

Education New Zealand Aide Memoire

Title:	Student Visa Processing		
Date:	4 February 2019	ENZ ID no:	1819-121



Purpose

1. This report responds to a request from your office to inform you about student visa processing, following an update on this from Immigration New Zealand (INZ) in the Education News edition published by Education New Zealand (ENZ) on 30 January 2019.
2. ENZ is working with INZ to develop a joint briefing for you and the Minister of Immigration to provide further advice on student visa processing, including detailed statistics on context about the current situation.

Background

3. INZ reports that large volumes of student visa applications are being received at present. It advises applicants to apply for their student visas at least eight weeks before their intended travel date. Despite this advice, a large number of applications have been received in January (and continue to be received) where the applicant is planning to travel in February.
4. INZ advises student visa applicants to check visa processing times on the INZ website before contacting it for an update, and if applicants have applied online, to check their online account for communications from INZ about their application.
5. INZ states it is addressing the high number of student visa applications by processing cases in additional sites and is developing regular email reporting for education peak bodies on work in progress and processing times.
6. ENZ is working with INZ to use various channels (including Education News, and its offshore offices) to help providers, students and agents understand the current situation. ENZ is also monitoring market reaction and continues to engage with INZ. ENZ is also working with INZ on a joint paper to provide more information about this.
7. Student visa statistics provided by INZ, as at 27 January 2019, are as follows.

Current fee paying student visa application volumes

Status	Application volumes
Assessment ongoing	7430
Approved in principle ¹	1109
Total on hand	8539

¹ Pending evidence of tuition fee payment from the applicant.

Recent processing timeframes (calculated based on fee paying student visa applications decided 28 Oct 2018-28 Jan 2019)

Provider Type	80% completed within:	90% completed within:
Polytechnics	38 days	50 days
Private Training Establishments	36 days	47 days
Schools	15 days	25 days
Universities	21 days	31 days

8. These timeframes are broadly in line with normal processing times, as published on the INZ website – however ENZ understands the number of applications on hand is larger than is usual for peak season.
9. ENZ recommends that any media inquiries about student visa processing be referred to Immigration New Zealand, and that your office and ENZ Communications are kept informed.

Proactive release

10. ENZ intends to proactively release this briefing as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

Education New Zealand recommends that you

- a. **note** that a more detailed joint briefing on student visa processing is being developed by ENZ and INZ for you and the Minister of Immigration.
- b. **agree** that this briefing is proactively released as part of the March 2019 release.

Noted

Agree / Disagree

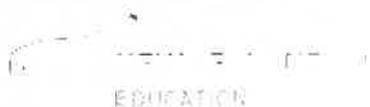


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30 January 2019

Student visa processing update

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) is continuing to experience high student visa application volumes and would like to remind applicants to apply for their student visa well in advance of their course start date.

A very large number of applications have been submitted to INZ in January for courses beginning within four weeks of the application submission date.

Jeannie Melville, INZ's Assistant General Manager, Visa Services reminds applicants to apply for their student visa at least eight weeks before their course start date.

“For those with an application in progress, we ask that they first check the recent student visa processing times published on the INZ website [before](#) contacting INZ to seek an update on their application. Those who submitted their visa application online should also check their online account regularly to ensure they haven't missed any communications from INZ. If INZ needs more information to decide an application, it will take longer to assess.”

During this peak student visa application period, INZ is processing applications in some additional sites in an effort to ensure applications are decided as quickly as possible.

To ensure the sector is well informed, INZ is developing improved reporting on application processing, including the volume of work in progress and expected processing times. INZ will provide this information in regular email updates to education peak bodies.

ENZ is working closely with INZ on student visa processing matters, to help providers, students and agents understand the current situation. While INZ continues to experience high volumes of student visa applications, ENZ continues to monitor market reactions and engage constructively with INZ.

Current fee paying student visa application volumes (as at 27 January 2019)

Status	Application volumes
Assessment ongoing	7430
Approved in principle	1109
Total on hand	8539

Recent processing timeframes (calculated based on fee paying student visa applications decided 28 Oct 2018-28 Jan 2019)

Provider Type	80% decided within:	90% decided within:
Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics	38 days	50 days
Private Training Establishments	36 days	47 days
Schools	15 days	25 days
Universities	21 days	31 days