (International Student Insurance)
 - NZ International Student Insurance
- Recommended Coverage:
 - Medical and hospital expenses
 - Optical and dental care
 - Mental health services
 - Prescription medications
 - Emergency evacuation and repatriation
 - Personal liability
 - Travel insurance components

EXTENDING YOUR STAY

Student Visa Extension

- Apply online through Immigration Online at least 4 weeks before current visa expires
- Required documents:
 - New offer of place
 - Evidence of tuition fee payment
 - Updated financial documents
 - Academic progress reports
 - Current health insurance certificate
 - Explanation for extension if course is taking longer than expected

Transitioning to Other Visas

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- Post-Study Work Visa
 - Apply within 3 months of completing qualification
 - Requirements:
 - Completed qualification that meets minimum requirements
 - Studied full-time in New Zealand for at least 30 weeks
 - Sufficient funds for support during stay
 - Health and character requirements
- Skilled Migrant Category
 - Points-based permanent residence pathway
 - Points awarded for age, qualifications, work experience, and job offer
 - Requires Expression of Interest submission
- Work to Residence
 - For those with skilled employment in New Zealand
 - Pathway to permanent residence after working for 2 years
- Partnership Visas
 - For those in genuine relationships with New Zealand citizens or residents
 - Various partnership visa options available

LIVING IN NEW ZEALAND

Accommodation Options

- University Halls of Residence:
 - Convenient on-campus accommodation
 - Usually includes meals and utilities
 - Cost: NZ\$200-400 per week
 - Best for first-year students
- Private Rentals:
 - Flats/apartments for independent living
 - Cost: NZ\$150-350 per week (shared), NZ\$250-600 per week (solo)
 - Requires bond payment (usually 4 weeks rent)
 - Additional costs for utilities and internet
- Homestay:
 - Live with a local New Zealand family
 - Includes room, meals, and family environment
 - Cost: NZ\$250-350 per week
 - Good for cultural immersion and language practice
- Purpose-Built Student Accommodation:
 - Modern facilities designed specifically for students
 - Usually close to campus with security features
 - Cost: NZ\$200-450 per week
 - Often includes utilities and internet

Transportation

- Public Transport:
 - Buses are the main form of public transport in most cities
 - Trains available in Auckland and Wellington
 - Student discounts available with student ID

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- Monthly passes offer cost savings
- Weekly cost: NZ\$30-60
- Cycling:
 - Popular and eco-friendly option
 - Many cities have dedicated cycle lanes
 - Bicycle purchase: NZ\$150-500 second-hand
- Driving:
 - International driving permit valid for 12 months
 - Must convert to NZ license after 12 months
 - Used car costs: NZ\$3,000-15,000
 - Fuel costs: NZ\$2.00-2.50 per liter

Banking & Finance

- Opening a Bank Account:
 - Can be done upon arrival with student visa
 - Major banks: ANZ, ASB, BNZ, Westpac, Kiwibank
 - Required documents: passport, visa, proof of address, student ID
 - Student banking packages often available
- Managing Money:
 - EFTPOS (Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale) widely used
 - Credit/debit cards accepted most places
 - Mobile banking apps standard with all major banks
 - ATMs readily available in urban areas

Communication

- Mobile Phones:
 - Major providers: Vodafone, Spark, 2degrees
 - Prepaid options from NZ\$20-40 per month
 - Postpaid plans from NZ\$40-100 per month
 - Most providers offer student discounts
- Internet:
 - University/campus Wi-Fi available to students
 - Home broadband plans from NZ\$60-100 per month
 - Free Wi-Fi available in many public spaces, libraries, and cafes

Cost of Living

- Estimated Weekly Expenses:
 - Accommodation: NZ\$150-400
 - Food/Groceries: NZ\$80-120
 - Transport: NZ\$30-60
 - Phone/Internet: NZ\$20-40
 - Entertainment: NZ\$50-100

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- Miscellaneous: NZ\$50
- Total: Approximately NZ\$380-770 per week

CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Māori Culture

- Māori are the indigenous people of New Zealand
- Understanding Te Reo Māori (language) and tikanga (customs) is valuable
- Many universities offer introduction to Māori culture for international students
- Respect for Māori cultural protocols and traditions is important

Kiwi Culture

- Casual and relaxed approach to life
- Emphasis on work-life balance
- Outdoor lifestyle and appreciation of nature
- Direct communication style
- Strong café culture

Supporting Integration

- Participate in international student orientation
- Join student clubs and societies
- Volunteer in community activities
- Explore New Zealand during breaks
- Make connections with local students

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Official Government Resources

- Immigration New Zealand: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz>
- Study in New Zealand: <https://www.studyinnewzealand.govt.nz>
- New Zealand Qualifications Authority: <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz>

Student Support Services

- International student advisors at your institution
- New Zealand International Students' Association
- Citizens Advice Bureau: <https://www.cab.org.nz>

Emergency Contacts in New Zealand

- Emergency Services: 111 (Police, Fire, Ambulance)
- Non-emergency Police: 105
- Healthline: 0800 611 116
- Mental Health Crisis: 1737 (text or call)
- Lifeline: 0800 543 354

Legal Support

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- Community Law Centres: Free legal advice
- Tenancy Services: 0800 836 262 for accommodation issues
- Employment Relations Authority for work-related issues
- Human Rights Commission: 0800 496 877

Additional Resources

- NauMai NZ: <https://naumainz.studyinnewzealand.govt.nz>
- Education New Zealand: <https://www.enz.govt.nz>
- NZ Ready: <https://nzready.immigration.govt.nz>
- New Zealand Now: <https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz>

Note: This guide is for informational purposes only. Requirements and procedures may change over time. Always verify current information with official sources before proceeding with your application.

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