



HOW TO

study abroad in

New Zealand

UPDATED for 2018





Contents

Introduction	3
Higher education in New Zealand	5
Admission requirements & applications	7
Student visas	8
Tuition fees, living costs & funding	10
Student cities	12
Working in New Zealand after graduation	15



Introduction

Slightly larger than the UK but with a total population of just 4.7 million (compared to 65m in the UK), New Zealand is famed for its stunning natural landscapes, multicultural society, and laidback approach to life. If you're keen on outdoor pursuits, seeking a cosmopolitan setting, and have a penchant for rugby, wine and seafood, then New Zealand could be the study destination for you.

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Recent statistics show New Zealand is attracting a growing number of students from across the world. Over 130,000 foreign students now study in the country, and national agency Education New Zealand aims to increase this by more than 40,000 by 2025.

The nation is famed for its large areas of natural beauty, from lush green forests and lakes, to rocky fjords, expansive beaches and awe-inspiring mountains. Students with a taste for adventure will certainly find plenty to explore, including the 'Great Walks' hiking trails and all kinds of sports – from skiing to surfing and bowls to bungee jumping. What New Zealand lacks in human population, it more than makes up for in terms of varied and interesting wildlife, including the distinctive kiwi bird which is the official national symbol.

New Zealand's eight universities are spread across its two main islands – from the multicultural melting pot of Auckland in the north down to the Scottish-influenced and student-centered Dunedin in the south. All



eight are featured in the QS World University Rankings®, offering a good selection for prospective international students. If you think New Zealand student life could be for you, read on to find out what steps to take next.



Higher education in New Zealand

As well as a selection of public and private universities, New Zealand also offers around 600 private training schools, for specialized foundation and diploma qualifications

With a strong emphasis on research and personal development and a student satisfaction level of 90 percent in the International Student Barometer, New Zealand offers a very successful higher education system. In recent years, the nation has seen a significant increase in international student enrolments, thanks not only to the high quality of living and education, but also because of relaxed restrictions on student visas.

In part due to its history as a former British colony, New Zealand's higher education system is very similar to the European system. Tertiary qualifications run from certificate to doctorate level, progressing through diploma, bachelor's, and master's levels along the way.

Typically, a bachelor's degree will take three or four years to complete and a master's degree one or two years, while a PhD program takes up to four years. The option of a fast-track master's degree, which takes less than one calendar year to complete, is also growing in availability and popularity.

As well as a selection of public and private universities, New Zealand also offers around 600 private training schools, for specialized foundation and diploma qualifications. Other options include studying at a 'Wānanga' –



Maori-led tertiary institutions unique to New Zealand – or at one of the 18 Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs), which cater to around 157,000 students and offer more vocational degrees and diplomas.



Top universities in New Zealand

The highest-ranked university in New Zealand in the **QS World University Rankings®** 2019 is the University of Auckland, which is ranked 85th in the world. A further seven New Zealand universities feature further down in the ranking, with the University of Otago, Victoria University of Wellington and the University of Canterbury all among the world's top 300.



Admission requirements & applications

The process of applying to study in New Zealand varies, with specific guidelines provided by individual institutions. In most cases, you can submit your application online, but some institutions require hard copies of documents to be sent by post.

Generally, you will be asked to submit a copy of your passport and relevant academic transcripts, providing proof of any qualifications you've completed. While qualifications and credit transfers are widely accepted from New Zealand, Australian and UK institutions, some international qualifications must be assessed by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), which will cost NZ\$746 (~US\$540) and take up to 35 working days. If your documents aren't in English, you'll need to provide a translation.



Language requirements

If you're not a native English speaker, you'll be asked to provide proof of proficiency in English, either by submitting language test results (e.g. TOEFL or IELTS), or by demonstrating you've studied in English previously.



Student visas

Once you've received an offer for a place at a New Zealand university and paid any required fees, you're ready to apply for your visa. Student visas are required for all full-time students from outside of New Zealand or Australia who wish to study in the country for longer than three months. Part-time students are only eligible for a visitor visa.

In order to apply for your student visa, you must submit the official application form (online or on paper) to Immigration New Zealand (INZ), along with the following documents:

- Proof of acceptance to an NZQA-approved university (an offer letter)
- Valid passport and passport-style photos
- Proof of medical and travel insurance
- Evidence of sufficient funds to cover living costs (at least NZ\$15,000 per year of study, which is approximately US\$10,945)
- Evidence of sufficient funds to cover tuition fees, or evidence of a scholarship
- A police certificate, to show you're of good character
- Students from certain countries will need to have an x-ray and/or medical check
- Return flight ticket (or proof of sufficient funds for this)

Student visas are required for all full-time students from outside of New Zealand or Australia who wish to study in the country for longer than three months



Unless further information is required, your visa application will take around 20-25 days to process. Your student visa will last for a maximum of four years, depending on the length of your course, after which you will need to apply for a graduate visa in order to stay in the country.

Working while you study

All students studying for two years or more (or for a New Zealand qualification that gains points under the Skilled Migrant Category) can work part-time during term time (up to 20 hours a week) and full-time during official holidays. Master's and PhD student researchers are granted unlimited work rights.



Tuition fees, living costs & funding

Undergraduate students at universities in New Zealand can expect to pay tuition fees of NZ\$22-32,000 (~US\$16,060-23,370) annually, while postgraduate students can expect costs of around NZ\$26,000-37,000 (~US\$19,000-27,000) per year. International PhD students pay the same fees as home students, which are comparatively low at NZ\$6,500-\$9,000 (~US\$4,750-6,570) per year.

