

INZ response to the Novel Coronavirus

2 February 2020

In January 2020, Chinese authorities confirmed a new type of coronavirus. The New Zealand government is closely monitoring the situation and following guidance from the World Health Organization.

The New Zealand Government has now made the decision that any foreign travellers who have left or transited through mainland China after 2 February 2020 will be refused entry to New Zealand.

All travellers currently in transit to New Zealand on 2 February 2020 will be subject to enhanced screening on arrival but, pending clearance, will be granted entry to New Zealand.

This measure does not apply to flights to and from Hong Kong at this time.

This decision to refuse entry does not apply to New Zealand citizens, permanent residents and their immediate family, who will still be able to come to New Zealand. Australian citizens and permanent residents are also excluded if they ordinarily reside in New Zealand.

The decision to restrict travel will be in place for up to 14 days and will be reviewed every 48 hours.

The decision comes as both Australia and the United States have also closed their border to foreign travellers who have left or transited mainland China.

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) is working with other government agencies to ensure a whole-of-government approach is being taken to manage this evolving situation.

INZ's Beijing office remains temporarily closed in line with the Chinese Government's decision to close schools and businesses as part of their ongoing management of coronavirus.

It is likely that there will be some impact on visa processing times as a result of the temporary closure of the Beijing office. However, INZ is committed to minimising the impact on processing times as much as possible.

We understand visa applicants and current visa holders may have some questions about their specific circumstances. Below is some information that may address your concerns. These will be updated as more information becomes available.



Questions and Answers

All visas

I am in New Zealand on a visa that is about to expire, but I can't go back to my home country due to the travel restrictions.

Anyone in this position should contact INZ to discuss their options. Individuals who are currently in New Zealand are able to apply for a further visa, which will be assessed on a case by case basis against immigration instructions, taking into account the current coronavirus outbreak and any relevant travel restrictions.

I have been granted a visa but I am no longer able to travel to New Zealand because I left or transited mainland China after 2 February 2020.

Individuals in this situation will be refused entry to New Zealand and will not be able to travel until the restrictions are lifted by the New Zealand Government.

Can I get a refund for my visa if I'm not able to travel to New Zealand due to the travel restrictions?

Individuals who have already been approved a visa but are no longer able to come to New Zealand are not able to get a refund.

I have applied for a visa but can no longer travel to New Zealand as originally planned due to the travel restrictions. Can I withdraw my application and get a refund or change my travel dates?

Applicants who have applied for a visa who no longer wish to, or cannot, travel to New Zealand are able to withdraw their application by contacting INZ. Applicants who withdraw their application are not able to get a refund.

INZ is currently looking at options for applicants who want to change their travel dates.

Student visas

I have been approved a student visa but cannot travel due to travel restrictions. Do I need to apply for a new student visa if I want to defer my study?

If an individual is unable to come to New Zealand before the first entry date on their visa, they will need to apply for a new student visa. INZ encourages education providers to advise INZ of students who will now be starting their study in semester two.

If I apply for another student visa to study in semester two or defer until 2021, do I need to pay again?

INZ is currently considering whether applicants who cannot travel to undertake study as planned will be required to pay for a new application to begin studying in semester two. More information will be provided once decisions have been made.

I have more questions about my specific circumstances. Who can I talk to?

Student visa holders or applicants who have more questions should contact INZ about their situation. Individuals who have specific questions about their study plans should contact their education provider. INZ will be providing education providers with more detailed information as the situation evolves.

For general information on coronavirus in New Zealand, visit www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov.