



**OTAGO**  
POLYTECHNIC  
Te Kura Matatini ki Otago

**Auckland  
International  
Campus**

In partnership with  
Future Skills Academy

# Pre-arrival guide

Everything you need to know  
before you leave home





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## Studying in New Zealand

So, you've made the decision to travel all the way to New Zealand to discover a new country and to gain some international experience. You've been offered a place at the Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus, your bags are packed and you're ready to begin an exciting adventure. However, studying in NZ might be very different from what you're used to. Here are some things you can do to avoid 'academic culture shock'.

Things you can start doing to prepare yourself:

- ▶ Become familiar with the experiential learning model
- ▶ Learn about academic integrity
- ▶ Use referencing in your writing
- ▶ Learn how to write academically
- ▶ Start practising critical thinking
- ▶ Get good at time management
- ▶ Gain confidence in your language skills.



## Experiential learning

We explain the differences between traditional and experiential learning.

TRADITIONAL LEARNING	EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
Teacher talks a lot.	Teacher doesn't talk much – gives a few instructions on how to do something and asks questions.
Students sit and listen.	Students do something – activities inside or outside the classroom.
Students memorise information.	Students reflect on the activities to think of a better way of doing them, or of what they learnt from the experience.
Students write assignments to show what they have memorised.	Students do assignments which apply the understanding from classroom activities to real-world examples.

Watch this two-minute video to find out more about experiential learning.

[youtube.com/watch?v=CJN9QKufPc](https://youtube.com/watch?v=CJN9QKufPc)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Adventure Associates (2016, February 24). Experiential Learning Explained – Definition and Theory.

Concrete  
experience

Active  
experimentation

Reflective  
observation

## Academic integrity

All students are expected to have academic integrity when producing any work for their studies. Having academic integrity means that you will be honest when you create any work and will not claim that somebody else's work is your own.

You are not allowed to cheat, copy the work of another student, pay somebody else to do your work for you or use plagiarism when working on your assignments. If you do, there are serious consequences, and you may not be able to continue your studies.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating, where you use all or part of somebody else's work and pretend that it is your own. This includes information from books, journals, the internet and other students. Plagiarism also includes when you put somebody else's work into your own words without showing the source of the information.

It's possible to plagiarise by accident if you don't have the right academic skills.

Read more about academic integrity and how to avoid plagiarism here: [studentsupport.op.ac.nz/learning-support/academic-integrity/](https://studentsupport.op.ac.nz/learning-support/academic-integrity/)

## Use referencing in your writing

In New Zealand tertiary institutions such as OPAIC, you will be expected to take information you find in your research and use it in your writing.

One of the ways to avoid plagiarism is to make sure that you are referencing other people's research correctly. Here is a guide to citing and referencing that you can come back to once you start your studies – it will help you to become competent at this skill: [studentservices.op.ac.nz/learning-support/citingandreferencing/](https://studentservices.op.ac.nz/learning-support/citingandreferencing/)

## Learn how to write academically

Academic writing skills are extremely important, not only for your success in your studies, but also for your ability to get a quality job.

Many students find academic writing challenging, but there are some simple guidelines you can follow to improve in this essential skill. You may be asked to do different types of writing, but they are all built around well-structured paragraphs. Have a look at these tips on how to write an effective paragraph: [studentservices.op.ac.nz/learning-support/structuring-text/](https://studentservices.op.ac.nz/learning-support/structuring-text/)

## Start practising critical thinking

Critical thinking means learning to think for yourself both on your own and in collaboration with others.

Linda is a Chinese student who had achieved good marks in her English major in China, yet when she started a master degree in England and got her first assignment back, she was shocked to find that she had only just passed. "That was the lowest mark I have ever got in my educational history and I was really sad and I doubted myself." Linda said.

It turned out that Linda had not shown critical thinking in her essay. Her lecturer explained how expectations differed from what she was used to.

"He said I did a very good literature review but I wasn't showing my own opinion about what I had researched – there was no critical thinking being displayed and I needed to justify why I went with one choice over another."

"It was like the difference between a cook and a chef. A cook follows the recipe, but a chef understands the elements and can recombine them because he understands why each ingredient is there. I was writing like a cook when there was the expectation that I'd be a chef."

