Teaching in New Zealand

A guide for teachers wanting to teach in New Zealand

Are you looking for a better lifestyle, a new teaching adventure or a more relaxed pace of life?

Whether you are migrating with your family or wanting a working holiday adventure, New Zealand offers all of these things and more.

New Zealand has plenty of space, recreational pursuits, cultural entertainment, successful businesses and a brilliant quality of life. Even in the cities there are beautiful beaches, inland lakes, and many outdoor spaces. Close by are reserves, national parks and ski fields for you and your family to enjoy.

The New Zealand education system is recognised worldwide as effective, broad-based and student centred. Teacher morale is high and teachers are able to escape a rigid, narrow exam-based system and enjoy making a difference to the learning of their students.

New Zealand is the adventure capital of the world. With huge variance in geographical features, from cities to volcanoes, rainforest to alpine mountains, and beautiful beaches, there are so many opportunities to explore.

Whether you have been interested in teaching in New Zealand for years, or have just started thinking about the possibility, you will find out what you need to know about living and teaching here, in New Zealand, in this guide.
The Demand for Your Skills

In New Zealand there is demand for teachers with particular skills and experience. Demand for teachers in all sectors is growing. We offer long-term and permanent roles throughout the country and daily relief in Auckland and Wellington.

While teaching is not on the Skills Shortage list for Immigration, teachers with a job offer are able to gain a Work Visa if the school can prove that they are unable to find a local candidate. This means that opportunities for Work Visas tied to a specific school are now possible.

Secondary Education

New Zealand’s secondary education sector currently has demand in subjects across the board (with the possible exclusion of Physical Education).

Primary Education

Primary teachers (especially in the Auckland region) are in demand. Teachers that have experience in Special Education, that can teach (or are fluent in) Sign Language, or are Catholic Tagged, are particularly sought after.

Early Childhood Education

In the Early Childhood sector there is a high demand for experienced educators as well as those who are looking to take on management roles. Relief (supply) teachers with recognised Early Childhood and Primary qualifications are also sought after.

When is the best time to come over to New Zealand and when are roles advertised?

Long term and permanent positions are advertised throughout the year because, unlike other countries, teachers in New Zealand are able to leave their positions any time during the year. The majority of positions are advertised in September/October/November with teachers starting their new roles at the beginning of the new school year. Positions will be advertised any time from two terms before the start date of the role.

The New Zealand school year is divided into 4 terms and each school term is about 10 weeks in length. Term 1 starts at the end of January/beginning of February, Term 2 starts at the end of April/beginning of May, Term 3 starts around mid-July and Term 4 at the beginning of October.

If your visa status permits you to find employment as a casual relief (supply) teacher* Term 2 and 3 is the busiest time for this type of work. Relief teaching and contracting provides a great entry point for teachers recently arrived in New Zealand, especially those on working holiday visas.

* You may need to have an NZQA assessment and will require New Zealand teacher registration with the Education Council.
The Three Steps: Making the Move to New Zealand

Teaching in New Zealand is a brilliant opportunity. It is a good idea to know exactly what you are getting into before you make the decision to move. In this section of the guide, we will tell you what you need to do to make the move to New Zealand.

Step One: Make sure moving is the right decision for you

New Zealand is a country that can offer you an amazing quality of life. It has a small, multicultural population, a clean and safe environment, and a highly regarded education system. Education Personnel has worked with many teachers from overseas for more than 20 years, and the vast majority have had a fantastic experience in this country.

However, moving to another country (even temporarily) is a significant life decision and it is worth making sure that it is the right one for you. Here are some things worth considering:

Where would you live? New Zealand’s cities and towns can range dramatically in terms of population, demographics and topography. You want to make sure that your location matches you and your family’s needs. Do your research on New Zealand’s cities. Keep in mind that the majority of roles are in major cities such as Auckland and Wellington.

What will your standard of living be like? New Zealand teaching salaries can differ from the United Kingdom and Ireland. Your salary will depend on your qualification level of teaching experience and your job title - and you may not initially have the same job title as you did back home. The cost of living in New Zealand can be quite different too, and can drastically differ from city to city. Go here for a useful guide. By working out your salary and the cost of living, you can ensure that you have an accurate picture of the lifestyle you will be able to afford.

