

# Student visa information sheet: first-time international students

Updated January 2024

## Who is this information for?

This information sheet is for people who have not had an international student visa approved in the past. It tells you what we need to assess your application as quickly as possible.

This information sheet helps you submit a student visa application with the information and evidence the immigration officer needs to assess your application. Following the advice in this document will help your application to be processed faster. It does not guarantee an approval.

In some cases, an Immigration Officer may request information from you as part of their assessment that is not detailed in this sheet. They are not obliged to do this. Make sure you submit all the information we need to assess your international student visa application.

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## How to apply

Apply for your student visa online at: [Applying for your visa online | Immigration New Zealand](https://immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/preparing-a-visa-application/the-application-process/applying-for-a-visa-online)

([immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/preparing-a-visa-application/the-application-process/applying-for-a-visa-online](https://immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/preparing-a-visa-application/the-application-process/applying-for-a-visa-online))

A guide is also available to help you prepare your application.

## When to apply

We recommend applying four months in advance of your intended travel but this will not be possible for everyone. There is no deadline for your application, but you should allow **at least** eight weeks for visa processing.

For recent student visa processing times visit: [Visa processing times for international students](https://immigration.govt.nz/assist-migrants-and-students/assist-students/international-markets/visa-processing-times-international-students)

([immigration.govt.nz/assist-migrants-and-students/assist-students/international-markets/visa-processing-times-international-students](https://immigration.govt.nz/assist-migrants-and-students/assist-students/international-markets/visa-processing-times-international-students))

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## Important

### Translations

You must provide a certified translation of all police certificates if they are not in English.

Please provide English translations of supporting documents and copies of the original untranslated documents so we can process your application faster.

For more information visit: [Translating supporting documents into English](https://immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/preparing-a-visa-application/english-language/translating-supporting-documents-into-english)

([immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/preparing-a-visa-application/english-language/translating-supporting-documents-into-english](https://immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/preparing-a-visa-application/english-language/translating-supporting-documents-into-english))

## Travel plans

Do not finalise your travel plans until you have been granted a visa. We cannot prioritise your application because you have booked flights.

## Immigration advice and assistance

If you receive immigration advice as part of your student visa application, or someone has assisted you by explaining, translating, or recording information on the form, you **must** declare this in your application and the person must complete the [student visa declaration form INZ 1226](#).

**([immigration.govt.nz/documents/forms-and-guides/inz1226.pdf](https://immigration.govt.nz/documents/forms-and-guides/inz1226.pdf))**

To give immigration advice, people must be licensed or exempt from licensing. Education agents who are outside New Zealand advising on student visas only are exempt. Even if they are legally able to provide you with immigration advice, they must be declared in the visa application.

For more information about who can give immigration advice visit: [Who can give advice? | IAA](#)

**([iaa.govt.nz/for-migrants/who-can-give-advice](https://iaa.govt.nz/for-migrants/who-can-give-advice))**

## Students aged under 10 years old

Student visas will only be granted to international students aged under 10 years old if they will be living in New Zealand with their legal guardian or in an approved school hostel.

## Students aged under 18 years old

International students who are under the age of 18 must provide a statement from their education provider confirming their accommodation is compliant with the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021. This statement may be included in the offer of place or separately.

## *Work rights for secondary school students*

If you are a Secondary school student you can work for up to 20 hours a week during the school year, and full-time in the Christmas and New Year holiday between school years if:

- you are 16 or older, and
- studying in year 12 or 13, the last two years of secondary school.

If you are under 18, you must have written permission from your school and your parents or legal guardian to work 20 hours per week.

If you want the conditions of your visa to allow you to work in New Zealand, please include permission statements when you apply for your visa. Otherwise, you can apply for work rights when you are in New Zealand by applying for a variation of conditions.



### **Pathway student visa applications**

Do not apply for a Pathway Student Visa unless you have a Pathway Student Visa offer of place or a Pathway Student Visa cover letter from an approved Pathway education provider. For more information on [Pathway education providers](#):

**([www.immigration.govt.nz/pathway-student-visa](http://www.immigration.govt.nz/pathway-student-visa))**

### **Excessive documentation**

Please keep the volume of documents limited to the information relevant to the application requirements.

If you submit an excessive number of documents for review, it will take us more time to check these documents which may slow down the processing of your application.

## Information we need

You **must** provide the following mandatory information with your international student visa application.

**An offer of place from a New Zealand education provider**

**A copy of the identity pages in your current passport**

This should be the passport you intend to use to travel to New Zealand on.

Make sure you have scanned the whole bio-data page and include the machine-readable zone (MRZ) at the bottom of the page.