References: Education Central (2018). Navigating Chinese students' culture shock.  
Retrieved from: <https://educationcentral.co.nz/navigating-chinese-students-culture-shock/>

To find out more about critical thinking, click here:

[studentservices.op.ac.nz/learning-support/critical-thinking/](https://studentservices.op.ac.nz/learning-support/critical-thinking/)

## Get good at time management

When you come to New Zealand you will be very busy. You will be expected to study for 37.5 hours a week, and as well as that you may have a part-time job.

If you are a keen student who wants to succeed you may want to study more than the suggested hours. OPAIC also provides activities and suggestions for you to get to know beautiful New Zealand. How are you going to fit all this in? You need to get good at managing your time. For some ideas of how to take control of your time, have a look at these suggestions: [studentservices.op.ac.nz/learning-support/time-management/](https://studentservices.op.ac.nz/learning-support/time-management/)

## Gain confidence in your language skills

Do you feel confident in your English language skills? It's a good idea to practise your speaking and listening before you come to this country so that you are confident to speak up in class and participate in classroom activities.

In New Zealand we expect you to have opinions and express them politely, to discuss issues with your classmates and lecturers and to become informed on different points of view about your subject area. Practise reading widely in English before you arrive so you can do the research that is expected in your course. Make sure that your written work is accurate. Here are some useful tips on grammar that can help you improve: [studentservices.op.ac.nz/learning-support/](https://studentservices.op.ac.nz/learning-support/)

Once you arrive at OPAIC, you can get help with your academic studies in a number of ways:

- ▶ Take advantage of free peer tutors. These senior students can help you with your assignments and your course materials.
- ▶ Attend academic skills workshops. These will reinforce the academic skills you need to succeed in your studies.
- ▶ Look at the academic support resources online. These are always at your fingertips.
- ▶ Keep in touch with your lecturers and make sure you ask questions whenever you don't understand something.

## Succeeding as a student at OPAIC

You go through two major transitions as an international student: firstly to life as a student at OPAIC, and then to life as an employable graduate.

There are a range of services to support you as you navigate the challenges and opportunities of these two important transitions. Pre-arrival information is also on our website: [auckland.op.ac.nz/important-information/pre-arrival-information/](https://auckland.op.ac.nz/important-information/pre-arrival-information/)

### A safe and stress-free arrival

OPAIC offers new students a free airport pickup service, provided by Quick Shuttle. If you would like an airport pickup from Auckland International Airport and have not booked this already, please complete this online form at least 48 hours in advance of your arrival: [form.jotform.co/OPAIC/pickup](https://form.jotform.co/OPAIC/pickup).

After clearing New Zealand Customs, please come to Door 11, the main exit. A Quick Shuttle representative will be waiting for you here with a sign displaying your name two hours after your flight arrival time. This will give you plenty of time to get through customs. If you have any issues locating Quick Shuttle, please call **0800 366 723** or ask the Visitor Information Desk.

If you are bringing family members with you, an additional charge will apply. Please add this information in the 'Special Requirements' field in the booking form.

Cancellations must be made 48 hours in advance by emailing [info@quickshuttle.co.nz](mailto:info@quickshuttle.co.nz).

## Short-term accommodation

Until you find somewhere more permanent to live, there are several hostels in central Auckland. The YMCA Hostel is very popular with other young travellers and students, and is just a five minute walk from our campus. There are private, furnished rooms available for about \$385 per week, as well as dormitory-style accommodation for about \$295 per week. Please visit their website at [www.ymcaaccommodation.org.nz/accommodation/ymca-hostel](http://www.ymcaaccommodation.org.nz/accommodation/ymca-hostel) for more information or to book.

Choice Backpackers is a two minute walk from our campus. If you would like to share a room with other students, Choice Backpackers makes every effort to try and put students together. Accommodation options range from six bed and four bed dormitories to twin, double and single private rooms. Costs range from \$174 a week for a six bed dorm to \$390 a week for a single private room. Daily rates are also available. OPAIC students are entitled to 10% off these costs and free Wi-Fi. Choice Backpackers is fully booked at certain times of the year, so make sure you book as early as possible. To book online, go to: [www.hostelnz.co.nz](http://www.hostelnz.co.nz)

## Long-term accommodation

Be sure to do your research before committing to something permanent. If you're unsure, it's a good idea to book some short-term accommodation to give you some time to get a feel for the city, and the people you meet. Then you can confidently commit to a longer-term lease.

