



Getting a Visa in China

The visas that are relevant for teachers headed to China:

Z Visa	—	Work visa
L Visa	—	Tourist visa
S Visa	—	Relative visa
D Visa	—	Residence visa

To legally teach in China, you'll need to obtain a work visa through your employer.

Sometimes employers will have you come over to China on a tourist visa, but you'll need to have them convert it to a work visa prior to beginning your job.

If you're bringing your spouse along with you, they'll need to acquire a relative visa & relative residence permit. The same goes for your children.

Lastly, as a teacher, you'll need to get a residence permit/visa from your school once you're in China and teaching. This allows you to stay in the country long-term while you teach.





Required documents:

In order to begin the process of obtaining a Z visa, you first need to have signed a contract of employment with an employer in China.

Your employer then obtains two pieces of documentation. The first of these is the **“Work Permit,”** and the other is the **“Invitation Letter.”**

Your employer requires your CV, a reference letter, authenticated versions of your university degree(s), teaching certificates, and background check, as well as a copy of your passport to obtain these documents.

Lastly, if you're bringing your spouse and/or children to China, you'll also need to authenticate your marriage license and the birth certificates of your children through the Chinese consulate in order to get them the proper visas.

Only schools that are legally allowed to hire foreigners are able to provide these documents. Furthermore, you will likely need to undergo a medical check, both/either in your home country and/or in China.



Document authentication:

To get a Z visa in China, you must authenticate your **degree** and **background check**. You almost always need to authenticate your **teaching credential** (TEFL, teaching license, or letter of experience) as well, though in rare cases, it won't be necessary.

If you're bringing your spouse and/or children, you'll also need to authenticate your **marriage license** and the **birth certificates** of your children.

The document authentication process can get quite complicated. You can order this service through us, or you can choose to read more information about it on our website.

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Z Visa cont.

work visa

Obtaining a Z Visa:

Once your employer has sent you the required documents, you may then apply for a Z visa. Along with your passport, you will need to submit these documents to the Chinese Embassy in your home country.

If you are working or traveling in another country that's not your home country, you'll need to find a service that can submit your visa paperwork to the consulate or embassy for you, as it has to be done in person, either by you or an agent on your behalf.

Depending on processing time, in a few days or a week, you will get your passport back in the mail with a temporary "Z visa" inside. This temporary visa is good for 30 days and is designed for you to enter China.

Registering with the police:

You will need your passport for this and usually a copy of your lease. The police will provide you with a "[Registration Form of Temporary Residence](#)." Failure to obtain this document may result in steep fines. If you are residing in a hotel or hostel, the hotel staff can usually do this for you on the spot.

Finishing the process:

Once you're in China, your school will assist you in converting your temporary visa into a "[Foreign Expert Certification](#)" or "[Alien Employment Permit](#)" along with a "[Residence Permit](#)".

This process could take around a month. In the meantime, the government requires you to have a physical exam done. Even if you've already had one done elsewhere, you'll likely need to do it again in China.



L Visa

tourist visa

Obtaining an L Visa:

Sometimes your Chinese employer will have you enter China on a tourist visa while they work on preparing the documents that you'll need to get your work or Z visa. This is perfectly normal, but you cannot work on this visa.

Going to China on a tourist visa allows you to have some settling in time, which is great for teachers that have never lived in China before.

To get an L visa for China, you will either need to go to the appropriate consulate in person or hire an agent to do it on your behalf. [If you're a U.S. citizen, we recommend using CVSC for this process with the discount code NOMAD2020.](#)

You'll need to send CVSC your passport, a photocopy of the passport information page, the China visa application form, a passport photo, proof of residency, and other supporting documents listed on their website depending on the consulate you're using.

Things to know:

L visas can be single-entry, double-entry, or multiple-entry, and the duration of your stay can be 30-90 days, so choose wisely. You'll need to get your Z visa within the time frame that your L visa is good for, otherwise, you'll need to leave the country.



S Visa

relative visa

Obtaining an S Visa:

The S visa works in a similar manner to the Z visa. The person that is teaching in China will get the invitation letter and work permit so that they can get their Z visa.

The teacher's spouse and children will also use these documents to apply for their S visas. Once you have arrived in China on an S visa, you will need to get your residence permit. The teacher's school will often help with this process and you can all get your residence permits at the same time.



Obtaining a D Visa:

Once you have your Z visa in China, you'll need to apply for a residence permit/visa. This allows you to live and work in China for an extended period of time. If you get caught living in China without a residence visa after a certain period of time, there are serious consequences.

Your employer will likely help you obtain your residence permit/visa through the proper government authority. You need to apply for this within 30 days of your arrival in China.

We hope you enjoy your time in China!

