



## English Language Information

For residence and business categories



This leaflet will give you information on how well you must speak and understand English for a residence

class visa, or a long-term business visa.

We call this the 'minimum standard of English'.

It will tell you who must meet the minimum standard, what it is, and what you must do to meet it. It will also tell you what you can do if people in your family do not meet the minimum standard.

### Why do we have a minimum standard of English?

If you can speak and understand English, it will help you to get a job in New Zealand, and help you and your family to settle successfully here.

### Who needs to meet the minimum standard?

**Skilled Migrant Category** – the principal applicant and everyone aged 16 or over included in the application.

**Business categories** – the principal applicant and everyone aged 16 or over included in the application (with the exception of the Investor Plus (Investor 1 Category)).

**Residence from Work Category** – principal applicants under the Religious Worker instructions must meet the minimum standard of English.

All other principal applicants under Residence from Work categories do not need to meet the minimum standard.

November 2011



Partners and any children aged 16 and over included in any Residence from Work application must meet a minimum standard of English.

If your partner and children (aged 16 and over) do not meet the minimum standard, they must pay for English language classes before we approve your application. Then, they can learn English when they arrive in New Zealand.

## How do you show that you meet the minimum standard?

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There are different ways to show that you meet the minimum standard. See the minimum standard for each of the categories on pages 4-7 to find out which applies to you. You may be able to:

- show us that you have an English-speaking background, or
- show us that you are a competent user of English for other reasons, or
- provide us with an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) certificate.

If your partner and/or dependent children aged 16 and over do not meet the minimum standard, they can pay us for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes, which they can attend when they arrive in New Zealand. See 'Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition' on page 7.

If you provide evidence that you have an English-speaking background or you are a competent user of English, we may still ask you to provide us with an IELTS certificate to show that you meet the minimum standard.

## Showing that you have an English-speaking background

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To show that you have an English-speaking background you must show us evidence that you completed:

- all your primary education, and at least three years of your secondary education, at a school or schools that taught in English, or
- at least five years of your secondary education at a school or schools that taught in English, or
- a course taught in English that took at least three years and led to a tertiary qualification,

or, you can show us evidence that you hold one of the qualifications in the following table.

Qualification	Requirements
General Certificate of Education (GCE) 'A' levels from Britain or Singapore	Minimum C pass. Subjects must include English Language or Literature or Use of English.
International Baccalaureate	Full diploma in English medium.
Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English	Minimum C pass.
Hong Kong Advanced Level Examinations (HKALE)	Minimum C pass in Use of English.
STPM 920 (Malaysia)	A or B pass in English Literature.
University of Cambridge in collaboration with University of Malaya, General Certificate of English (GCE) 'A' levels	Minimum C pass. Including English or General Paper subjects.
South African Matriculation Certificate	Minimum D pass in English (higher grade).
South African Senior Certificate	Minimum D pass in English (higher grade). Endorsed with the words 'matriculation exempt'.
New Zealand tertiary entrance qualification	Gained on completing year 13 (seventh form).

## Showing that you are a competent user of English

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If you do not have an English-speaking background, you may show us that you meet the minimum standard for other reasons. For example, you may be able to show us that you are a competent user of English because:

- of the country you live in/countries you have lived in previously, and the length of time you lived in each country
- of other languages you speak, or your family speaks
- you needed English language ability for your current and/or previous employment
- you needed English language ability to study for qualifications that you have.

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## Providing IELTS certificates

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The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is an English language test that is recognised in many countries. You can show us that you meet the minimum standard of English by providing us with an IELTS certificate. See the requirements for each category on pages 5-7 for the band score you must have.

**IELTS certificates must be no more than two years old when you lodge your application.**

See the IELTS website [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org) for more information, and to find out where you can take a test.

If you, your partner, or your children do not provide an IELTS certificate to show you meet the minimum standard, we may ask you to provide one.

Even if you meet the English language requirements for your category we strongly recommend that you take English lessons when you arrive in New Zealand if you sat the IELTS test but did not have a minimum level 7 score across all bands.

