

Guide to Applying for Residence in New Zealand



New Zealand
Immigration Service
Te Ratonga Manene

New Zealand
the right choice

Residence

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Use this leaflet as a guide to completing your application. It gives you the information you need so that you can supply all the documents the New Zealand Immigration Service (NZIS) needs to decide your residence application. You can help the NZIS make a quicker decision by carefully reading this leaflet, and providing the necessary documentation with your application form.

Lodgement requirements

Lodgement

- The NZIS requires information to be submitted when your application for residence is first lodged.
- This information is summarised in the checklist at the end of the residence application form.
- You must provide the NZIS with all the information you wish to have considered.

Documentation

- The NZIS must have documentation to make a decision on your application.
- The documents required will support the statements you are making on your application form.
- You must provide all the information and documents you wish to have considered when your application is made.

- You may provide additional information/ documents before the decision is made on your application.
- If you require your original documents returned by “secure post”, provide a prepaid self-addressed registered envelope or courier pack.

Photocopies

- Ensure that all documents you supply are either originals or certified copies. If you send certified copies, the NZIS may ask for originals at a later date.
- Certified copies are photocopies that have been stamped or endorsed by a person confirming the copy as a true copy of the original.
- The person who certifies the copy must be authorised to do so by law, in your home country or in New Zealand (e.g., a Justice of the Peace, Notary Public, lawyer or court official).

Translations

If any of your documents are not in English, have them translated by a person familiar with both English, and the language in which the documents are written. The chosen translator must also be competent in translation work. The translation provided must:

- Be certified by a recognised private or official translation service; and
- Be on official letterhead, and include the name and signature of the translator.

Section A: Personal details

This section lists the lodgement requirements. Without these, the NZIS will not be able to accept your application for consideration.

Section A of the application form must be completed by each applicant. Ensure you have understood the questions before completing the form.

1 Application form

You must complete the application form in English. Fill out the parts of Section A that apply to you, and then fill out the section that relates to the category under which you are applying. Make sure you answer all the questions, and if a question does not apply to you, answer N/A for “not applicable”. This way the NZIS will know that you have not accidentally missed out a question.

2 Passport or travel document

The NZIS must see your current passport. If you are outside New Zealand and your passport is unavailable, then submit your birth certificate or other identity document. If you are already in New Zealand, you must show you have a current temporary permit to be eligible to apply for residence. Your temporary permit will usually be in your passport.

You must declare the passport details on the application form for each family member included in the application. You must indicate whether the passport is issued in that family member's name or whether that family member is travelling on someone else's passport (that is, the family member is an endorsee on another person's passport).

3 Photographs

Attach two passport-sized photographs of each person included in your application to the application form. All photographs must have the person's name written on the back and be dated.

4 Birth certificate

You must supply originals, or certified copies, of **full birth certificates** for each person included in your application. Full birth certificates must show the names of the parents as well as that of the child.

If you have an adopted child, you must provide a valid adoption order from your home country or New Zealand along with documents that show the adoption order is in accordance with the New Zealand Adoption Act 1955.

If you are separated or divorced and bringing a child(ren) with you to New Zealand, you must provide evidence that you have legal custody of the child(ren), and the right to remove the child(ren) from the country in which rights of custody or visitation have been granted.

5 Do you have to pay an application fee?

Not every applicant has to pay a fee. New Zealand has fee waiver agreements with some countries (see the leaflet **New Zealand Immigration's Guide to Fees** to see if this applies to you).

The fee must be paid when you lodge your application. If you are in New Zealand, the fee may be paid by cash, credit card (not American Express or Diners Club), bank cheque, EFTPOS or personal cheque.

If you are outside New Zealand, you must contact the branch you are applying to for advice on the fee and the method of payment.