OPAIC does not own any of its own accommodation.

Most of our students prefer to do what New Zealanders call 'flatting' – staying in a shared house with other people. See [auckland.op.ac.nz/important-information/pre-arrival-information/finding-a-place-to-live/](http://auckland.op.ac.nz/important-information/pre-arrival-information/finding-a-place-to-live/)

We also suggest you consider homestay as an option. This is where you stay in the welcoming home of an approved family in Auckland. Your stay includes all meals and a private, furnished bedroom. Host Families NZ matches students and visitors with their ideal host family by providing each party with a detailed profile. You can feel safe and secure knowing that all host families are interviewed, and police screened. Whether you're looking for short-term or long-term stays, their dedicated and experienced team match you with your ideal host. The placement fee is \$300 and weekly accommodation is \$330. Additional fees may be charged if you have special food requirements. You can expect a safe and welcoming family environment, a private bedroom, laundry availability, breakfast and dinner every day, lunches over the weekends, internet, electricity and water, and 24-hour support in case of an emergency. For more information, please email [admin@hostfamilies.co.nz](mailto:admin@hostfamilies.co.nz) or call them on 021 026 91882. You can also visit their website here.

Auckland Homestay Services arrange for students to stay in the welcoming home of an approved family in Auckland. Your stay includes all meals and a private, furnished bedroom. The cost is \$350 per week for two meals Monday-Friday and three meals Saturday and Sunday. There is also a \$300 placement fee. Please email [homestay91ct@gmail.com](mailto:homestay91ct@gmail.com) for more information.

## Enjoying life in Auckland

Auckland is an amazing city to live in. It is a beautiful place with beaches, parks and forests. There are hundreds of cafes, restaurants and bars.

We recommend checking out the Auckland Unlimited website, which is a great source of information for international students about getting the most out of life in Auckland: [www.aucklandnz.com/visit/discover](http://www.aucklandnz.com/visit/discover) or go to the Nau Mai NZ website at [naumainz.studyinnewzealand.govt.nz](http://naumainz.studyinnewzealand.govt.nz)



# Departure Checklist

## One week before you leave

- ▶ Save online copies of important travel information to a cloud-based storage account such as Google Docs or Dropbox. Copy your passport, insurance policy, itinerary, traveller's cheques, and visa and credit card numbers. It's a good idea to print a hard copy of all documents and leave them at home with a friend or family member.
- ▶ We recommend you bring a passport sized photo with you to New Zealand in case you need to replace a lost passport or obtain any other form of identification.
- ▶ Please do some research into the cost of living. Auckland is an expensive city to live in. One great resource showing you some costs is: [www.studyinnewzealand.govt.nz/live-work/cost-of-living/](http://www.studyinnewzealand.govt.nz/live-work/cost-of-living/)
- ▶ Exchange some money into NZD currency and have at least NZD\$300 for when you arrive to cover airport transfers and general expenses. Visa and Master Card are preferred in NZ, but many places accept American Express credit cards.
- ▶ Familiarise yourself with customs and immigration rules as different countries have different laws and policies. New Zealand has strict border security in order to protect our wildlife and environment, view here what you can and can't bring with you: [www.customs.govt.nz/personal/prohibited-and-restricted-items/](http://www.customs.govt.nz/personal/prohibited-and-restricted-items/)
- ▶ Find and save the details of your national embassy in New Zealand.
- ▶ Check your airline ticket for your carry-on and checked luggage allowance. Most airlines allow 7kg carry-on and 20kg checked.
- ▶ Purchase a padlock to secure your checked baggage. Medication must be correctly labelled and attached to a subscription.
- ▶ Download the helpful travel apps: Trip Advisor, Uber, Auckland Airport, Hello Auckland (we highly recommend this one), Skype, and the app for your airline (for example Air New Zealand).
- ▶ Download movies onto your devices so you have entertainment on the plane!
- ▶ Understand your telco's data roaming costs so you don't get a large phone bill when you arrive in Auckland. You can buy a pre-paid SIM at Auckland International Airport. Our main providers are Spark, Vodafone, 2 Degrees and Skinny Mobile.

