

Pre-Departure Guide

Starting Your International Study Journey



UCOL

Te Pae Mātauranga ki te Ao
Universal College of Learning

UCOL.AC.NZ

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Welcome to UCOL!

Thank you for choosing us as your destination for study.

Studying abroad will be one of the most exciting and transformative times of your life. We encourage you to embrace the chance to challenge yourself, develop your independence, and create lifelong memories.

Moving to a new country can be daunting, especially if the culture is different from your own and you are far from family and friends. That's why we have produced this pre-departure guide - to simplify your transition to life in New Zealand and at UCOL, equipping you with essential information to get you started on your exciting new path.

At UCOL, we believe learning changes lives and opens doors and we are committed to helping our students succeed. If you have any questions or need assistance as you prepare to depart your home country, our International Student Support team is ready to help. You can email them at internationalsupport@ucol.ac.nz. We are dedicated to supporting you every step of the way, ensuring your time at UCOL is both successful and memorable.

We very much look forward to your arrival and are excited to welcome you into our UCOL whānau (family).

Before You Leave

Accommodation

Accommodation is something that needs to be arranged before you leave your home country. UCOL can provide advice on finding accommodation close to your campus and there are a few different options, such as renting an apartment, staying in a hostel, or going flatting (sharing an apartment with other students). You will need to contact the accommodation provider directly to book your place, or you can talk to your agent about this.

If you are under 18 years old, you must live with a designated caregiver. A "designated caregiver" is defined as a relative or close family friend who has been formally designated in writing by your parent or legal guardian.

Shared accommodation - Flatting

Students have the option to go flatting. Flatting is when you rent a house or an apartment with friends. If you choose this type of shared accommodation, we recommend staying for the first four weeks in short term accommodation as it can take some time to find a suitable place.

When flatting, you are responsible for providing your own furniture, paying your share of power/gas/water/internet, cooking your own meals, doing your own laundry and following the rental agreement.

Students need enough money to buy any required furniture, bedding, cooking utensils and other household items.

Hostels

There are hostels close to UCOL campuses with furnished rooms, kitchen and laundry facilities, offering both long term and short term accommodation, including:

@ the hub

Located in Palmerston North
Priced from \$265 per week.

Palmy 31

Located in Palmerston North
Single room \$205; double room \$255 per week.

Baxters

Located in Palmerston North
Single room \$205; double room \$255 per week.

Baptist Youth Hostel

Located in Palmerston North
Full-year fee for 2024: \$13,824 (includes 3 meals per day, unlimited Internet, and hostel-provided bed linen and two towels, laundered free of charge)

42b College House

Located in Whanganui
Priced from \$27-\$54 per night
Twin room: \$65

Tamara Riverside Lodge

Located at Whanganui
Priced from \$52 per night

Visit UCOL's website for more details about accommodation options in Palmerston North, Whanganui, and Wairarapa.

If you need assistance, feel free to get in touch with UCOL's International Student Support team internationalsupport@ucol.ac.nz.



Photo credit: Education New Zealand



Hand luggage

Before embarking on your journey, ensure you have the following key items securely packed in your hand luggage:

- Plane ticket
- Valid passport which covers your intended stay in New Zealand
- Student visa for New Zealand
- Copies of original documents previously supplied during the application stage and all documentation received from UCOL, including your Offer of Place letter and Confirmation of Place letter
- At least \$200 in cash in New Zealand dollars
- Copy of your insurance policy and certificate if you purchased your own
- Contact details for the UCOL International Student Support Team

Pro Tip: Keep a photocopy of your birth certificate and passport in your checked luggage, and leave a copy with someone at home for added security.

Baggage allowance

It's best not to bring too much luggage with you to New Zealand. Major airlines in New Zealand have different luggage restrictions, so make sure you check the requirements of your flight carrier before you leave. Ensure you have enough time between your international flight and domestic flight to collect your luggage, clear Customs and Biosecurity, and change terminals.

To be well-prepared for potential flight or processing delays, it's advisable to have contact details for the UCOL International Student Support Team and your accommodation provider readily available.