**Tuition fees evidence**

Provide evidence you:

- › have paid your tuition fees in full for one year or one programme (whichever is shorter), or
- › have money available to pay your tuition fees if you are outside New Zealand and wish to use the Approval in Principle route, or
- › are exempt from paying fees and your provider has confirmed this, or
- › are an aviation student who meets the *fees by instalment* requirements. Only eligible aviation students can pay tuition by instalment. Check with your aviation training provider to see if you are eligible.

### **Evidence of tuition fee payment:**

- › evidence you have paid your tuition fees is a receipt of payment or confirmation from your education provider. Screenshots of bank transfers or receipts from education agents are not acceptable.

### **Approval in Principle**

- › if you are outside New Zealand when you apply for your visa you can choose to pay your tuition fees after your visa has been approved in principle (AIP). You must provide a tuition fee receipt after your application has been AIP to have your visa granted.
- › AIP deadlines are usually 5 days, 10 days for India. If you need longer, request an extension from the Immigration Officer as soon as possible. If the AIP deadline is missed, the application will likely be declined.
- › You do not have to use AIP. You can pay your tuition fees up front for faster processing, but you must provide evidence of the source of funds that made the tuition fee payment.

**Evidence you have enough money to live on and proof of where this money has come from**

The money must be genuinely available for you to use to pay your living costs while you are in New Zealand and be from a source that we can confirm. You will need:

- › NZD \$20,000 per year if you are studying tertiary, English language, or other non-school study or NZD \$1,667 per month if your study will be shorter than 1 year or
- › NZD \$17,000 per year if you are studying primary, intermediate or secondary school (years 1-13 at a school) or NZD \$1,417 per month if your study will be shorter than 1 year. Accommodation costs, such as homestay, that have been pre-paid to the school can be deducted.

Evidence you have enough money could include:

- › money held by you or on your behalf
- › evidence of a scholarship
- › evidence held as part of the Funds Transfer Scheme (FTS). This is only available to students from China, India, Sri Lanka, and Philippines.
- › a financial undertaking by a non-New Zealander – use the [Financial Undertaking for a Student form \(INZ 1014\) \(immigration.govt.nz\)](https://immigration.govt.nz/documents/forms-and-guides/inz1014.pdf) ([immigration.govt.nz/documents/forms-and-guides/inz1014.pdf](https://immigration.govt.nz/documents/forms-and-guides/inz1014.pdf))
- › a sponsorship by a New Zealander, a New Zealand residence class visa holder, or a New Zealand organisation – use the [Sponsorship Form for Temporary Entry \(INZ 1025\) \(immigration.govt.nz\)](https://immigration.govt.nz/documents/forms-and-guides/inz1025.pdf) ([immigration.govt.nz/documents/forms-and-guides/inz1025.pdf](https://immigration.govt.nz/documents/forms-and-guides/inz1025.pdf))

For more information on money and examples of the evidence we need, see ‘Supporting information’ and ‘Examples of evidence’ later in the information sheet.

**Evidence you have enough money to leave New Zealand**

Evidence can be a fully paid ticket out of New Zealand or evidence you have enough extra money to buy a ticket.

**Evidence of your health and character**

Depending on how long you plan to stay in New Zealand and the countries you have previously spent time in, you may also need to:

- › visit a panel physician for a chest x-ray and/or a medical examination to show that you are healthy. To find out if you need to do this visit: [Who needs an x-ray or medical exam \(immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/preparing-a-visa-application/medical-info/when-you-need-an-x-ray-or-medical-examination\)](https://immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/preparing-a-visa-application/medical-info/when-you-need-an-x-ray-or-medical-examination)
- › provide a police certificate (or certificates) – and a certified translation if it is not in English – to show you are still of good character. To find out if you need to provide this visit: [Who needs to provide police certificates \(immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/preparing-a-visa-application/character-and-identity/when-you-need-a-police-certificate\)](https://immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/preparing-a-visa-application/character-and-identity/when-you-need-a-police-certificate)

## Supporting information and evidence

We strongly recommend you provide the following supporting information with your visa application.

It will help us process your application faster, and will help us to decide if you:

- › are a genuine applicant
- › are not likely to stay in New Zealand for longer than your visa allows
- › are not likely to breach the conditions of your visa
- › will leave New Zealand if you cannot get another visa.

**A cover letter or statement of purpose** that explains why you want to study in New Zealand and provides information about you. This should be written by you – not your agent or licensed immigration advisor.