Please note: *Your application fee covers the cost of processing your application and is non-refundable.*

6 Settlement Information Fee

If you are the principal, or sole, applicant, and your application is successful you must pay a settlement information fee. This does not apply to Samoans or refugees. The fee is NZ\$90, and must be paid before residence is granted. Outside New Zealand, the fee is usually paid in local currency.

7 Evidence of relationship to principal applicant

You must supply evidence of your relationship to all the family members included in the application.

Spouse — an original or certified copy of your marriage certificate.

De facto partner — a detailed list of acceptable evidence is provided in *Section C: Family category*.

Children — see information in *4 Birth certificate*, above.

8 Police certificates (see questions A60-61)

A60

Each person aged 17 years and over included in your application must submit:

A61

- A police certificate from their country of citizenship; and
- Police certificates from any country they have been in for 12 months or more in the last 10 years, whether in one or more visits.

The NZIS has a leaflet which explains how to get a police certificate from most countries. You can get a copy from your nearest NZIS branch.

Please note: *the NZIS can only accept your application if all of your police certificates are less than six months old.*

9 English language ability

(see questions A62-63)

- A62** All principal applicants and non-principal applicants aged 16 years and over must meet the specified standard of English language if applying under the General Skills category.
- A63**

General Skills category

Principal applicants

Principal applicants in the General Skills category must provide evidence of a minimum standard of English (see below) when they lodge their application. Residence will be declined if the principal applicant does not meet the minimum standard of English. However, principal applicants are not required to lodge evidence of their minimum standard of English if they have been working lawfully in New Zealand for the 12 months prior to the date the residence application is lodged, and they intend to pre-purchase ESOL tuition.

Non-principal applicants

Non-principal applicants aged 16 years and over included in General Skills category applications may either show that they meet a minimum standard of English or pre-purchase ESOL training.

Acceptable evidence of minimum standard of English

- A certificate from the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), no more than two years old at the time that you lodge your application for residence under the General Skills category, which shows a minimum band score of five for each of the four components of the IELTS General Module or the Academic Module; or
- A certificate from the following list showing acceptable evidence of an English-speaking background.

Acceptable evidence includes:

- A certificate, or certificates, showing completion of all primary education and a minimum of three years secondary education in English (this means the equivalent of Form 5 in New Zealand) ; or
- A certificate, or certificates, showing completion of at least five years of secondary education in English (this means the equivalent of Form 7 in New Zealand); or
- A certificate showing that a course of at least three years duration, leading to the award of a tertiary qualification at institutions using English as the medium of instruction, was completed; or
- For applicants already in New Zealand and who have worked in New Zealand for a minimum of 12 months, where English was the language of employment, references from employers on company letterhead which state the occupation and dates of employment and the contact phone number and the address of employer, or an employment contract with confirmation from the employer that the person is still employed; or
- General Certificate of Education (GCE) “A” Levels from Britain or Singapore with a minimum C pass. The passes must specifically include the subjects English Language or Literature, or Use of English; or
- International Baccalaureate — full Diploma in English Medium; or
- Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English — minimum C pass; or
- Hong Kong Advanced Level Examinations (HKALE) including a minimum C pass in Use of English; or
- STPM 1119 (Malaysia) — A or B pass in English; or

- South African Matriculation Certificate, including a minimum D pass in English (Higher Grade); or
- South African Senior Certificate, including a minimum D pass in English (Higher Grade), endorsed with the words “matriculation exempt”; or
- New Zealand Tertiary Entrance Qualification gained on completion of the seventh form.

***Please note:** Even though evidence of an English-speaking background is sighted, you may still be required to provide an IELTS certificate.*

10 ESOL tuition

Some applicants in the General Skills category will pre-purchase ESOL tuition. Full information about how to take up this tuition in New Zealand will be provided with settlement information after an application is approved.

Section B: General Skills category

This category is based on a points system. If you score less than the passmark, which is calculated on a weekly basis, your application will be declined. The *Self Assessment Guide* has details of the points system.