Arriving in New Zealand

Airport pickup

Your international flight will arrive in either Auckland, Wellington, or Christchurch. There are ground transport options, but the easiest and quickest option to get to either Palmerston North or Whanganui is a short domestic flight. We recommend purchasing this as part of your international flight ticket. If you need to arrange ground transportation, please contact us to talk through options.

As soon as you know your flight number, let us know by email so that we can arrange transport for you when you arrive at the local airport. We'll inform you of your pickup plan. It will most likely be one of our friendly International Student Support team members.

Please note: Palmerston North and Whanganui are a long way from Auckland, Wellington, or Christchurch and we do not offer a free pickup service from these locations.

Customs regulations

New Zealand has very strict regulations around what items are allowed into the country. You have the option to complete a digital declaration up to 24 hours before you start your journey to New Zealand, or a paper declaration form which you will be given on the plane. You will need to read carefully and tick 'yes' to declare any items you have with you or in your baggage. If you are unsure about an item, there is no problem declaring it; New Zealand Customs will advise you if you are able to bring it into the country. There are fines and penalties for false declarations. It's better to be safe than sorry! Do not bring fresh food, animal products, fish, shellfish, shells, uncured wood products, plant life (e.g. seeds), or illicit drugs. Remember to bring a doctor's prescription for any medication you may be carrying.

If you complete a paper declaration form, you will need to present this, along with your passport, at the passport control point when you arrive in New Zealand.

For full details, visit the following websites:

[New Zealand Customs](#)

[How to declare items when arriving in NZ | NZ Government \(mpi.govt.nz\)](#)

[Home | New Zealand Traveller Declaration](#)



Settling In

Enrolment process

When you arrive at UCOL, you will need to undertake the enrolment process. It's important to complete this step before commencing your classes so that you have access to everything you need for your study. If you're studying at our Manawatū campus in Palmerston North, please go to the Information Centre. For those enrolled at our Whanganui campus, please go to the Reception desk in the atrium. Remember to bring along your passport, visa letter, and the original documents submitted during the application process to complete your enrolment.

Contact details for enquiries related to your enrolment:

Email: internationalstudent@ucol.ac.nz

Phone: +64 6 952 7000

Freephone: 0800 468 265 (within New Zealand)



Manawatū campus

18 Princess Street, Palmerston North

Information Centre opening hours:

Monday – Friday 8am-4:30pm



Whanganui campus

16 Rutland Street, Whanganui

Opening hours: Monday – Friday 8am-4:30pm

International support staff

UCOL's dedicated, professional staff are experienced at looking after the educational, practical, and social needs of international students. They care about your experience and will help you make the most of your time at UCOL. Our international support staff work closely with other members of the Student Success Team to ensure the academic and wellbeing needs of international students are met. In your first week they will be in touch with you to attend Orientation which will include tailored tutorials, campus and facilities tours, and visits to local attractions.



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Student Success

Student Success offers a wide range of free services to support, encourage, and guide you through your academic journey. We're here to help you achieve your goals and make the most of your UCOL experience.

Student Engagement Hub

The Engagement Hub team are dedicated to working alongside students to support them in reaching their academic goals and connecting them with other services when required.

Wellbeing Hub

Physical, psychological, and social wellbeing play a big part in students' success, both in the classroom and in life. Each UCOL campus has specialist wellbeing staff who can provide direct assistance, or refer you to an external, professional organisation.

Library and Learning Hub

The Library and Learning Hub provides a range of services to develop and enhance students' academic skills across all levels and areas of study. You will learn skills that will support your success at UCOL, and beyond.

Our Learning Advisors provide individual support and group workshops throughout the year to help you get ahead in your studies. UCOL's campus libraries contain a wealth of information including online resources such as eBooks, eJournals, and article databases. We know that finding the right information for your assignment can be challenging, so our library staff can assist you to develop effective information management and research skills.

Careers and employability

This is a service offering career support, advice, and guidance in how to seek both part-time work while you are studying and employment after you graduate. You will have the opportunity to develop your knowledge and skills to improve your employability, including creating a CV and cover letter, and learning interview skills. You will also learn about your employment rights and responsibilities.