## Departure day

- ▶ Triple check you have all the correct paperwork – airline ticket, passport, photo identification, insurance policy, itinerary, traveller's cheques, credit card.
- ▶ Note down the OPAIC emergency contact number, **021 0282 8711**, in case you need help during your travels.
- ▶ Wear comfortable clothing and shoes.
- ▶ Arrive at the airport early, two to three hours before your flight is due to board.

## Orientation

When you first arrive at Otago Polytechnic, you will take part in an orientation programme. It will introduce you to your new study environment.

During Orientation welcome week you will learn about the services, facilities and support available to students.

It is important that you know your way around and understand our expectations before you start your classes. It is compulsory to attend Orientation and your attendance will be recorded. Students are required to attend 100% of their classes here at OPAIC, and this starts with Orientation.

You can find a detailed Orientation schedule here: [auckland.op.ac.nz/important-information/pre-arrival-information/orientation/](http://auckland.op.ac.nz/important-information/pre-arrival-information/orientation/)





## The Employability Centre: helping you to become work ready

Throughout your studies at OPAIC, you are encouraged to engage in different forms of work experience in order to develop your skills and capabilities in a New Zealand context.

These experiences could take the form of industry placements, industry projects, part-time and casual work, participating in groups and clubs, or voluntary work.

Having recently arrived in New Zealand, you may feel overwhelmed or unsure about how to find or apply for these opportunities. This is a common and normal feeling but preparing early and having a proactive attitude can make this transition smoother.

Seven things you can start doing to prepare yourself:

1. Explore opportunities (research the labour market)
2. Be aware of the top capabilities required by employers
3. Know your rights to work in New Zealand
4. Understand your strengths and preferences
5. Write down your career goals and aspirations
6. Create a New Zealand style CV and cover letter
7. Familiarise yourself with the Employability Centre Team.



## 1. Explore opportunities (research the labour market)

Start researching the labour market and understanding what job roles exist in New Zealand. The following websites provide industry trends and job information:

Careers New Zealand	<a href="http://www.careers.govt.nz/job-hunting/new-to-new-zealand">www.careers.govt.nz/job-hunting/new-to-new-zealand</a>
New Zealand Now	<a href="http://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/work-in-nz/nz-jobs-industries">www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/work-in-nz/nz-jobs-industries</a>
SEEK	<a href="http://www.seek.co.nz">www.seek.co.nz</a>
TradeMe Jobs	<a href="http://www.trademe.co.nz/jobs">www.trademe.co.nz/jobs</a>

## 2. Be aware of the top capabilities required by employers

New Zealand employers value some capabilities (also referred to as skills and characteristics) more than others in the workplace. In your home country different capabilities may have been valued so it is critical that you understand what capabilities are required for you to be successful in the New Zealand workforce.

Some of the essential capabilities identified by employers are:

- ▶ Problem solving
- ▶ Critical thinking
- ▶ Working independently
- ▶ Effective interpersonal behaviour
- ▶ Communicating effectively in writing
- ▶ Team work
- ▶ Resilience
- ▶ Ability to reflect on performance
- ▶ Acting responsibly

Watch this five-minute video to learn more about the skills and capabilities employers want.

<https://youtu.be/ivs9S67wdEI>

During your studies you will have opportunities to develop and reflect on these capabilities as well as other employability skills deemed important in the workforce.

## 3. Know your work rights in New Zealand

Under New Zealand employment law, it is important to abide by the conditions of your visa and to be aware of the rules, and your rights and responsibilities.

Information on New Zealand employment rights: [www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/work-in-nz/employment-rights](http://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/work-in-nz/employment-rights)

## 4. Understand your strengths and preferences

It is important to understand who you are and to know what things you enjoy doing. Take the time to think about your interests, values, skills and experiences. Think about what appeals to you most. These insights can help inform the type of placement or future career opportunities you may pursue.