Migrant levy

If your application is approved, you will be required to pay a migrant levy of NZ\$180 for each person, up to a total of NZ\$720 per application.

Scoring points

Points are awarded for a number of factors, but only if you provide acceptable evidence of these factors.

This section describes the documents you need to supply as evidence of the points you are claiming.

1 Qualifications (see question B1)

B1

What you need to provide

You must provide evidence of the qualification you are claiming points for (you may be asked to provide a course transcript).

You may need to get an assessment of your qualification from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to establish its comparability to a New Zealand qualification. Points are awarded for qualifications on the basis of being comparable to New Zealand qualifications, for example, a four-year degree in one country may not be comparable to a New Zealand four year degree. If you are not sure about this, ask at your nearest branch.

If your qualification relates to an occupation that requires registration by law in New Zealand, you must submit:

- A certificate of full New Zealand registration; or
- An offer of employment, for which points have been awarded, in an occupation which does not require registration and is assessed as relevant to the qualification for which points are claimed.

You must obtain registration before you apply for residence. A decision on your application will not be deferred to wait for you to obtain registration.

Information about contacting the appropriate registration board can be obtained from the NZIS. If you need to come to New Zealand to apply for registration, you may apply for a temporary visa.

The following occupations require New Zealand registration:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ■ Architects | ■ Dietitians |
| ■ Chiropractors | ■ Dispensing opticians |
| ■ Clinical dental technicians | ■ Electricians |
| ■ Dental technicians | ■ Electrical service technicians |
| ■ Dentists | ■ Enrolled nurses |

- Environmental health officers
- Lawyers
- Line mechanics
- Medical laboratory technologists
- Medical radiation technologists
- Medical practitioners
- Midwives
- Nurses
- Occupational therapists
- Optometrists
- Pharmacists
- Physiotherapists
- Plumber, gasfitters and drainlayers
- Podiatrists
- Psychologists (registration required if employed in the state services or in a licensed institution under the Mental Health Act)
- Real estate agents
- Teachers in primary and secondary schools and free kindergartens
- Veterinarians

***Please note:** If you do not score points for qualifications under the General Skills category, your application cannot be approved.*

2 New Zealand qualifications

(see question B2)

B2 If you are claiming 1 point for a qualification completed in New Zealand, you must submit the following when you lodge your application:

- Evidence of the qualification (you may also be asked to provide a course transcript); and
- A letter from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) stating that you did not receive New Zealand Overseas Development Assistance (NZODA) funding. To request the letter, contact the Scholarship Management Unit, Development Co-operation Division, MFAT, PO Box 18-901, Wellington, New Zealand.

3 Work experience (see question B3)

B3

What you need to provide

If you are claiming points for work experience, the NZIS must see documents that show:

- Your name, and the position(s) you held; and
- The dates for which you held the position(s); and
- The name and address of the employer.

There are a number of documents that may show the required information. Examples of these include:

- References on company letterhead;
- Letters of appointment;
- Pay slips;
- Contracts;
- Job specifications;
- Job assessments; or
- Tax records.

You may have to provide several documents for one job to show all the details listed above. You cannot count work experience which was an integral part, or course requirement, of the qualification for which you are claiming points.

Please note: *If you do not score a minimum of 1 point for at least two years' work experience under the General Skills category, your application cannot be approved, unless the following exemption applies.*

If you are claiming exemption from the requirement to score 1 point for work experience, then you must submit the following when you lodge your application:

- Evidence of the New Zealand qualification (you may also be asked to provide a course transcript); and
- A letter from the MFAT stating that you did not receive NZODA funding - see 2 *New Zealand qualifications*, above, for address.

4 Offer of employment (see question B4)

B4

What you need to provide

If you are claiming points for an offer of employment, the offer must be:

- With a single employer for ongoing employment (employment must be permanent, for an indefinite term or for a term of at least 12 months with an option of further terms after that); and
- For full-time employment; and
- Current at the time of your application and at the time you are issued with a residence visa or permit; and
- Accompanied by evidence of registration (if required).