Living in New Zealand

Rental accommodation information

The **Tenancy Services** website provides essential information for both tenants and landlords in New Zealand. It covers topics such as market rent, details about rent and bond payments, and other expenses related to renting a property. The website also outlines the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants under the Residential Tenancies Act and offers mediation services to help resolve disputes between parties involved in tenancies. For more detailed information, visit the Tenancy Services website.

[tenancy.govt.nz](https://www.tenancy.govt.nz)

The Housing Advice Centre provides a free 24-hour accommodation listing service for Palmerston North.

[housingadvice.org.nz](https://www.housingadvice.org.nz)

Transport

Urban bus service

During your time as a student at UCOL, you can travel on the Palmerston North and Whanganui urban buses for free by showing your Student ID card to the driver. You can check when the next bus will be arriving with real-time tracking using your mobile phone.

[horizons.dynamis.live/#/home](https://www.horizons.dynamis.live/#/home)

Full-time students at UCOL's Wairarapa campus are eligible for discounted trips on Metlink bus services. See [metlink.org.nz](https://www.metlink.org.nz) for more information.

Driving in New Zealand

Students must know the New Zealand road rules before driving in New Zealand.

In general, you can drive using your overseas driver's license for up to 12 months, but after this time you must convert your license to a New Zealand driver's license. Read more about the rules and regulations from the New Zealand Transport Agency. [nzta.govt.nz](https://www.nzta.govt.nz)

National public transport

New Zealand's national public transport system includes buses, ferries and trains. Students planning a tour throughout New Zealand can obtain special student travel passes. Discount fares are also available for plane travel if booked early. Read more on [New Zealand Tourism's website](https://www.visitnz.com).

Keeping safe in New Zealand

In the 2023 Global Peace Index Report, which compares 163 countries according to their level of peacefulness, New Zealand was ranked 4th most peaceful country. Regardless of a 'very high' state of peace, international students must take necessary precautions to keep safe.

You can read some helpful tips in the New Zealand Police's Your Guide to Keeping Safe in New Zealand (available in several languages). police.govt.nz

In the event of an emergency, call the following numbers:

- Fire/Police/Ambulance: 111
- Non-emergency police assistance and reporting incidents: 105
- UCOL's 24-hour international student support emergency number: 021 242 7625

Weather in New Zealand

New Zealand experiences a temperate climate with four distinct seasons. In the Manawatū-Whanganui and Wairarapa regions, winters tend to be mild, with temperatures ranging from 5°C to 15°C (41°F to 59°F), while summers are warm and enjoyable with temperatures varying between 20°C and 30°C (68°F to 86°F). The region receives a moderate amount of rainfall throughout the year.

During winter, for those who enjoy the outdoors, nearby ski fields offer opportunities for snowboarding and skiing adventures, while in summer, students have the chance to explore the stunning natural beauty of the region. The pleasant climate is perfect for hikes, outdoor gatherings and picnics, and engaging in water-based activities like swimming, kayaking, and beach outings.

It is recommended that you bring a mix of clothing options to accommodate the changing weather conditions, including:

- Woollen jersey
- Waterproof jacket
- Umbrella
- Covered shoes with rubber soles
- Sports shoes

[New Zealand climate and weather | 100% Pure New Zealand \(newzealand.com\)](https://www.visitnz.com)





Opening a bank account

We recommend opening a New Zealand bank account before leaving your home country. You can start the process once you receive your visa and up to 90 days before arriving. We suggest ANZ's Jumpstart account which is designed for full-time students.

To apply, visit [Moving to New Zealand](http://anz.co.nz/personal/moving-to-new-zealand) and complete ANZ's online application form. Note that it may take up to 15 days to open your account after submitting all required information. When you arrive at UCOL, we will provide you with a letter confirming your New Zealand address. You will need to take this letter to your local branch to verify your identity and activate your account.

If you decide to open a bank account after you arrive, UCOL's international support staff will be available to assist you with the process.

anz.co.nz/personal/moving-to-new-zealand

Working in New Zealand

With a Student Visa, you may be entitled to work part-time, up to 20 hours per week and full-time during scheduled holidays, depending on your visa conditions.

Check your visa to confirm your study and work rights while in New Zealand.