Are you prepared for the costs and paperwork? Moving countries is never an easy undertaking. There are several processes to complete in order to be recognised as a qualified teacher in New Zealand and you will have to invest both time and money in getting this done.

A useful website on working and living in New Zealand is New Zealand Now

This New Zealand Government website is packed with useful and reliable information to help get you settled. You will find information on schooling, childcare, the cost of living, housing, real estate and much more.
Step Two: Become familiar with New Zealand’s education system

On the whole, teachers that are trained in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Canada find New Zealand’s education system very similar and tend to fit in well. Many comment on how much more rewarding teaching in New Zealand is. However, it is important to make allowances for differences and make sure that you are as informed as possible about our education system. This will allow you to make a smooth adjustment and get stuck into teaching ASAP.

Sector Overview

New Zealand children start compulsory primary schooling at age 5 or 6. Prior to that, they are able to attend optional early childhood education. For their 7th and 8th years of schooling, they may attend intermediate schools or continue at primary school. Secondary schooling encompasses years 9 to 13 (around ages 13 to 18). Area schools usually service small rural communities and encompass years 1 - 13. There are also secondary schools that teach students from years 7 - 13, and several Junior High Schools that cover Years 7 - 10.

For more information about New Zealand’s ECE (Early Childhood Education), primary, secondary sectors, head to the Teach New Zealand website.

Some other useful information:

- Most independent and state integrated schools are Years 7 - 13.
- Many independent schools also have primary and, in some cases, preschools on the same site.
- Most independent and integrated schools are single sex.

New Zealand’s Qualification

New Zealand students in their final three years of schooling (Years 11, 12 and 13) study towards NCEA – the National Certificate of Educational Achievement.

- NCEA Level 1 is equivalent to GCSE
- NCEA Level 2 is equivalent to AS Level
- NCEA Level 3 is equivalent to A2 Level

Some schools are now offering Cambridge IGCSE & A Level instead of/or in addition to NCEA. A small number also offer IB. For more information on NCEA go to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority Website here.
Step Three: Start the process for teaching in New Zealand

As an overseas trained teacher wanting to teach in New Zealand, there are some processes that you need to go through. It is important to become familiar with these and start them as soon as possible. On average, the whole process can take up to 3 - 5 months.

The sooner you get started on the NZQA and teacher registration processes, the less stressful it will be when you secure a job. You can submit both applications at the same time. Please see chart below.

The Process

This is a rough outline of the process that you will need to go through. Keep in mind that there are two ways of going about this process. Both options have their advantages and disadvantages. However, if you are serious about teaching in New Zealand, it is a good idea to get started on the registration process as soon as possible. It can sometimes take months to complete.

Option 1
Starting the process only once you have been offered a job. Keep in mind this can take up to 3-5 months, and delaying this may impact your ability to take up certain roles.

Option 2
Starting the process as soon as possible and applying for roles whilst your NZQA and teacher registration applications are being processed.

The following steps are required to be able to teach in New Zealand:

1. Have your qualifications assessed by NZQA. Not all qualifications are required to be assessed. NZQA have a list of ‘Teaching qualifications exempt from assessment.’ Check [here](#) to see if your qualification is on this list and that you meet the other exempt requirements.
2. Register and gain a practicing certificate from the New Zealand Education Council.
3. Gain the right to work in New Zealand (visa).
4. Complete a salary assessment (for state schools).
1. Have your qualifications assessed by NZQA

Watch our video guide to completing your IQA application

If your qualifications are not exempt from assessment, you will need to submit an International Qualifications Assessment (IQA).

The New Zealand Qualification Authority’s role is to assess international qualifications against New Zealand qualifications (including some teaching qualifications). This means that some overseas teachers must have their qualifications evaluated to determine if they are comparable to an approved New Zealand initial teacher education qualification.

