

VISA APPLICATION GUIDANCE



To be able to enter and work legally in China, you will need a (Z) Work Visa. There is quite a lot involved in getting this visa, so it is important to familiarize yourself with the information in this document and start the process as soon as possible.

To make things clearer, we've broken things down into two main sections:

- **PRE- VISA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**
- **APPLYING FOR YOUR VISA**



PRE-APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS



Your school in China will send you the documents you need to apply for the (Z) Work Visa, but for them to do this, you first need to collect and send the following documents to them via e-mail:

- Signed contract
- Passport copy
- Medical examination
- Criminal background check
- Copy of degree certificate
- Legalised documents
- Signed reference
- Completed TEFL

You can find a detailed breakdown of each of these requirements below.

SIGNED CONTRACT

You must print off and sign your contract, then send a scanned copy back to your school.

PASSPORT COPY

You must ensure this is up to date and valid until the end of your placement.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION

In order for your school to send you the necessary documents to apply for your visa, you will need to undergo a medical examination and ask a doctor to complete [this](#) form to prove that you are in good health.

This can be quite a stressful procedure, as services and prices differ vastly across the UK. Therefore, we have sought feedback from our past teachers to put together this document to help guide you through the process and point you in the right direction.

COMPLETING THE FORM

You will need to get a registered doctor to complete the tests, fill in and stamp the form. You must attach a passport size photo to the form and ask the doctor to use an official stamp to cover both the form and part of your picture.

The majority of the form is straightforward and will simply require checks on your medical history and your current state of health. The doctor will have to:

- tick 'YES' or 'NO' to state whether or not you have had any of the listed diseases
- Write 'NORMAL' (or otherwise) in the boxes next to 'eyes' and 'nose' to indicate their observations
- Write 'POSITIVE' or 'NEGATIVE' to indicate results of the blood test

You will not need to have an x-ray or an ECG. The doctor can fill in these boxes with 'NORMAL'.

At the bottom of the form, where it says 'Suggestion' the doctor can write 'good health' or something along those lines. They will again need to sign and stamp the form.

WHERE TO GO

As your first port of call, we recommend asking your local GP to complete the tests. As the majority of them are quite straightforward, this should not be too difficult. Many of our teachers have done this in the past and have reported that some will complete it free of charge, while others have charged approximately £20*.

You will need to find out your blood type and have a blood test for AIDS or syphilis. For this, we advise speaking with your doctor to find out the best way to go about this. It's possible you could be referred to a sexual health clinic, or arrange for the tests at your local GP. Our teachers have reported an average cost of about £40* for blood tests and a report of the results.

You can find a sample of a completed form [here](#).

Please note that the information contained in this section is based on findings from our teachers. We are happy to guide you with any questions you may have, but it is best to get a GP's advice.

There are several private clinics in the UK that perform 'Visa Medicals', specific to individual countries requirements. The doctors at these clinics are used to performing such medicals and are familiar with the forms, however they tend to charge a minimum of £375 for the tests.

As you do not need to have an x-ray or ECG, we advise against this option and suggest it only as a last resort.

You should wait until you school has told you their requirements before arranging a medical check, however once they have told you and you have signed a contract, this should be a priority.

**These are only indications based on some of our teacher's experiences. Please be aware that it may be different at your local surgery, so we strongly advise you check.*

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

In order to work in a Chinese school, you will need to obtain a Criminal Background Check. The most simple and basic format that the Chinese authorities accept is the 'basic disclosure' document.

It costs £25 to obtain and you can receive it within 14 days from the day you apply. You can find more information about the application process here:

<http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/basicdisclosureonline/index.htm>

We strongly recommend you start the application process for the DBS document as soon as possible.

If you already have a current criminal background check then you don't need to get a new one for the moment. Specific requirements of what's considered in date vary for different schools, so please check with your school contact what your prospective schools requires when you sign a contract.

COPY OF DEGREE CERTIFICATE/FINAL YEAR STATEMENT

If you have already graduated, you will need to send your school a copy of your Degree Certificate. If you have not yet graduated, we advise checking with your university when you will receive the certificate and if you can get it early. If this is not possible, you can send a copy of a final year statement*.

LEGALISING DOCUMENTS

One of the steps you will need to take as part of the visa application process is getting certain documents legalised, to prove their authenticity to the Chinese authorities.

Visa rules are currently being confirmed in China, so we are unable to give an exact idea of which documents this will apply to, however one will be your Degree Certificate or Final Year Statement*. We will notify you with an update as soon as possible.

This three-step legalisation process requires you to do the following:

- Notary Public/Solicitor; you must present your original and a copy of your certificate to a Notary Public or solicitor for them to sign, stating that it is an official document
- FCO; you must then send your document to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, where it will be given an apostille, proving that it is real
- Chinese Embassy; you must then present the document to the Chinese Embassy, where it will be given a seal of approval – this cannot be submitted by post.