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## Skilled Migrant Category

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### Principal applicant

The minimum standard of English is an IELTS certificate with an overall band score of at least 6.5 in the General or Academic module.

However, we may also consider the following as evidence if you can show us that you:

- are a competent user of English (see page 3).
- have a recognised qualification that was taught entirely in English. If you gained the qualification in New Zealand, it must have taken at least two years to complete, unless it is a postgraduate qualification. If it is a postgraduate qualification, you must also have an undergraduate qualification that can score you at least 50 points under the Skilled Migrant Category.
- have a job in New Zealand that we consider to be skilled employment. You must have had the job for at least 12 months. You need to be able to score points under Skilled Migrant Category for the employment.

## Partner and children

Your partner and each of your children aged 16 and over can show they meet the minimum standard in the following ways.

- Show us they have an English-speaking background (see page 2).
- Show us they are a competent user of English (see page 3).
- Provide an IELTS certificate with an overall band score of at least 5 in the General or Academic module.
- Show us they have a recognised qualification that was taught entirely in English. If they gained the qualification in New Zealand, it must have taken at least two years to complete, unless it is a postgraduate qualification. If it is a postgraduate qualification, they must also have an undergraduate qualification that can score at least 50 points under Skilled Migrant Category.

Your partner also meets the minimum standard if they are currently working in skilled employment in New Zealand, and have been for at least 12 months. Your partner must be able to score points for the employment. You will only get bonus points for your partner's skilled employment in New Zealand if they meet the minimum standard of English language set for principal applicants.

If your partner and/or dependent children do not meet the minimum standard, they must pre-purchase ESOL classes (see 'Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition' on page 7).

## Residence from Work Category

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The Residence from Work Category includes:

- Talent (Accredited Employers) Residence Instructions
- Talent (Arts, Culture and Sports) Residence Instructions
- Long Term Skill Shortage List Residence Instructions
- Religious Worker Instructions.

## Principal applicant

Principal applicants applying under Religious Worker instructions must meet the minimum standard of English. The minimum standard of English is an IELTS certificate with an overall band score of at least 5 in the General or Academic module.

However, we can also consider that you meet the minimum standard of English if you can show us that you:

- have an English-speaking background (see page 2), or

- are a competent user of English (see page 3).

Principal applicants applying under any other Residence from Work category do not have to meet English language requirements.

## Partner and children

Your partner and each of your children aged 16 and over must:

- show us they have an English-speaking background (see page 2), or
- show us they are a competent user of English (see page 3), or
- have an IELTS certificate with an overall band score of at least 5 in the General or Academic module.

Your **partner** meets the minimum standard if they have been lawfully employed in New Zealand for at least one year.

- Self-employment does not qualify.
- English must be the language used in the job.

You will need to provide a letter from the employer(s) giving a contact phone number and address. The letter must:

- state your partner's occupation, and
- state your partner's dates of employment, and
- confirm that English is the main language used in the job.

If your partner does not meet the minimum standard, they must pre-purchase ESOL tuition (see 'Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition' on page 7).

Your **dependent children** may meet the minimum standard if they have been attending primary or secondary school in New Zealand. You must provide a letter from the school confirming:

- their English ability, and
- how long they have been at the school, and
- which classes they take.

If your dependent children do not meet the minimum standard, they must pre-purchase ESOL tuition (see 'Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition' below).

## Business categories

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### Principal applicant

To meet our minimum standard of English you must show us that:

- you have an English-speaking background (see page 2), or
- you are a competent user of English (see page 3), or
- you have an IELTS certificate.

If you provide an IELTS certificate, the band score you must have depends on which category you apply under.

- **Employee of a Relocating Business Category** – an overall band score of at least 5 in the General or Academic module.
- **Entrepreneur, Entrepreneur Plus, or Long-Term Business Visa categories** – an overall band score of at least 4 in the General or Academic module.
- **Investor (Investor 2 Category)** – an overall band score of at least 3 in the General or Academic module.

## Partner and children

Partners and children aged 16 or over included in the application must meet the same minimum standard as the principal applicant. However, if they do not meet the minimum standard of English, they can pre-purchase ESOL tuition (see 'Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition' below).

