

Bona Fide Student

The New Zealand education experience is world-renowned. Not only do students come out with a well-recognised qualification, New Zealand is also a safe and fun environment for a bright young mind.

The 'bona fide' requirement is really Immigration New Zealand's way of asking if you are a 'genuine' student. Aside from secondary school applicants and tertiary institute applicants straight out of high school, we also have clients who have decided that they want to return to study after several years of work, or have previously studied a different qualification and want to come to New Zealand to gain a further area of expertise. Immigration New Zealand will often ask these students to demonstrate their commitment to achieving the qualification and also show that they have the academic ability to do so as well. The responsibility is therefore on the student applying to show why they are studying the qualification and why they are capable of gaining the qualification. We can assist you with this to put your best foot forward.

Most secondary curriculums and tertiary qualifications take more than a year to complete, therefore it is important to be aware of what you need to do to ensure that you keep getting your student visas approved until you have been awarded the qualification that you are working towards.

Aside from applying on time, to be granted a student visa you need to have:

- A formal offer of place by your education provider;
- Either a receipt to show that you have paid your tuition already; evidence of sufficient funds to pay your tuition (an official stamped bank statement); or evidence that you have a sponsor who will pay your tuition;
- Sufficient maintenance funds (for a course under 36 weeks the student needs to have \$1,250 for each month they intend to study, for a course over 36 weeks the student needs to show \$15,000 per year for the duration of their study - less any prepaid living expenses);
- Either a pre-purchased outward travel ticket or evidence showing that you have sufficient funds to leave the country once you have completed your studies;
- Acceptable insurance for the duration of your studies;
- Meet the good health requirements (this includes having a valid Medical and/or X-ray certificate);
- Be of good character (this includes having a valid Police certificate); and
- Be a bona fide student (show that you are achieving the qualification by making adequate progress and having a good attendance record).

We are also aware that not all study paths are straight forward and sometimes due to unforeseen circumstances, you are not able to meet the above requirements and as a result, may have your 'bona fide' student status being questioned. It is important that 'bona fide' student issues are dealt with properly as it may result in Immigration New Zealand declining your student visa resulting in an unlawful status. We have experience in assisting clients with thorough submissions to ensure that 'bona fide' student issues are dealt with properly.

If you are currently unlawful due to having your student visa declined or due to a failed lodgement (not having all the necessary application documentation), we can also assist you with a section 61 student visa request.

Disclaimer: This publication is necessarily brief and general in nature. You should seek professional advice before taking any further action in relation to matters dealt with in this publication.

About the author

- Lauren Qiu is fluent in both Mandarin and English
- Lauren is also a restorative justice facilitator and is on the management committee for Auckland Restorative Justice Trust
- Email: lauren@queencitylaw.co.nz / DDI: 09 970 8826