When submitting your application to NZQA:

- Check that you have included all of the documents required for an International Qualification Assessment (IQA).
  a) Make sure you send legible, coloured, scanned digital copies of all documents.
  b) Upload each of the documents as prompted by the online application process. Follow the prompts and read the help features as you progress with your online application.
  c) All files must be in PDF format.
  d) File size is limited to 5 MB per file.
  e) One file must be uploaded per document type (e.g. one file for an award certificate, one file for transcripts etc).
  f) Applications are not complete until all required information is included and payment submitted via the online application.
  g) Include translations to the corresponding qualifications (if applicable).
- Ensure that everything requested is included in your application. Otherwise you will be contacted via email and your application cancelled.

NOTE: a substantial number of teacher applications to NZQA do not include all the required information and this delays the application.

A NZQA Recognition Report is required by the New Zealand Education Council and for salary assessment purposes in order to ensure that you are paid at the correct level (unless your qualifications are on the NZQA pre approved list of exempt teaching qualifications). To find out about applying, go to the International Qualifications section on the NZQA website. The cost is roughly $746NZD. Online applications can be accessed here. Applications generally take several months (from the date that a complete application is received) to complete.

Australian teachers NOTE: Due to the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement, you do not require an NZQA assessment for teacher registration. However, if you are going to be working in a state school in New Zealand, you may require one for salary assessment purposes. Without this you will be paid as an untrained teacher.
2. Apply for teacher registration with the New Zealand Education Council

Watch our video guide to completing your EC15 form

All practising teachers in New Zealand (including relief/supply teachers) must be registered with the New Zealand Education Council and hold a current practising certificate. These are administered by the New Zealand Education Council and without these you cannot be paid as a registered teacher in schools in New Zealand. An overseas trained teacher applying to teach in New Zealand for the first time (see the overseas teachers page for more information) should complete an EC15 form and see the checklist of requirements on page 8.

If your qualifications are exempt from being assessed by NZQA, you will need to register with the New Zealand Education Council and apply for a current practising certificate. We advise registering and applying with the New Zealand Education Council at the same time as applying to NZQA, or as close to as possible. The Education Council will require a copy of your IQA (see #1) in order to complete your application.

You should complete the online EC15 form (save, then print and sign) ‘Application Form and Guide for Overseas Applicants’ for teacher registration. Unless your qualification is exempt from assessment, the Education Council will require a copy of your NZQA Recognition Report (see #1) in order to complete your application. The Education Council require certified copies of all required documents (they will not return originals).

Proof of Identity If you are living overseas at the time of completing this form complete the Proof of Identity currently residing overseas form.

Question 9: Education refers to your teaching practicum school experiences during your teacher training, whilst
Question 10: Experience refers to your paid teaching work experience gained since graduating.

For section F: Language Proficiency, complete the statutory declaration (if English is your first spoken language) and have it witnessed by somebody authorised to witness statutory declarations. Or, submit certified copies of evidence that you have met the minimum score required for one of the listed English language tests.

You can find the type of Police Check you require at Overseas Police clearance. For the United Kingdom International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) they ask for the ‘Name of School or Organisation’ requesting the police check. Send this letter, add you name and DOB. The answer is New Zealand Education Council.

There are two likely outcomes on your NZQA Recognition Statement:

1. Your qualification does contain core knowledge requirements of a New Zealand initial teacher education qualification.
2. Your qualification does not contain core knowledge requirements of a New Zealand initial teacher education qualification.

If your qualification is assessed as ‘does not contain core knowledge requirements’ of a recognised New Zealand teaching qualification you may have to apply for teacher registration through the Discretionary Pathway for Overseas Teachers. It is worth looking at the requirements for this pathway in case you need to apply this way.

The Ministry of Education may pay practising certificate fees for teachers covered by the Collective Agreements and employed in a school. To find out if you are eligible for the payment of the practising certificate fee or for a reimbursement, check here for effective dates and forms. Send the signed form to the Education Council.

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Eoghan Sheridan
Technology Teacher
Rongotai College, Wellington

“I contacted Education Personnel and they have been absolutely fantastic from day one. As soon as we made the decision to go they were there to help me 100%, from collecting all the documents that I needed to right till the first day at school, they were there to support me.