Tips on how to reflect on your strengths and preferences: [www.careers.govt.nz/plan-your-career/start-to-plan-or-change-your-career/where-do-i-start/](http://www.careers.govt.nz/plan-your-career/start-to-plan-or-change-your-career/where-do-i-start/)

## 5. Write down your career goals and aspirations

Start writing down a list of all the things you wish to achieve or develop during your time at OPAIC. It could include getting experience in a particular industry, developing your communication skills, joining a club or group, learning more about digital marketing, or getting information from an employer for example. Having goals (big or small) keeps you focused and provides a clear path for your development.

Learn about setting SMART goals here: [www.mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.htm)

## 6. Create a New Zealand style CV and cover letter

The purpose of your CV is to get yourself an interview. Your CV (also called a résumé) should show a potential employer that you're the person they're looking for and that they will benefit from hiring you. Your CV will include your personal details, and a summary of your work experience, qualifications, training, skills, expertise, and project work.

Take the time to look at templates and examples of CVs that are acceptable in New Zealand and start adapting your CV to suit. The Careers New Zealand website has lots of great information on how to create a CV: [www.careers.govt.nz/job-hunting/cvs-and-cover-letters/](http://www.careers.govt.nz/job-hunting/cvs-and-cover-letters/)

Be proactive and have your CV adapted and checked in your first study block.

A cover letter is a document you send with your CV, which explains why you are interested in the job, highlighting certain reasons you think make you right for the role.

Tips on how to create a cover letter: [www.careers.govt.nz/job-hunting/cvs-and-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cover-letter/](http://www.careers.govt.nz/job-hunting/cvs-and-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cover-letter/)

## 7. Familiarise yourself with the Employability Centre Team

Throughout your time at OPAIC, you will actively engage with the Employability Centre Team.

They can provide:

- ▶ Online information and resources on a variety of employability topics.
- ▶ Career services: Make an appointment with the employability team by sending an email to [opaicemployability@op.ac.nz](mailto:opaicemployability@op.ac.nz) for one-on-one employability support.
- ▶ Employability skills workshops and guest speaker presentations from a range of industry employers and alumni.
- ▶ Industry and employability networking events.
- ▶ Opportunities to undertake an industry placement, with support from a dedicated Placement Consultant.

Follow the team on Facebook: **Work Ready @OPAIC**

To be successful and increase your chances of gaining work, we recommend you take advantage of the workshops, presentations and networking events provided. Be proactive!

Come and visit the team on Level 4. *We're here to help you.*

# Our expectations of students

## Attendance

Attend 100% of your classes, and show up on time. Send a medical certificate to [studentsuccessaic@op.ac.nz](mailto:studentsuccessaic@op.ac.nz)

## Assessment

Complete assessment items on time and take responsibility for any missed class time and failed assessments.

Raise any queries about what is expected of you with your lecturer at the first opportunity.

## English Language Ability

Demonstrate the level of English language ability associated with the admission requirements for your programme.

Talk to your lecturer, if you have trouble understanding them. If you feel you are having difficulty understanding what is covered in class, see the Learning Support Team on Level 8.

## Engagement and Attitude

Actively participate in class, pay attention and respect your teachers and classmates.

Regularly use Moodle and check your OP email. If you feel un-motivated, please see the Student Success team on Level 1.

## Workload and Self-Study

Work the required hours outside the classroom. You will be told how many hours you are expected to work for each course. This ranges from 1.34 hours outside class for each hour of class time for Level 5, to 3.7 hours for Level 8 and 9 courses (postgrad).

## Academic Integrity

Produce your own work and don't copy from other sources for individual assessments.

Reference properly - using APA referencing. Please talk to your lecturers, or the Learning Support Team if you are unsure of the expectations in this area.

## Group Work

Contribute to group projects. This means communicating professionally with group members, and producing a genuine joint effort on group projects. Talk to your lecturer if you have any issues with group work.

Meeting these expectations is the key to developing your employability and succeeding as a student.



We're looking forward to welcoming you to Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus.





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Visit us at [www.auckland.op.ac.nz](http://www.auckland.op.ac.nz)  
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