If you are claiming points for a qualification in an occupation requiring registration by law in New Zealand, and you do not have full registration, you must provide an offer of employment in an occupation that:

- Does not require registration; and
- Is assessed as relevant to the qualification for which points are claimed.

The required evidence of an offer of employment is:

- A detailed job description; and
- A letter from the employer stating whether or not registration is required by law for the applicant to take up the position; and
- An employment contract entered into by you and your New Zealand employer including the term of employment, the hours of work and the period during which the employment may commence.

It is in your interest to include additional information about your potential employer, the job offered and why you were the successful applicant.

5 Age (see question B5)

B5

What you need to provide

The NZIS can establish your age from your birth certificate or passport supplied with your application.

Please note: if you are 56 years or over your application under the General Skills category cannot be approved.

Settlement factors

The maximum number of points you can score under “settlement” factors is 7.

6 Settlement funds (see question B6)

B6

What you need to provide

To claim points for settlement funds, you must be able to show us that you and/or your spouse own the funds and assets (that is, they are free of debt).

Evidence to show this includes:

- Bank statements;
- Letters from credit agencies or a bank manager;
- Mortgages/title deeds to property and valuation reports;
- Proof of ownership and value of stocks and other assets;
- Proof of the amount of debt (if any) owing on any evidence of settlement funds.

All documents showing the value of the assets must be dated no more than three months old when your application is lodged.

If your application is approved in principle, the NZIS will ask you to transfer the funds through the trading bank system to a New Zealand trading bank account to be held in New Zealand currency. You must submit evidence that the transfer has been made before a residence visa/permit will be granted.

7 New Zealand work experience

(see question B7)

B7

What you need to provide

If you have lawfully worked in New Zealand and want to claim points for this work experience, the necessary documents are the same as those required for general work experience.

***Please note:** You must provide documents for every job you are claiming points for.*

8 Spouse or partner's qualifications

(see question B8)

B8

What you need to provide

If you are claiming points for your spouse or partner's qualification, the NZIS must see an original or certified copy of the qualification.

You may need to get an assessment of your spouse or partner's qualification from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to establish its comparability to a New Zealand qualification. If you are not sure about this, ask at your nearest NZIS branch.

9 Family sponsorship (see question B9)

B9

What you need to provide

If you are claiming points for family sponsorship, you must provide a completed sponsorship form which has been endorsed by an NZIS branch within New Zealand, and evidence of your relationship to your sponsor.

What should my sponsor do?

Your family sponsor (adult brother, adult sister, parent or adult child or your spouse's adult brother, adult sister, parent or adult child), must complete a sponsorship form, which can be obtained from any of our New Zealand branches.

Your family sponsor must:

- Be a New Zealand citizen or resident; and

- Have been lawfully and permanently living in New Zealand for at least three years immediately before undertaking sponsorship; and
- Complete the sponsorship form; and
- Provide evidence of their New Zealand immigration status, that is, their passport or citizenship certificate.

***Please note:** Your sponsor must have been lawfully and permanently living in New Zealand for three years.*

Section C: Family category

1 Marriage and de facto relationships (see questions C1-C4)

Are you living together in a genuine and stable relationship with a partner who is a New Zealand resident or citizen? If yes, you may be able to apply for residence under this category, whether you are legally married or in a de facto relationship. The **Self-Assessment Guide** contains details on the necessary length of relationships.

What you need to provide

C1

As proof that you are living together in a genuine and stable relationship, you must provide any of the following documents:

C2

C3

C4

- A marriage certificate (if you are married);
- Letters of support from friends and/or family confirming the length and genuineness of the relationship;
- Proof of shared accommodation (such as a joint mortgage or tenancy agreements or rent book);
- Proof of shared income or bank accounts, or accounts that show money transfers to or from your account to your partner's;
- Birth certificates of any children you may have had between you;

- Any evidence of public or family recognition of your relationship;
- Photographs of you and your partner; or
- Letters between you and your partner especially if they still have their original envelope.