I contacted Kristina when we were first thinking of coming over and I was sent a package of the steps I had to follow to make it here. Overall I can’t praise her enough

I have to say that Education Personnel were there from the offset as soon as they knew we were coming to Wellington they offered to pick us up at the airport. They even helped us with accommodation too.

From the Principal right down to the other members of my department they have been extremely welcoming. Even before the school started the principal was in and gave me a tour around. I have found the overall experience fantastic.”
3. Gain the right to work in New Zealand

Visa details are available on the Immigration New Zealand website [here](#). Once you have New Zealand registration you can legally teach in New Zealand with a valid right to work.

**Work Visa**

You cannot apply for a work visa until you have New Zealand teacher registration. If you meet immigration criteria set by Immigration New Zealand and have a job offer and the required forms for teaching work from a New Zealand school, then you can apply for a work visa. You can find out more [here](#).

**NOTE:** Under New Zealand law only a licensed immigration adviser is allowed to provide immigration advice. Education Personnel is not a licensed immigration adviser. However, we can assist the school with preparing the paperwork required for a work visa application.

**Working Holiday Visa**

If you meet the age requirements and are from a qualifying country, you may be able to enter New Zealand on a working holiday visa. This means that you can take on shorter term teaching roles. Education Personnel can assist you with finding daily relief (supply) teaching work in Auckland and Wellington or long term relieving positions nationwide.

**NOTE:** You need to complete an IQA and New Zealand teacher registration to be eligible to teach in New Zealand (refer to #1 and #2 of this Guide as these are requirements to be able to teach). These processes can take up to 3-5 months, so you should start these processes before you arrive in New Zealand.

One of our Immigration partners, Migration Associates, also organise physical seminars in the United Kingdom (London, Manchester, Birmingham & Bristol) on working and living in New Zealand. These seminars allow you to find out more about the New Zealand lifestyle, meet others that are looking to make the move and, more importantly, have all of your questions answered in person and in an intimate setting. If you are serious about moving to New Zealand, we encourage you to speak to their team. They also offer free visa evaluations. You may find this useful to get an understanding of your eligibility for a temporary or permanent visa, the costs and time-frames. It is important to note that you are under no obligation to use them or any other Licensed Adviser, however we encourage you to seek immigration advice from a Licensed Immigration Adviser to understand your visa eligibility.

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**Caragh Rellis**

Science Teacher

Auckland Grammar School, Auckland

“Education Personnel were very helpful, extremely friendly and approachable. They were invaluable in explaining the different processes required, qualification assessment, the medical, even intercepting and redirecting documentation.

Melanie provided invaluable support throughout the whole process from initial application to post-placement. She collected me from the airport and brought me to the school to meet the headmaster.

The school that I got placed in is perfect, the ethos is similar to the type of schools I taught in in Ireland. Stuart spent a lot of time discussing my previous school experience and type of school I had taught in, I really felt that I was placed in a school that suited me rather than just to be placed in a school to suit EP.”

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4. **Complete a Salary Assessment**

Once you have secured a position in New Zealand in a state or state integrated school you will need to submit a Salary Assessment to NovoPay to ensure that you are paid at the correct salary rate.

If you start working in New Zealand prior to the completion of your Salary Assessment, you will initially be paid on a lower salary. Depending on the outcome of your IQA report from NZQA and the date you are granted teacher registration, you may be back paid.

**Complete and email the NovoPay form** (with the required colour certified copies of the documentation) to your employing New Zealand school. They will submit this Salary Assessment on your behalf.

For a salary assessment, you will need statements of service from all schools/teaching agencies you have worked for. This can be in the form of a reference as long as it contains the following:

- On official letterhead from your previous employer.
- Signed by your previous employer (principal or headteacher).
- Has the exact start date (dd/mm/yyyy) and exact end date (dd/mm/yyyy).
- Is written after your last day of service or is accompanied by a letter from you stating you are happy for the service to be calculated up until the date of the letter. Then obtain a letter after you last day of service.
- States full-time or part-times - if part-time or casual, it must include hours worked per week or total hours overall.
- A description of service.

