

Certificate of Character Application

Important points and common mistakes when making your application.

Certificate of Character

- Application documents must be dated no earlier than 3 months prior to the date the Certificate of Character is issued.
- Your Certificate of Character is valid for 3 months from the date of issue and must be valid on the day of admission. If you require a new certificate some of the application process may need to be repeated including payment of the fee, so please be certain of the date you want to be admitted and that you are able to obtain all documents required.
- Your certificate of character receipt will be provided along with your certificate.
- Usually you will apply to NZLS Auckland branch for Auckland High Court admissions. However, you can use your certificate to be admitted in other areas of the country if you need to change your admission date/venue.

Certificate of Completion

- When your Profs course is complete you must also obtain a Certificate of Completion from the NZ Council of Legal Education, a document required by the court (**not NZLS**).
- This can take up to 40 working days. For more information refer to the Council of Legal Education [website](#) information.
- The Certificate of Completion needs to be filed with your application for admission. You should ensure that you have completed your profs and have allowed sufficient time to obtain your Certificate of Completion to file with your Certificate of Character. Do not apply for your Certificate of Character unless you can obtain the Certificate of Completion in time.
- Please contact completioncertificatesnz@nzcle.org.nz for any completion certificate queries.

Certified ID

- You need to provide a certified copy of your current valid photographic identification (current passport or drivers licence). If you do not have either of those forms of identification please contact us to discuss
- Drivers Licences must show the expiry date, newer licences have the expiry on the back of the card and we require a copy of both the front and back. Passports and driver licences must be signed.
- Certified ID must have the exact **correct wording** as shown on **page 2** of the application form (also shown below)
- Anyone who provides a reference for you **cannot** certify your documents (application, ID statutory declaration)
- The witness can hand write the statement if they don't have a stamp with the exact wording.

"I certify this to be a true copy of the original, which I have sighted, and the photo represents a true likeness of [name of the person presenting the document to me for certification]."

Application form

Common mistakes when completing the application form that results in us having to refer the matter back to you.

Tertiary Qualifications (Section 6)

- Please record **all Tertiary institutions** you have attended, even if you did not complete your degree with them.
- This includes exchange courses, overseas Universities.
- NZLS will be making inquiries with all institutions you have attended.

Professional Legal Studies (Section 7)

Please do not submit your Certificate of Character application unless you have completed your profs course or are expected to complete it within 2 weeks of the closing date for applications to be submitted to NZLS

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Professional legal studies

Please record the details of the professional legal studies course you have completed or are completing. The Law Society will be making inquiries from your professional training provider concerning matters of character.

Course provider IPLS College of Law

Date of completion (dd/mm/yyyy)

Employment and academic history (Section 8)

- Your timeline must begin in the first month after you finish high school and end the day you complete your application. If you finished high school more than 10 years ago, only go back 10 years.
- You must include your tertiary academic history in your timeline, **not just your employment history.**
- All months during this time need to be accounted for (if you were unemployed, travelling, on parental leave, etc. – these periods need to be included). There should be no unexplained gaps of over a month.
- You must include all roles during this time including voluntary roles.
- If you do not have enough space in the application form – please write your timeline on a word document instead.

Fit and proper person (Section 10)

- If you make a declaration, please provide supporting information and a statement with your account of what happened with your application. If you have been made bankrupt please provide any liquidators report. If you have appeared before a disciplinary tribunal or similar please provide any documents and findings.
- Extra time may be required to process your application if any issue is declared in the 'Fit and Proper Person' section.
- Depending on the circumstances, you may need to attend an interview in person, via Zoom or a phone call to discuss the situation.

Overseas request for criminal conviction history (Section 11)

If you have lived in another country (other than New Zealand) for more than 12 months consecutively since the age of 18 (other than on a University exchange organised through a NZ university):

- You will need to arrange for a criminal conviction report from that country to be sent to the Law Society
- It needs to be sent directly to us if it is an electronic copy If it is a hard copy original, it can be sent to you first and you can deliver it to us
- Arrange this well in advance of making your application because these can sometimes take a long time to be processed
- If you have lived in the USA you will need an FBI report. A State police check alone will not suffice.