The documents you provide should be independently verifiable.

As proof of your partner's New Zealand resident or citizenship status, you must provide at least one of the following documents:

- A residence permit in your partner's passport or travel document;
- A current returning resident's visa in your partner's passport or travel document;
- A valid New Zealand or Australian passport for your partner;
- A New Zealand birth certificate for your partner;
- A recent statement of citizenship for your partner, from the New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs;
- A certificate of New Zealand citizenship for your partner.

Partner's support for your application

Provide a signed and dated letter, from your partner to the NZIS, stating that your partner supports your application for residence.

***Please note:** If your partner does not support your application, then your application cannot be approved.*

2 Parents (see questions C5-C7)

Are you the parent(s) of an adult child(ren) lawfully and permanently in New Zealand? If yes, you may be able to apply for residence under this category.

Sponsorship

C5

You must be sponsored by one of your adult children.

Your sponsor must:

C6

- Complete the sponsorship form available at one of our New Zealand offices; and

C7

- Show the NZIS proof of their New Zealand immigration status, usually their passport or citizenship certificate.

The sponsor then gives it to you to attach to your residence application. The NZIS also needs to see evidence of the relationship between you and your child. Their birth certificate will usually demonstrate this.

***Please note:** If your family sponsor has a conditional residence permit they can still sponsor you, but the same conditions will be placed on your residence permit.*

Immigration status of your children

The NZIS needs to see evidence of where all your children are living. They may be in New Zealand, your home country, or in a third country (a country other than their home country or New Zealand). Usually a certified copy of their passport and residence permit, or an identity card, will show this.

Evidence of relationship

The NZIS needs to confirm that the people you have claimed to be your children are in fact your children. Provide their full birth certificates (listing their parent's names).

3 Sibling/adult child (see questions C8-C9)

C8

If you are single, have no children, are alone in your home country and have parents, adult brothers or adult sisters living in New Zealand, you may be able to apply for residence under this category.

C9

Sponsorship

You must be sponsored by your parent, adult brother or adult sister.

Your sponsor must:

- Complete the sponsorship form available at one of our New Zealand offices; and
- Show the NZIS proof of their New Zealand immigration status, usually their passport or citizenship certificate.

The sponsor then gives it to you to attach to your residence application. The NZIS also needs to see evidence of the relationship between you and your sponsor. In the case of a brother or sister, their full birth certificate (listing their parent's names) will usually demonstrate this. In the case of parents, a full marriage certificate is required.

***Please note:** If your family sponsor has a conditional residence permit they can still sponsor you, but the same conditions will be placed on your residence permit.*

Immigration status of your parents, brothers and sisters

The NZIS needs to see evidence of where your parents, brothers and sisters are living. They may be in New Zealand or in a third country (a country other than their home country or New Zealand). Usually a certified copy of their passport and residence permit, or an identity card will show this.

Evidence of relationship

The NZIS must confirm that the person or people you have claimed to be your parents and brothers and sisters are related to you. Provide original or certified copies of their full birth certificates with your application.

4 Dependent child (see question C10)

C10 If you are single, aged 19 years or less with no children, and have a parent(s) living in New Zealand you may be able to apply for residence under this category.

Evidence of relationship

The NZIS must confirm your relationship to your parents. Your full birth certificate should show this. If you are an adopted child, you must provide a valid adoption order from your home country or New Zealand, along with documents that show the adoption order is in accordance with the New Zealand Adoption Act 1955.

Immigration status of your parents

The NZIS must confirm your parent's New Zealand citizenship or immigration status in New Zealand.