NovoPay require colour certified scanned copies of all documents. Certified copies must contain:

- The statement “This is a true copy of the original document”, or words to the similar effect.
- The position of the person certifying the document e.g. Principal, Solicitor, Justice of the Peace (or any other person allowed to take declarations under the Oaths and Declarations Act 1957).
- Signature of the person certifying the copy.
- The school stamp (if the Principal has certified the document).
- Certification is dated.
- Certification on each page of the document.

NovoPay Forms may be supplied by your school or you can obtain them [here](#).

**NOTE:** As soon as you have applied to the Education Council or if you already hold a practising certificate this application needs to be submitted. Teachers mention that this is the most difficult stage of relocating. It can take several months to have your salary assessed correctly and, in the meantime, you may need funds to support yourself whilst living in New Zealand.

**Salary Scale**

New Zealand teachers at state and state integrated primary, secondary and area schools are paid on an incremental scale, according to their qualifications and their years of teaching experience. Teachers are paid by the payroll service Novopay.

Independent schools typically pay their teachers directly. Some schools pay on the state pay scale and some set their own salary rates (these are generally slightly higher than state rates).
Base Salary Scale for Teachers

To give you an idea of what your salary might be, here is the New Zealand teacher’s salary scale as of Jan 2018. The amount you can be paid depends on your qualifications and experience. Your overseas teaching experience is also taken into account.

Teachers enter the salary scale at different steps depending on their qualifications. The salary assessment uses six qualification groups, each one with a minimum and a maximum salary step. You move up one step on the salary scale for each full year of teaching experience (as assessed by Novopay as part of your salary assessment).

To access the full salary scales:
- Early Childhood Teachers Collective Agreement
- Primary Teachers Collective Agreement
- Secondary Teachers Collective Agreement

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary Group</th>
<th>NQF Level*</th>
<th>Example of qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bachelor of Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts + Graduate Diploma of Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Honours Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Masters or PhD</td>
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*NQF = National Qualifications Framework.

Once you have been teaching for 7 years, you reach the top of the base scale. Teachers who take on extra responsibilities can be allocated management units (MU). Each unit is worth $4,000pa. Schools receive a certain amount for ‘units’. Boards can allocate units as a permanent or fixed-term addition to a teacher’s salary. For a full explanation of teacher pay, go to the New Zealand Ministry of Education website here.

Overseas Relocation Grant

You may be eligible for the ‘Overseas Relocation Grant’ of up to New Zealand $5 000.00 for overseas trained teachers. There are some criteria attached to this. In summary they include:
- All teachers applying must have secured employment of 12 months or longer at a state or state-integrated school. They can only receive the grant once in a five year period.
- A role must either be a full time position in a state or state integrated school, permanent or fixed term for one year, and in a shortage subject or area.
- Teachers should apply for the grant within three months of employment in New Zealand.
- The grant will be paid in two instalments – 50% after 10 weeks and 50% after 40 weeks of teaching.
- Teachers must be employed in a state or state-integrated school for at least one month before applying for the payment.
How Education Personnel Can Help You

- You will have the safety and security of working with experienced recruiters who have helped hundreds of international teachers turn their New Zealand dream into reality.
- Whether you are looking to migrate to New Zealand permanently or coming over for a working holiday, Education Personnel know the best pathways to teaching work.
- You will have peace of mind knowing you are working with a Preferred Recruitment Company for the New Zealand Ministry of Education.
- You will be helped to find the right school for you. Tell us about your goals, your expectations, your teaching experience and what kind of school you want to work in. We will help you make it happen.
- Your referees will only be contacted once for written references - you don’t have to worry about them being contacted for every role you apply for.
- Your CV will only be put forward to schools that you have selected. Your CV and references are used to promote your applications directly to the Principals of our client schools. Your CV will go straight to the top of the pile.
- You will be guided through the interview process and provided with all the important information you need to know, ahead of time.
- To help ensure a successful outcome, Education Personnel will be the liaison between you and the school during the offer process.
- You and your school will be supported through the process of obtaining a work visa (please note that Education Personnel are not licensed immigration advisers).
- You will be helped to settle in and advised about life in New Zealand.

If you have not done so already, please send your CV through to Education Personnel at careteam@edperson.co.nz and get the ball rolling to begin your New Zealand teaching experience.

Click here to check out our current vacancies.