It should include:

- › an outline of your study plans
- › the reasons you chose this education provider and course
- › an idea of what you want to do once you have finished your study. Be honest, if you want to apply for a different type of visa after study, such as a post study work visa, then declare this.
- › details of education and training you have completed in the past or are currently studying, including if you have started your course from outside of New Zealand
- › information about what you were doing during any gaps in your recent education or work history. If gaps were due to the pandemic, please explain this.
- › information on how you are paying for your study, including:
  - a summary of the evidence you are providing with your application and where this money has come from. It must show that this money is genuinely available for you to use while you are in New Zealand.
  - an explanation of how you will pay for your future years if you plan to study in New Zealand for longer than one year (we call this a funding plan). Please include evidence to back this up. For example, if parents are supporting future years include their salary and employment information.
- › if you are supported by a financial guarantor or sponsor, provide evidence of how you are related to them.

\* While it is not mandatory to provide a cover letter it helps us to assess your application faster. If you do not provide one, we may not have enough information to determine if you are a genuine applicant.

A copy of each page of your current passport with a visa label, exit stamp, entry stamp, or cancellation stamp on it. If these are in a previous passport, provide copies from that passport.

If your travel has only been recorded electronically, provide a summary of your international travel history.

A copy of any letters you have received for declined visa applications for other countries and the reasons you were declined.

## Examples of evidence we accept in your application

We must be able to confirm all the evidence that you provide. We might request additional information from you during the assessment process, but an immigration officer is not obliged to do this.

The following pages provide additional detail to help you provide information and evidence that meets our threshold.

Please provide copies not original documents.

### Education and training

Examples of evidence:

- › a qualification certificate
- › an academic transcript
- › confirmation of enrolment
- › if you have studied with a New Zealand provider while you have been outside New Zealand (for example, remote or online learning) please provide confirmation of learning attendance and progress
- › English language test if applicable (more information on acceptable tests can be found on the New Zealand Qualifications Authority website: [English language entry requirements for international students](http://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/tertiary/english-language-entry-requirements-for-international-students/#e11831_heading1)) ([www2.nzqa.govt.nz/tertiary/english-language-entry-requirements-for-international-students/#e11831\\_heading1](http://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/tertiary/english-language-entry-requirements-for-international-students/#e11831_heading1))

### Work and employment history

Examples of evidence:

- › employment contract or letter from your employer that includes your job responsibilities
- › salary slips
- › salary deposits shown on bank statements
- › income tax returns
- › pension or provident fund payments.

### Finances

*The following information is not exhaustive. It lists only the most common examples. There is some additional country specific information near the end of this sheet.*

#### Evidence of having money available

The money to support your first year of study (or first programme) must be readily available. For example, cash in bank accounts that you can use to support yourself while in New Zealand. We recommend **at least three months** of transaction history for bank accounts. You may want to provide longer history (such as six months) to strengthen your financial evidence.

A single source of funds is easier to assess than multiple sources.

- › Evidence must be in your name or the name of your financial guarantor or sponsor.

- › Do not include evidence that we cannot confirm as genuine.

### **Examples of some funds that do not generally meet our threshold as genuine and accessible**

- › credit cards
- › cash or photos of cash
- › gold or loans against gold
- › jewellery valuation certificates
- › loans from Non-Financial Banking Corporations/Companies/Institutions or loans from co-operative banks
- › Post Office held funds
- › volatility/mutual funds
- › funds from co-operative societies
- › bonds
- › property sales or statements stating a property may be sold to finance study
- › agricultural income
- › a bank balance without supporting three month transaction history.

### **Examples of funds that are more likely to meet our requirements**

- › Bank balance and transaction history of at least three months. You can provide longer if you wish. If your transactions show any large deposits of more than NZD \$2,000, or if there are multiple smaller deposits, explain where this money has come from and provide supporting evidence. If you opened the bank account recently, for example to consolidate your funds into one source for the visa application, explain where this money has come from and provide supporting evidence to show the transfer of money from the original accounts into one account.
- › Certificates for fixed deposits that have been held for at least three months (if there is longer history, please provide this).
- › A letter from your employer that confirms the position you held, the length of your employment, and your salary/wage or that of your financial guarantor/sponsor.
- › Tax returns showing income earned.
- › Recent business tax returns and bank statements – if you are self-employed.
- › Evidence that shows you own any assets you get income from, like a rental property – such as tax payments or income.
- › We can accept public and employee provident fund accounts as evidence, but only if they are supported by documents confirming employment.
- › An education loan sanction letter from a nationalised or multi-national bank (see below).

#### **Education loans**

- › We can accept education loans as evidence of money, but only if they are from nationalised or multi-national banks with security against fixed assets that belong to you or your financial guarantor or sponsor.
- › You must provide evidence of how you will repay the loan, and a loan sanction letter that states the security, moratorium period, interest payable, repayments, and details of the security accepted for the loan.