If you are applying for a long-term business visa, your partner and children do not have to meet the minimum standard of English when you lodge your application. If they are later included in a residence application, they will need to show they can meet a minimum standard of English at that time, or pre-purchase ESOL classes (see 'Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition' below).

## Pre-purchasing ESOL tuition

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ESOL tuition is English language classes for people who speak other languages.

Partners and dependent children aged 16 and over who do not meet the minimum standard of English can pay us for ESOL tuition before we grant residence. Then, when they arrive in New Zealand, they can take the English language classes that they have paid for.

If you pay us for English language tuition, we strongly encourage you to take up English language classes soon after you arrive. There are a lot of different courses and course providers all across New Zealand, with a lot of options.

## Who must pay for ESOL tuition?

You must pay for ESOL tuition before we will grant you residence if:

- you are included in a Skilled Migrant Category, Business Category (excluding the Investor Plus (Investor 1 Category)) or Residence from Work Category application (excluding principal applicants under Religious Worker instructions), and
- you are the partner or child of the principal applicant, and you are aged 16 years or over, and
- you do not meet the minimum standard of English.

## How much does ESOL tuition cost?

The amount you must pay depends on your IELTS score across all four bands. If you do not provide an IELTS certificate you must pay the maximum charge. The amount you must pay includes our administration charges, and the Tertiary Education Commission's (TEC) administration charges. The TEC is the government agency that purchases and arranges English language tuition for new migrants. In the table below, 'ESOL entitlement' shows the value of the tuition you will be entitled to.

Overall band score	Amount you must pay (NZ\$)	ESOL entitlement (NZ\$)
4.5 or more but less than 5	1735	1533.33
4 or more but less than 4.5	3420	3066.66
3.5 or more but less than 4	5110	4599.99
Less than 3.5	6795	6133.33

## How do I pre-purchase ESOL tuition?

If we approve your residence application in principle, we will tell you the amount of ESOL tuition that you need to pay for before we give you a visa.

We will collect the ESOL tuition money for the TEC, and we will send you two copies of an Agreement and Schedule to complete for each person that has to take the ESOL tuition. The Agreement and Schedule explain the conditions of your ESOL tuition, and give information about the TEC.

After you complete the Agreement and Schedule, you must return one copy with the tuition payment to the Immigration New Zealand office that is processing your application. You can keep the other copy for your records. We will send you a receipt for the payment made by you. Please keep the receipt and the Agreement and Schedule

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in a safe place. You will need to take them with you when you enrol for your English classes.

### **What happens if I do not pay my ESOL tuition charge?**

If you do not pay us the ESOL tuition charge within six months, we must decline your residence application.

### **Can I get a refund?**

We will only refund ESOL tuition money if you and your family do not take up residence in New Zealand. In these circumstances, you need to write to your nearest INZ branch requesting a refund within six months after your residence class visa expires. If we approve your request we will refund the money to the person who made the original payment. Before we give a refund, we must be satisfied that you and your family have not entered New Zealand on your residence class visa.

### **Do I have to complete my tuition within a certain time?**

If you purchase ESOL tuition, you have up to five years to complete the tuition.

### **What should I do when I am ready to start my English language tuition?**

When you pay your ESOL tuition fees, we will send you information about how to find an English class that is right for you.

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## For more information

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If you have questions about any of the information in this guide:

- see our website [www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz)
- telephone our call centre on 0508 558 855 (within New Zealand)
- contact one of Immigration New Zealand's offices.

Immigration New Zealand has offices in Apia, Bangkok, Beijing, Dubai, Ho Chi Minh City, Hong Kong, Jakarta, London, Manila, Moscow, Mumbai, New Delhi, Nuku'alofa, Pretoria, Shanghai, Singapore, Suva, Sydney and Taipei.

Our New Zealand offices are located in Auckland, Henderson, Manukau, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch, Queenstown and Dunedin.

You can also contact your nearest New Zealand Embassy or New Zealand High Commission.



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[newzealand.govt.nz](https://www.newzealand.govt.nz)