Living costs in New Zealand will depend on where you're based, with the highest costs found in the capital Wellington and the largest city Auckland. While these are the costliest places to live within New Zealand, both cities are nonetheless relatively affordable from a global perspective.

As a guideline, you should aim to budget NZ\$20,000-25,000 (US\$14,600-18,250) per year for living costs, equating to a weekly budget of NZ\$384-480 (US\$280-350). To apply for your student visa, you'll need proof of at least NZ\$15,000 (US\$10,945) to cover expenses.

Scholarships to study in New Zealand

If you're unsure as to whether you can afford these costs, be sure to research the range of funding opportunities for international students,

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offered by the government, external organizations and individual universities.

For instance, the New Zealand government offers a range of scholarships for all study levels through the New Zealand Aid Program, which includes scholarships for students from developing countries, pacific nations, Southeast Asia and the Commonwealth.

For more information, visit the www.mfat.govt.nz website or search your chosen university's website to see if you're eligible for funding. More scholarships to study in New Zealand are listed [here](#).



Student cities

New Zealand consistently ranks near the top in ratings of the world's best places to live and countries with the highest quality of life. It has an appealing climate, stunningly beautiful natural landscapes, and cities which are modern and multicultural.

Find out more about life in some of New Zealand's top student cities:

Auckland

On the east coast of North Island, Auckland is New Zealand's largest city and home to its highest-ranking university, the **University of Auckland**. Auckland is known for its especially multicultural community, and (though this is true of the whole country) for the wide range of high-adrenaline activities available in and around the city. Jet-skiing, canyoning, surfing, abseiling, bungee-jumping, snowboarding, climbing, diving – you get the idea. Or, of course, you might choose to simply relax on the beach.

The city is also home to **Auckland University of Technology** and several institutes of technology and polytechnics, while **Massey University's** Albany campus is less than 20km north of the city center. Auckland itself is ranked 23rd in the 2018 edition of the **QS Best Student Cities index**.

Wellington

On the south coast of North Island, Wellington is the capital city of New Zealand. It's believed by some to be more aesthetically attractive than

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rival Auckland (we'll let you make up your own mind), and offers a good selection of culture, cuisine and nightlife within a relatively compact area. And, of course, stunning natural scenery is never far away in New Zealand – here, you'll find beaches, forests, islands, hills and vineyards all within easy reach.

Wellington's higher education institutions include [Victoria University of Wellington](#) and one of [Massey University](#)'s three campuses, as well as several institutes of technology and polytechnics. The University of Otago has a medical school here, and the New Zealand School of Music (run jointly by Victoria University of Wellington and Massey University) is also based in Wellington.



Christchurch

Located on the east coast of South Island, Christchurch is the largest city on the island and the third most-populous urban area in New Zealand. In recent years, Christchurch has undergone major redevelopment projects, following damage from earthquakes in 2010 and 2011, and the general consensus seems to be that it's just as lively as before the natural disasters struck. Marketing itself as the 'Garden City', Christchurch prides itself on its large areas of public parkland and picturesque river banks, as well as its thriving arts and cultural scene. And yes, since this is New Zealand, you'll find the usual broad selection of outdoor pursuits.

Universities in Christchurch include the **University of Canterbury** (New Zealand's third highest-ranked) and **Lincoln University**, as well as a selection of specialist colleges, many of them private. Christchurch is also currently ranked 69th in the QS Best Student Cities index.

Dunedin

The second-largest city on the South Island, Dunedin is the main city in the Otago region, located on the east coast about 300km (190 miles) south of Christchurch. Formerly New Zealand's largest city (until around 1900), Dunedin is home to around 128,800 people and retains a leading position in the country's culture.

It's also a major student hub, as it's the site of New Zealand's second highest-ranked and oldest university, the **University of Otago**. The city is also distinctive for its Scottish heritage (the name Dunedin comes from the old Gaelic for Edinburgh), and the legacy of its past Scottish settlers lives on – from whisky-stocked bars to a special tartan and haggis ceremony.

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Working in New Zealand after graduation

If you'd like to stay in New Zealand after graduation to look for work, you'll need to apply for a post-study work visa. You must do this within three months of completing your qualification, or within six months for PhD graduates

According to the Ministry of Education, around 40 percent of international students were in employment in New Zealand a year after graduation, while 22 percent stayed in the country to pursue further study.

If you'd like to stay in New Zealand after graduation to look for work, you'll need to apply for a **post-study work visa**. You must do this within three months of completing your qualification, or within six months for PhD graduates. With this visa you'll be entitled to a year's stay in the country in order to find a job, with eligibility to apply for an additional visa of two to three years once you get hired.

As well as having completed an accredited academic program in New Zealand, you'll also need to provide proof of funds to cover your 12-month stay in New Zealand while seeking work (a minimum of NZ\$4,200, equivalent to around US\$3,070, is required). The job you undertake should show relevance to your qualification.

If you stay in New Zealand on a Post Study Work Visa and have an offer for full-time employment in the same area as your qualification, you could apply for the **Post Study Work Visa - Employer Assisted**, which allows you to stay in New Zealand to work for a specific employer for a further two years.

As for career opportunities, New Zealand provides many prospects within



its cities, as well as more rural areas. Key industries contributing to New Zealand's economy include agriculture, horticulture, forestry, mining and fishing. The nation is also reporting high demand for skilled graduates in specialized professional sectors such as healthcare, engineering, IT, construction, science, finance, education and hospitality.

Useful websites for finding jobs in New Zealand include www.careers.govt.nz, www.seek.co.nz and www.workhere.co.nz.



Want to find out more about studying abroad in New Zealand?
Ask a question in our **international student forum**.