## Evidence of a funding plan

Applicants who intend to study a multi-year course in New Zealand need to demonstrate they hold accessible liquid funds to cover tuition fees and living costs for their first year of study. INZ also wants to see a credible plan for funding the remaining years of study.

New Zealand wants international students to succeed in their studies. Students who have exhausted their finances for the first year of study and do not have a plan for the future years may breach their visa conditions by working more than permitted and are vulnerable to exploitation.

We will decide if the funding plan is reasonable and realistic, considering your financial history or the person providing a financial undertaking, or your sponsor.

We recommend you provide documentation and evidence to illustrate the feasibility of the plan.

### Examples of plans that do not generally meet our threshold are:

- › property ownership of the family home, where the plan for second year of study is to sell the family home
- › plans by your sponsor to fund your future years of study, which would leave them unable to afford their own expenses
- › future death of a relative and likely inheritance.

### Examples of plans that more easily meet our threshold are:

- › regular and steady employment by your parents, where employment history and salary information are provided to show that they can continue to fund you while still covering their own expenses
- › assets that can be liquidated without impacting your sponsor or family's life (for example, multiple rental properties owned).

## Evidence of your financial guarantor or sponsor

Only **one** sponsor or financial guarantor is permitted.

We may only accept a financial guarantor as legitimate if they are your immediate family member (wife or husband, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, parents-in-law), and you can prove your relationship to them. Financial guarantees or sponsorship must be credible.

### Examples of information to include in your application:

- › copies of the identity pages in your sponsor/financial guarantor's passport, their birth certificate, or national identity document
- › government issued relationship certificates, citizenship certificates, household books, marriage certificates
- › evidence of work and employment history (for example employment information and three months of salary information)
- › evidence of funds that follow the examples provided earlier in this sheet.

## **Evidence of your English language ability – if your study has an English level entry requirement**

Some courses of study have a minimum English language level entry requirement.

Providing English language test results is not mandatory for a student visa application but if your course has an English requirement, and you provide the test result up front, your visa application may be processed faster. This is because the test result will contribute to our assessment of genuine temporary entrant. It also means that we do not have to request the test result from you, which saves time.

You should include the same evidence that you provided to your intended education provider to show you meet the English language requirements for enrolment in your course (for example, IELTS or Pearson Test of English).

Students who intend to complete English language study before moving on to a tertiary qualification with a minimum English entry requirement, are advised to provide an English language test to show your current English ability. This helps us assess the credibility of the study plan.

**Students who are coming to New Zealand to study in the school sector, or to study English language courses only, are not expected to provide English language test results.**

## Extra information and evidence we need from some applicants

This information should be read with the information and evidence on pages 6-9.

If you come from China, Hong Kong, Macau, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka or Vietnam, we recommend you provide the following evidence with your application. Please provide copies not originals.

**We must be able to confirm all the evidence that you provide. We might request additional information from you during the assessment process however an Immigration Officer is not obligated to do this. Please remember that providing the information does not guarantee visa approval.**

### ■ CHINA, HONG KONG, OR MACAU

#### Evidence of identity

- › Chinese identity card.
- › Household registration book (Hukou).
- › Hong Kong or Macau identity card.

#### Supplementary form

If you are not applying online, and you are aged 17 years or over, and you are from China you must include a completed Supplementary Form for Chinese Visitors, Students and Workers (INZ 1027).

If you are not applying online, and you are aged 17 years or over, and you are from Hong Kong or Macau you must include a completed Supplementary Form for Hong Kong or Macau Visitors, Students and Workers (INZ 1220).

### ■ INDIA

#### Evidence of identity

- › Pan Card or Aadhar card.

**Note: We do not accept Voter ID, Ration Card, academic documents or driving license as evidence of identity.**

#### Evidence of having money available

It is common for families to plan well in advance that they wish to send their child abroad to study. To ensure faster processing times, the evidence that you provide to demonstrate the financial means to study in New Zealand should be concise and where multiple different fund sources are provided that cannot be independently verified an application may be declined or may take longer to process.

Indian applicants should include **at least three months** of financial history. If you or your agent wishes to provide more, we recommend six months.

- › Evidence must be in your name or the name of your financial guarantor or sponsor.
- › Do not include evidence that we cannot confirm as genuine.

- › We can accept education loans as evidence of money, but only if they are from a nationalised or multi-national banks with security against fixed assets that belong to you or your financial guarantor or sponsor.
- › You must provide evidence of how you will repay the loan, and a loan sanction letter that states the security, moratorium period, interest payable, repayments, and details of the security accepted for the loan.
- › We can accept public and employee provident fund accounts as evidence, but only if they are supported by documents confirming employment.