Authority to inquire and consent to publish name (Section 14)

- Please sign this section at the same time you sign the declaration. Many of the inquiries we make (with Universities, Ministry of Justice, advertising your name on Lawpoints) require this section to be signed first.
- **If you do not sign this, it can delay the entire process for all applicants.**

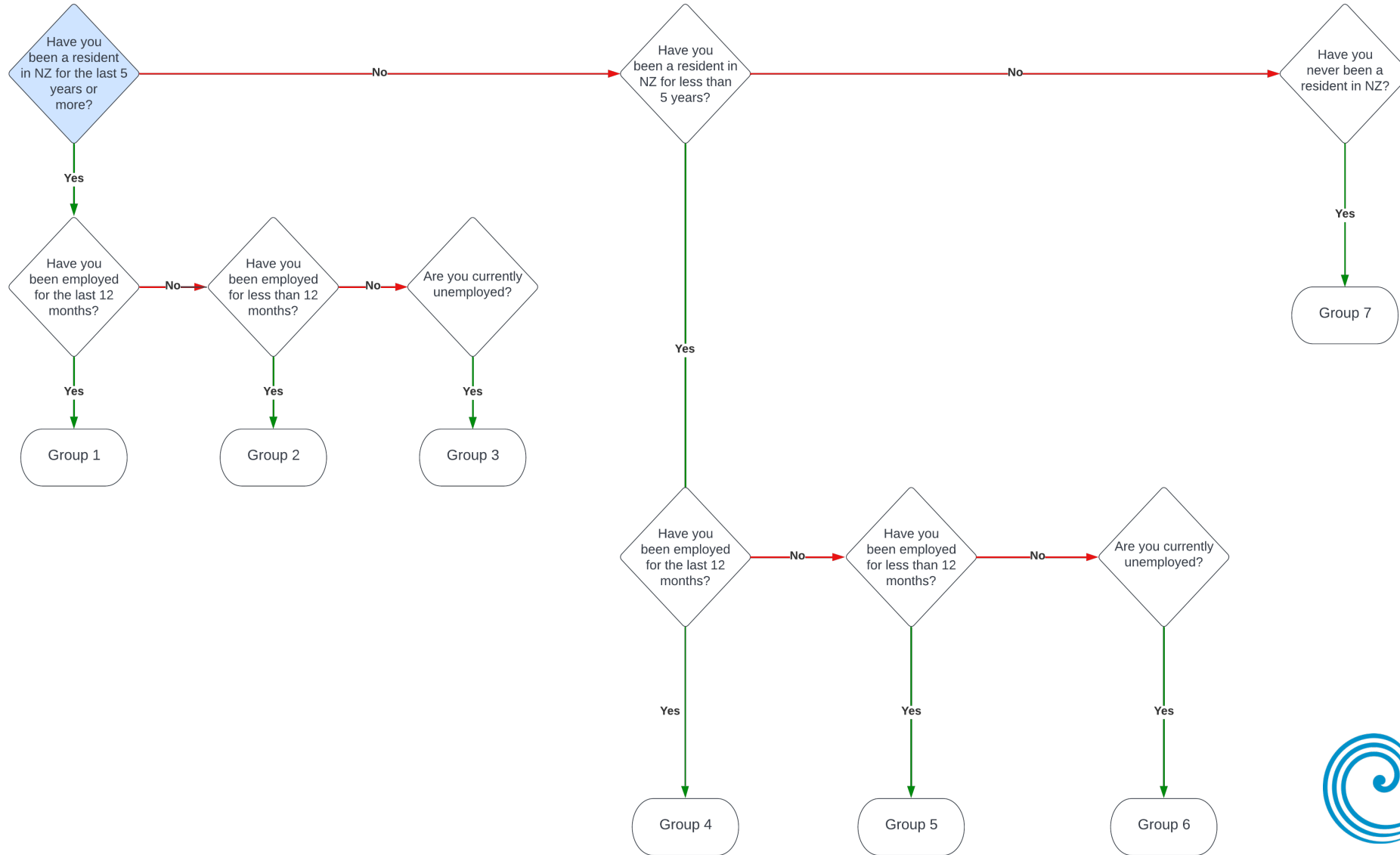
Payment

- The application fee is \$253 including GST
- If you are not an NZ resident, the fee will be \$220 because you are not liable for GST.
- Please pay the application fee as soon as you receive the invoice
- We cannot process your application until you have paid the fee