Find out more about the work rules for students on the Naumai NZ website.

naumainz.studyinnewzealand.govt.nz

Paying tax

If you intend to work while studying in New Zealand, you will need to apply for an IRD number and pay tax on your income. Visit Inland Revenue's website to find out about your tax obligations and how to apply for an IRD number.

[I am coming to work or study in New Zealand \(ird.govt.nz\)](http://ird.govt.nz)

Job search websites

The Careers NZ website can be used as a resource for researching jobs in your field of study and learning how to apply for jobs in New Zealand.

careers.govt.nz

Cost of living in New Zealand

UCOL's campuses are located in regional cities where the cost of living is lower than in the bigger cities, particularly accommodation and transport costs. Living costs will also depend on the lifestyle you choose and on your budgeting skills.

The Study With New Zealand website provides some typical living costs and the Sorted website has a tool to help you plan a detailed budget.

studywithnewzealand.govt.nz

sorted.org.nz/tool/budgeting-tool#

Food in New Zealand

A complete range of fresh meats, poultry and fish is available in New Zealand. Fresh fruit and vegetables are plentiful, and you can get the best variety and prices at specialty vegetable shops.

Ethnic foodstuffs are available from most supermarkets in their international section and at specialty stores.

All of the UCOL campuses are located within close walking distance of restaurants and food outlets catering to a variety of cuisines.

If you plan on bringing food from your home country, research [what is allowed under New Zealand law](#).



Mobile phone

We understand how important it is to stay connected with friends and family. That's why UCOL provides international students with a free 2 Degrees SIM card on arrival so that you can easily obtain a New Zealand phone number.

Doctors and health services in New Zealand

In New Zealand, [registering for a doctor](#) (general practitioner or GP) is free and easy.

For medical attention after 5pm and on weekends, there are after-hours medical centres and services available to all students across New Zealand.

If you have medical questions or concerns while in New Zealand, you can call Healthline 0800 611 116. Healthline is a free 24-hour telephone health advice service funded by the government's Ministry of Health. This service is operated by registered nurses who will assess a person's condition and health needs, and recommend the best course of action to take. They can also provide general health information and location of services.

Health service provider in Whanganui

If you are a student at UCOL's Whanganui campus, you can access free health services provided by Whatever, a youth-oriented health organisation.

UCOL students of all ages are eligible for these services. You will just need to show your student ID card.

39 Drews Avenue, Whanganui | +64 6 348 9935

whatever.org.nz

Legal and immigration

Immigration and student visas

If you are planning to study in New Zealand for more than three months, you will need to apply for a student visa. You can apply for your student visa online.

Use [INZ's first-time student visa information sheet](#) to make sure you provide the right documents and evidence to support your first-time student visa application.

UCOL recommends that you use the services of a Licensed Immigration Adviser or an exempt person, e.g. a lawyer or an offshore agent, to ensure your visa application complies with Immigration New Zealand's legal requirements.

immigration.govt.nz

Medical and travel insurance

Immigration New Zealand requires all international students to have comprehensive medical and travel insurance while studying in New Zealand.

UCOL will arrange insurance on your behalf with our preferred insurance provider, with the cost for the first period of insurance shown on your offer of place letter.

Travel cover commences 31 days from the course start date and full cover commences on your day of departure to travel to New Zealand.

You will be fully insured until the expiry of your student visa or when you return to your home country (whichever is earlier). Policy information and information on how to make a claim will have been sent to you. If you need to make a claim, contact the International Student Support team if you require assistance.

If you intend to purchase your own insurance, you must send us a copy of your insurance policy and insurance certificate as proof of purchase. This will also allow us to review the policy to ensure it meets the minimum standard of cover required by the [Education Code of Practice 2021](#) (refer page 29 of the Code).

insurancesafenz.com/studentsafe

Code of Practice

As an approved signatory to the New Zealand Government's Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (the Code), UCOL is committed to the well-being of its international students. The Code emphasises the responsibility educational providers have to ensure that international students arriving in New Zealand are well-informed, safe, and well-cared for.

For detailed information about your rights and the protections offered by the Code, visit the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) website. Translated summaries of the Code are available in several languages: [NZQA website](#).