**Examples of finances that do not meet our threshold:**

- › cash or photos of cash
- › gold or loans against gold
- › jewellery valuation certificates
- › funds from Non-Financial Banking Corporations/Companies/Institutions. Including when the loan document states that it is for the purpose of education
- › KCC loans
- › Chit funds
- › Post Office held funds
- › volatility/mutual funds
- › funds from co-operative societies
- › bonds
- › property sales or statements stating a property may be sold to finance study
- › agricultural income.

■ **NEPAL**

**Evidence of having money available**

Nepali applicants should include **at least three months** of financial history. If the student or agent wishes to provide more, we recommend six months.

- › Evidence must be in your name or the name of your financial guarantor or sponsor.
- › Do not include evidence that we cannot confirm as genuine.
- › We can confidently verify evidence provided by Nepal SBI, Nabil Bank or Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) Nepal Limited.
- › We can accept education loans as evidence of money, but only if they are from a nationalised or multi-national banks with security against fixed assets that belong to you or your financial guarantor or sponsor.
- › You must provide evidence of how you will repay the loan, and a loan sanction letter that states the security, moratorium period, interest payable, repayments, and details of the security accepted for the loan.
- › We can accept public and employee provident fund accounts as evidence, but only if they are supported by documents confirming employment.

## ■ PAKISTAN

### Evidence of having money available

Pakistani applicants should include **at least three months** of financial history. If the student or agent wishes to provide more, we recommend six months.

- › Evidence must be in your name or the name of your financial guarantor or sponsor.
- › Do not include evidence that we cannot confirm as genuine.
- › We can accept education loans as evidence of money, but only if they are from a nationalised or multi-national banks with security against fixed assets that belong to you or your financial guarantor or sponsor.
- › You must provide evidence of how you will repay the loan, and a loan sanction letter that states the security, moratorium period, interest payable, repayments, and details of the security accepted for the loan.
- › We can accept public and employee provident fund accounts as evidence, but only if they are supported by documents confirming employment.

## ■ SRI LANKA

Sri Lankan applicants should include **at least three months** of financial history. If the student or agent wishes to provide more, we recommend six months.

### Evidence of having money available

- › Evidence must be in your name or the name of your financial guarantor or sponsor.
- › Do not include evidence that we cannot confirm as genuine.
- › We can accept education loans as evidence of money, but only if they are from a nationalised or multi-national banks with security against fixed assets that belong to you or your financial guarantor or sponsor.
- › You must provide evidence of how you will repay the loan, and a loan sanction letter that states the security, moratorium period, interest payable, repayments, and details of the security accepted for the loan.
- › We can accept public and employee provident fund accounts as evidence, but only if they are supported by documents confirming employment.

### Pre-application document verification

Before you apply for your visa, you can use the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Sri Lanka to verify the authenticity of your Sri Lankan documents.

The IOM will provide us with a verification report directly. Using IOM is not mandatory but can help us to process your application faster. Please include the receipt with your application.

## ■ VIETNAM

### Evidence of identity

- › Household registration book. We know that these are being phased out but if you have a Household registration book include it in your application.

### Evidence of having money available

Vietnamese applicants should include **at least three months** of financial history. If the student or agent wishes to provide more, we recommend six months.

- › If you have been attending an international or bi-lingual school in Vietnam, you can include evidence of this as part of your financial information.
- › We can accept education loans as evidence of money, but only if they are from a nationalised or multi-national banks with security against fixed assets that belong to you or your financial guarantor or sponsor. A 'financial proof loan' does not meet our threshold for genuine and available funds.
- › Evidence must be in your name or the name of your financial guarantor or sponsor
- › Bank statements for a minimum of **three** months (if students or agents wish to provide longer history we prefer six months).
- › If the bank account has been recently opened or the statements show any recent large deposits, explain where this money has come from and provide evidence to support this.
- › Savings books or deposits certificates that are at least three months old.
- › Labour contracts, social insurance books and bank statements showing income and saving patterns.
- › Property rental contracts and/or Sale of property agreements.
- › Evidence of business ownership that may include business registration documents and tax returns
- › Income generated from employment. If your financial guarantor is self-employed, evidence of their income may include business registration documents, recent business and personal income/tax value added tax evidence and bank statements showing daily business transactions.
- › Income generated from assets (e.g. rental property). If recently acquired, please provide evidence to show you own the asset(s) along with a property rental contract document witnessed by Notary Public.