Provide a certified copy of:

- A residence permit in your parent's passport or travel document; or
- A current returning resident visa in your parent's passport or travel document; or
- A valid New Zealand passport for your parent(s); or
- A recent statement of citizenship for your parent(s), from the New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs; or
- A certificate of New Zealand citizenship for your parent(s).

Section D: Humanitarian category

You may apply for residence under this category if:

- You or a New Zealand party are suffering serious physical harm and/or serious emotional harm; and
- You have a close family member who is a New Zealand citizen or resident who is prepared to sponsor you; and

- The only reasonable solution to the situation is the grant of residence; and
- It would not be contrary to the public interest to allow you to reside in New Zealand.

Serious physical harm or serious emotional harm

You must show that your circumstances are causing serious physical harm and/or serious emotional harm to you and/or to a New Zealand party.

The following are examples of when a person may be considered to be suffering serious emotional harm:

- When the person's ability to function in their everyday lives is significantly diminished in a manner which is likely to endure; and/or
- When that the person is suffering from a serious mental illness or disorder which is likely to endure.

It is not sufficient to demonstrate that you or the New Zealand party will suffer harm in the future. You or the New Zealand party must:

- Be currently suffering harm; or
- Have suffered harm in the past which, having been alleviated by you being in New Zealand, would arise again if you left New Zealand.

What you need to provide

You must submit the following as evidence of serious physical harm when you lodge your application:

- Original medical reports or report from a registered medical practitioner, supporting the claim of serious physical harm.

If it is unduly difficult for you to provide such a report, you must state why in question D1. The NZIS may refuse to accept applications submitted without the required reports.

You must submit the following evidence of serious emotional harm when you lodge your application:

- An original psychiatrist's report from a registered psychiatrist supporting the claim.

D1

D2

If it is unduly difficult for you to provide such a report, you must state why in question D2. The NZIS may refuse to accept applications submitted without the required reports. Difficulty in paying for reports is not regarded as undue difficulty.

Medical or psychiatric reports must include the full name, address and qualifications of the writer and must be no more than three months old when lodged with a residence application. The reports must include the following information:

- The period for which the person suffering serious emotional or serious physical harm has been consulting or been in the care of the practitioner making the report; and
- A detailed description of the nature of the physical or emotional harm; and
- An estimation of whether or not the physical or emotional harm is serious; and
- A description of the likely causes of the physical or emotional harm; and
- Comment on why the grant of New Zealand residence is the only reasonable solution for medical, psychiatric or psychological reasons, and why other solutions are not reasonable; and
- The basis and evidence for all diagnoses, facts or opinions contained in the reports.

D3

You must give a written statement in question D3 describing the serious physical harm or serious emotional harm.

Sponsorship

You must be sponsored by a close family member who:

- Is a New Zealand citizen; or
- Is the holder of a New Zealand residence permit which is not subject to requirements imposed under section 18A of the Immigration Act.

Under the Humanitarian category, a close family member is defined as:

- A parent, adult sibling or adult child; or
- An aunt, uncle, nephew or niece; or
- A grandparent; or
- A person who has lived with, and been part of, the applicant's family for many years. This does not include an estranged or divorced spouse or partner.

Family sponsors may be a close family member of:

- The principal applicant; or
- The principal applicant's spouse or partner included in the application.

Family sponsors must complete, and be able to meet, the undertakings given in the approved sponsorship form. Children aged 16 years or younger are not eligible to be sponsors as they are not considered to be in a position to sponsor relatives. Children aged 17-19 years will only be acceptable as sponsors if they can satisfy a visa/immigration officer that they are able to meet the undertakings made in the sponsorship form.

Your family sponsor must:

- Complete the sponsorship form; and
- Show the NZIS proof of their New Zealand immigration status, usually their passport or citizenship certificate.

The sponsor then gives it to you to attach to your residence application.

You must submit documents showing your relationship with your family sponsor, such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, household registration documents and adoption orders.

