Applying for Your Student Visa: New Zealand

What is a visa?
A visa is official authorization allowing you to enter a country to travel, work, live, or study there for a specific period of time. Generally, a visa is an elaborate stamp that is sealed onto one of the pages of your passport. Visas are issued to American citizens by a foreign country's embassy or consulate located in the United States. Every country has its own regulations governing the issuance of visas.

Do I need a visa to go to New Zealand?
You must apply for a student visa prior to your departure if you are going to New Zealand to study full-time for longer than three months. It usually takes 2-3 weeks to receive your visa after you have submitted your complete visa application and all other necessary documents. Your spouse and children may apply for a Visitor or Student visa. An excellent resource for New Zealand visa information is: [http://www.immigration.govt.nz/](http://www.immigration.govt.nz/).

What do I need to apply for a visa?

► **Attention:** Visa requirements change constantly! Verify this information with the embassy, as the application process can change. [http://www.nzembassy.com/usa/going-new-zealand/visas](http://www.nzembassy.com/usa/going-new-zealand/visas). A checklist is available at [http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/study/application/checklist.htm](http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/study/application/checklist.htm).

You will need the following to apply for your visa:

• **A valid passport.** Make sure that your passport is valid for 3 months past the date that you leave New Zealand.
  ♦ See page 1 in the Study Abroad Handbook for passport application information.
  ♦ Apply early for your passport! It may take 6-8 weeks to process your application.

• **A completed visa application.** This form, Student Visa/Permit Application (form INZ 1012), can be downloaded from: [http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/study/application/](http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/study/application/) along with instructions to help you complete it (form INZ 1013). Do not forget to sign this document!

• **Two passport sized photographs.**

• **Proof that you have an offer of place.** Attach the letter of acceptance from your host university which should include information about the education provider’s name and contact details, the name of the course and the minimum time required for completing it, proof that the course of study and institution meet New Zealand’s requirements for international students, the amount of the fee for the complete course, whether you have to pay course fees and whether the fees are domestic or foreign fees, and whether you are studying full-time or part-time. More information can be found at: [http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/study/canistudyinnewzealand/whatisrequired/offerofplace.htm](http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/study/canistudyinnewzealand/whatisrequired/offerofplace.htm).

• **Proof of sufficient funds.** You must prove that you have access to at least NZ$1250/month that you plan to be in New Zealand if your stay is less than nine months, or at least NZ$15,000/year if your stay is more than nine months. This can be in the form of a bank statement in your name, financial aid documents, a credit card with enough credit, and/or a bank letter or statement from an outside source of funding (e.g., a parent or sponsor) that states their wish to fund your study and accommodation.

• **Proof that you plan to leave.** The consulate may ask you to show your travel documents to prove that you will leave New Zealand once you have completed your studies.

• **Meet the health and character requirements.** If you are a student who intends to stay for 6-12 months and have a risk factor for TB (the US is generally considered a low-risk country), they will require a Temporary Entry X-ray Certificate available at: [http://glossary.immigration.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/4F0B1B69-EDAF-4BF5-B973-566D39BF52D3/0/INZ109630July2012.pdf](http://glossary.immigration.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/4F0B1B69-EDAF-4BF5-B973-566D39BF52D3/0/INZ109630July2012.pdf). More information about the Health Requirements can be found at: [http://glossary.immigration.govt.nz/healthrequirementstemporary.htm](http://glossary.immigration.govt.nz/healthrequirementstemporary.htm). New Zealand may also require you to...
provide police certificates as evidence of your good character. More information about how to meet the character requirements can be found at: http://glossary.immigration.govt.nz/Goodcharacter.htm.

- **There is no application fee for American citizens if the application is lodged outside of New Zealand.**
  - Apply as soon as possible: The procedure for processing an application for a Student Visa requires up to 15 working days to be processed, but any omissions in your application will cause significant delays in receiving your Student Visa.

**How do I obtain a visa?**

**A. In person**
- Take your documents to the appropriate New Zealand Embassy or Consulate General. This depends your state of residency, and which consulate/embassy has jurisdiction over your state. The Los Angeles Consulate has jurisdiction for Montana residents. For a complete listing of Consulate-General offices, visit: http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/study/application/LinkAdministration/ToolboxLinks/officeandfeescalculator.htm?level=1
  - Call the embassy before you visit to verify hours of operation and location.
  - Avoid waiting until the last minute to apply for your visa, as omitting one document or failing to complete a form completely may delay the processing of your visa for weeks.
  - A checklist for completing the application process is available at: http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/study/application/checklist.htm

**B. Via mail**
If you decide to apply for your visa via mail rather than in person, you should:
- Send all documents, including your passport, in a FedEx, US Overnight Mail, or other express mail service that provides a tracking number for your parcel, to the consulate that covers your state of residency. **Keep a photocopy of all documents, including your passport, for yourself.** For a complete listing of Consulate-General offices, visit: http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/study/application/LinkAdministration/ToolboxLinks/officeandfeescalculator.htm?level=1
  - If there is a fee for your visa, send a cashier’s check or money order. The New Zealand Embassy does not accept personal checks. Do not send cash in the mail.
  - Apply early: missing documents may cause delays in the processing of your application. Allow a minimum of 15 working days for your visa application to be processed.
  - Enclose a postage paid FedEx/USPS/UPS Overnight Mail envelope **addressed to yourself.** The consulate will only return your visa and documents if you provide a return envelope.
  - Do not leave the country until you have received your passport and visa.
  - A checklist for completing the application process is available at: http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/study/application/checklist.htm

**General tips for applying for a visa:**
Foreign embassies and consulates in the US receive hundreds of inquires every day so contacting them can be a trying experience. Have patience. Some consulates only receive visitors or calls during certain hours of the day or on certain days of the week; visit their website to learn their hours or call back at different times of the day. You may find that you are placed on hold or that your call is never forwarded to the appropriate person. Don’t be discouraged: be persistent, but polite. Remember that US consulates in foreign countries operate in a similar fashion!

**New Zealand Embassy/Consulate-Generals in the US:**

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