Explore these "Know the Code" videos on the NZQA website, which are specifically tailored for international students:

- An overview of the Code for international learners (1:09 mins)
- Education agents (0:55 mins)
- Enrolments and contracts (1:34 mins)

These resources are designed to ensure you are fully aware of your rights and what you can expect during your educational journey at UCOL. Watching these short, informative videos can greatly enhance your understanding and experience.

How to submit a complaint

If you believe that UCOL is not complying with the Code or if you are experiencing a financial or contractual dispute, you should initially discuss your concerns with UCOL and follow our complaints process.

If UCOL doesn't resolve your complaint to your satisfaction, you can escalate it to NZQA or to Study Complaints. NZQA will only investigate your concerns if you have already gone through UCOL's complaints process.

For further guidance on how to proceed with your complaint, please visit:

- [NZQA Complaints Process](#)
- [Study Complaints](#)

Accident insurance

The Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) provides accident insurance for all New Zealand citizens, residents, and temporary visitors to New Zealand, but you may still be liable for all other medical and related costs.

Visit acc.co.nz for further information.

Tuition fee refund and withdrawal policy

The following table is a summary of UCOL's tuition fee refund and withdrawal policy. Ensure you have read and understand the refund policy before arriving at UCOL. For official policy wording, see [International Student Fees and Refunds Procedure](#).

Reason for Withdrawal ¹	Documentation required	Date of Withdrawal	Amount of Refund	Admin Charge
Failure to obtain appropriate visa from Immigration New Zealand.	Written notification of withdrawal.	Prior to commencing the programme.	100% of the fees ² received by UCOL, less the administration charge.	\$250
		After commencing the programme.	Partial refund of the fees ² at the discretion of UCOL.	
The Student no longer wishes to study at UCOL (for students issued a visa in the name of UCOL).	Written notification of withdrawal ³ .	2 or more weeks before commencing the programme.	100% of the fees ² received by UCOL, less the administration charge.	\$500
		Between 2 weeks prior and 2 weeks after commencing the programme.	90% of the fees ² received by UCOL, less the administration charge.	
		More than two weeks after commencing the programme.	No refund.	
UCOL is no longer able to provide tertiary education services, withdraws an offer of place or is unable to provide the programme for any reason.	No documentation required.	Prior to commencing the programme.	100% of the fees ² received by UCOL.	Nil
Exceptional circumstances (for example serious illness).	Documentation supporting an application for a refund.	At any time.	The amount and approval of any refund is at the discretion of the Chief Executive, or delegate. The student is expected to seek redress from their insurer before applying to UCOL.	\$500
Any reason not detailed above.		Less than two weeks before commencing the programme.	90% of the fees ² received by UCOL, less the administration fee.	\$500
		More than two weeks after commencing the programme.	No refund.	

Notes:

¹ UCOL reserves the right to withdraw an Offer of Place because of incorrect or incomplete information supplied by a student or student's agent, and retain part or all of the fees paid.

² Fees: aligns with the tuition fees, student services levy, insurance and all other charges detailed on the Offer of Place.

³ If a student has arrived in New Zealand, proof they have returned to their normal country of residence, or received an alternate visa to remain in New Zealand.

Terms and conditions of enrolment

Please make sure that you have read and understand the terms and conditions of your enrolment before you start your studies. Full details are available here: [International Enrolment Terms and Conditions \(ucol.ac.nz\)](https://international.enrolment.termsandconditions.ucol.ac.nz).

Useful information

Handy resources for students

- [NZ Ready](#) – Immigration New Zealand resource and checklist to help you prepare for your journey.
- [History and Culture of New Zealand](#) – learn about New Zealand history, language and culture.
- [NauMai NZ](#) – Education New Zealand's website to support you during your time in New Zealand.
- [Palmerston North / Manawatū Tourism](#)
- [Whanganui Tourism](#)
- Join UCOL's [International Student Facebook Group](#) and follow us on [Instagram](#).
- Connect with the [Manawatū Multicultural Council \(MMC\)](#) or the [Whanganui Multicultural Council](#). These groups provide support to newcomers and organise social activities, events, networking opportunities, and more.





Have any questions? We're here to help.

Get in touch with our International Student Support team.

Phone: +64 6 952 7000

Email: internationalsupport@ucol.ac.nz

Website: ucol.ac.nz

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