New Zealand residence the only solution

- D5** You must complete questions D5 and D6. You must show that the only reasonable solution to your
- D6** situation is being granted residence in New Zealand.

If there are medical, psychiatric or psychological reasons why New Zealand residence is the only solution, these must be stated in the medical or psychiatric report. You should also submit any other supporting documentation.

Section E: Declaration

It is important before signing the declaration that you read and understand the information about the cost of living in New Zealand, found in **Factsheets Nos 3 and 5** provided with the *Self Assessment Guide*. You must have sufficient personal resources to maintain yourself and your dependants for at least your first 24 months as a resident in New Zealand.

Personal resources may include:

- Cash and assets;
- A verified definite offer of employment in New Zealand (you must submit a written offer); or
- Support from family members in New Zealand verified by a written declaration made on the *Sponsorship Form*.

Information about your personal resources, and the contents of your application form will be provided to Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) if you apply for an emergency benefit.

You are not entitled to an emergency benefit from WINZ for the first 24 months of your residence in New Zealand, unless you are in hardship. If you apply for an emergency benefit, you must prove that you cannot support yourself and your dependants before the application will be considered. If you have deprived yourself of income and/or property by gift or by any other means, your emergency benefit application may be declined.

Make sure you read and understand the declarations before you sign them. Contact your nearest NZIS

branch if you have any questions about the declaration.

Check the form is signed and dated by:

- The principal applicant, and any family members included in the application aged 17 years and over;
- A parent or guardian for unmarried children aged under 17 years;
- Any person who helped complete the form.

Ensure you complete the payment details section.

Special categories

1 Samoan Quota Scheme

This scheme applies to Samoan citizens living in Samoa or American Samoa who are aged between 18 and 45 years inclusive, and who have an offer of employment in New Zealand. The scheme is administered by the Apia branch of the NZIS. Contact that branch if you want more information about the scheme.

2 Pitcairn Islanders

If you are a Pitcairn Islander, you must complete the standard residence form, provide all the documents required under section A and have a firm offer of employment in New Zealand.

3 Nationals of the People's Republic of China and Sri Lanka

There are special procedures for some people from these countries.

If you are from the People's Republic of China, you may qualify for residence under special procedures if you arrived in New Zealand on or before 31 March 1992.

If you are from Sri Lanka, you may qualify for residence under special procedures if you arrived on, or before, 31 December 1988.

For more information about these last two special categories, contact your nearest branch.

Visas/Permits/Returning residents' visas

Residence visas

A residence visa is granted if you are approved for residence outside New Zealand. It allows you enter New Zealand once only and is valid for 12 months from the date residence is approved in principle.

When you arrive at the border in New Zealand with a residence visa, you will be granted a residence permit in your passport.

Residence permits

A residence permit allows you to remain in New Zealand indefinitely, but expires when you leave New Zealand. You need a returning resident's visa to re-enter New Zealand.

If you are granted residence within New Zealand, you will be granted a residence permit.

Returning residents' visas

Once you have taken up residence in New Zealand you need a returning resident's visa to re-enter the country after overseas travel. A returning resident's visa entitles you to be granted a new residence permit on your return.

When you are first approved for residence you will be issued with a returning resident's visa valid for two years. The two years is counted from the date you arrive in New Zealand and are issued your first residence permit. It also has multiple entries which allow you to leave and re-enter the country several times.

If you are granted residence within New Zealand, your returning resident's visa will be valid for two years from the date you are granted your first residence permit.

Residence visa validity

If your application is approved, and you are outside New Zealand, you will be given a residence visa, valid for your first journey to New Zealand. This visa is valid for a period of 12 months from the date residence is approved in principle. No renewals or extensions will be granted.

If you do not travel to New Zealand within this time, you must submit a further residence application. This application will be assessed against policy applicable at the time of the new application. The New Zealand Immigration Service requires all information to be submitted at the time you lodge your application.



New Zealand
the right choice