

Character Requirements

Character checks are fundamental to almost all visa applications

The intention of the character check is to prevent people who pose a risk to New Zealand's safety or reputation from entering or staying in the country.

Do I need to be honest?

Yes! Providing false or misleading information or withholding any relevant information is taken very seriously by INZ. Failing to be open and honest can result in your application being declined.

Can previous criminal convictions affect my visa application?

Yes. Convictions may mean you are ineligible for a visa, or ineligible unless granted a character waiver. However, not every conviction has this outcome, so it is good to get advice.

How do I show that I meet the good character requirements?

You must declare any relevant information. You may also be required to provide police certificates from your country of citizenship as well as any country where you have resided for specified periods.

What are the key character requirements?

Applicants must not:

- Have been convicted of certain serious crimes, either in New Zealand or overseas;
- Been convicted of an offence in New Zealand where the court was able to impose imprisonment for a term of three months or more;
- Have been excluded, deported, or removed from any country, including New Zealand;
- Be judged as likely to commit criminal offences, pose a risk to security, or to incite social or racial disharmony;
- Be associated with groups or activities deemed criminal, dangerous, or contrary to New Zealand's interests.

What happens if I do not meet the character requirements?

You may be able to apply for a character waiver. This is where INZ waives the good character requirement.

How does INZ decide whether to grant me a character waiver?

It will depend on whether you are applying for a temporary or residence visa as to what factors INZ will take into consideration.

INZ will always consider the circumstances around any convictions or character issue along with your personal circumstances. This includes all circumstances regarding any offending, such as how long ago any offending occurred, the provision of any false or misleading information, the sentence imposed by any court, as well as any mitigating circumstances.

INZ will also consider the purpose of the visa you are applying for; and your connection and potential contribution to New Zealand (such as family connections or skills needed in the workforce).

Why choose Duncan Cotterill?

Duncan Cotterill's immigration team is experienced in guiding clients through every step of the visa application process, including where complex character issues arise. If you have concerns about meeting the character requirements or wish to discuss your eligibility for a character waiver, contact our team today. We are here to help you realise your immigration goals and make your journey to New Zealand as smooth as possible.

Contact our immigration team today for expert advice tailored to your situation.

Contact us



Nicola Tiffen
Partner

[Email me](#)



Nicky Robertson
Special Counsel

[Email me](#)