To complete this process, it is possible to use an agency. We recommend this for peace of mind that the documents are being processed correctly and will be accepted and also for those of you who live far away from London (where the Embassy is located). We recommend the below agency, as we have used them ourselves and they offer a reasonably priced and reliable service;

China Visa Direct offers the above 3 steps for a total of £110 (including postage). They also offer steps 2 and 3 at £95, recommended for those of you who may have found a cost-effective way of completing step 1, but would incur significant charges travelling to the Embassy in London. You can reach them by following this link; http://www.chinesevisadirect.co.uk/?gclid=CKj_sNek5dlCFYU-GwodMjoFeA

Alternatively, it is possible to complete the process independently. For this, there will be a cost associated with each stage, as outlined below. The cost of stage 1 can be reduced, as Notary Public/Solicitor costs can vary (you can find details on Notaries in your area using the following website: <http://www.facultyoffice.org.uk/notary/find-a-notary/>), while the costs of stages 2 and 3 cannot be reduced. Costs are as follows:

- Notary Public; approx. £10-£100
- FCO; £30 + postage
- Chinese Embassy; £15

Legalisation applications can be submitted at the London and Manchester Embassies:

- 31 Portland Place London, W1B 1QD, no appointment necessary (9am – 12pm)
- 71 Denison Road, Rusholme, Manchester M14 5RX, no appointment necessary (9am-12pm)

You can find more information using the following links:

a. Legalisation application form:

<http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/lsw/legalization/t624439.htm>

b. List of necessary documents:

<http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/lsw/legalization/t1021894.htm>

c. Legalisation process fees:

<http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/lsw/legalization/t1021882.htm>

Further information about legalising a document at the Chinese Embassy can be found at the following link: <http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/lsw/legalization/>

**we are awaiting confirmation that this will be accepted. Where possible, we advise notarising your degree certificate.*

SIGNED REFERENCE

This can be from either a former employer or an academic advisor. Please ensure the letter has an official stamp and a signature.

COMPLETED TEFL

You must complete your online TEFL by the time you apply for your visa.

Please note: the exact requirements of documents your school needs may differ from Province to Province. Your school should send you a list of all the documents they need via e-mail.

APPLYING FOR YOUR VISA



WHAT NEXT?

Once you have collected and sent these documents to your school, they will begin the process of collecting the documents you need to apply for your Work Visa. They will send hard copies to your UK address and once you have received these you should apply for your visa through the Chinese Embassy.

You will need to apply for a 3-month Single Entry (Z) Work Visa. In order to do this, you will need to have the following documents;

- Passport
- Visa Application Form and Photo
- Signed Declaration
- Proof of legal status*
- Photocopy of previous Chinese visas**
- Invitation Letter of Duly Authorized Unit
- Permit for Foreign Experts Working in China issued by the State Bureau of Foreign Experts

* For those not applying for the visa in their country of citizenship

** Applicable for those who have obtained Chinese visas before)

This is only a summary of the documents needed to apply for your Work Visa. You must visit the Chinese Embassy website to get further details on these documents.

There are Chinese Embassies in London, Manchester and Edinburgh and they are usually extremely busy, meaning appointments usually need to be booked weeks in advance. If you would like to apply for your visa in person at an embassy, we advise you to book an appointment for shortly after you think the documents will arrive to avoid having to wait once the documents arrive. Alternatively, you can ask someone to apply for your visa on your behalf. If applying in person, you must also pick up the visa in person and pay on collection. You will have the choice of;



- **Regular service**, 4 working days (£151)
- **Express service**, 3 working days (£178)

If you can't get an appointment at an embassy, you can apply by post. This service takes longer, usually around 10 working days and costs £175. If you choose this option, you must send the original copies of the required supporting documents, not photocopies. The originals will be posted back to you.

Sometimes the documents can arrive from China quite last minute, meaning you may not have enough time to wait for an appointment or apply by post. In this case, it is possible to apply through an agency (such as mandarinvisa.com), who can get your visa within 3 or 4 working days, depending on your chosen service. To do this, you will need to post your documents and passport to the agency, who will post it back when the visa has been processed. This is of course more expensive, but it may be worth the extra cost depending on how last minute it is.

Within 30 days of arriving in China your school will take you to a Public Security Bureau to change your Work Visa into a residence permit. This allows for multiple entries into China during its period of validity, meaning you can leave and re-enter without difficulty.

As you can see from this document, there is a lot involved in getting a Work Visa and it will take time. Therefore, it is very important that you gather the documents as soon as possible. Please note it is likely you will only obtain the visa a few weeks before departure to China, so please DO NOT book your flights until you have your visa.