References

The following page contains a flow-chart which will help you determine how many references you will need to provide.

Flow chart



Group 1:

- one reference from each of your employers in the last 12 months (see notes in relation to employer references above); and
- two general references from your referees, one of which must have known you in a personal capacity for at least five years and the others for at least two years.

Group 2:

- one reference from each of your employers within the last 12 months (see notes in relation to employer references above;) and
- three general references from your preferred referees, one of which must have known you for at least five years and the others for at least two years.

Group 3:

- one reference from your most recent former employer, if possible (see notes in relation to employer references above); and
- three general references from your preferred referees, one of which must have known you for at least five years and the others for at least two years; or
- if you cannot provide a reference from your most recent former employer, four general references from your preferred referees, one of which must have known you for at least five years and the others for at least two years.

Group 4:

- one reference from each of your employers in the last 12 months (see notes in relation to employer references above); and
- one general reference from your preferred referee, who has known you in a personal capacity for the majority of the time you have resided in New Zealand; and
- two general references from your preferred referees, in your previous (overseas) community who have each known you in a personal capacity for at least five years.

Group 5:

- one reference from each of your employers within the last 12 months (see notes in relation to employer references above); and
- two general references from your preferred referees who have each known you in a personal capacity for the majority of time you have resided in New Zealand; and
- two general references from your preferred referees, in your previous (overseas) community who have each known you in a personal capacity for at least five years.

Group 6:

- one reference from your most recent former employer, if possible (see notes in relation to employer references above); and
- two general references from your preferred referees who have each known you in a personal capacity for the majority of time you have resided in New Zealand, and
- two general references from your preferred referees in your previous (overseas) community who have each known you in a personal capacity for at least five years.

Group 7:

- one reference from your current employer, or if not employed from your most recent former employer, if possible (see notes above); and
- if possible one general reference from a preferred referee who has known you in a personal capacity in the NZ community; and
- three general references from preferred referees in your overseas community who have each known you in a personal capacity for at least five years; and
- a letter advising why you are seeking to be admitted in New Zealand and whether you intend to practise in New Zealand.

Preferred General references

When you are thinking about a preferred referee for the purpose of this application, these questions might help you decide:

- Would the person have had to go through a character and/or a criminal conviction check before attaining their position?
- Does the person belong to a profession where issues of conduct and/or professional standards are regulated?
- Are they in a role that is well respected in their community and consulted by members of the larger community?
- Do they know you in a personal capacity and are able to speak to your character?

Examples of persons considered preferred referees

- Lawyers (i.e. someone with a current practising certificate)
- Currently registered: Authorised financial advisors, Chartered accountants, Dentists, Engineers, Legal executives, Social workers, Marriage celebrants, Medical doctors, Nurses, Physiotherapists, Occupational therapists, Pilots, Real estate agents, Teachers, Veterinary surgeons
- University lecturers and professors who know you outside of university or in the capacity of an Employer
- Elders/pastors from a church, temple, mosque or Synagogue
- Justices of the Peace
- Serving members of the armed forces
- Serving police officers
- Senior government officials
- Members of parliament

Employer references

- The person providing an employer reference should be your supervisor or manager i.e. someone who has day-to-day responsibility for and of your work.
- A senior Human Resources official can only provide your employer reference if they have direct knowledge of your work and are closely involved in your supervision.
- If you have a reference from your current employer, please do not provide additional references from work colleagues unless closely involved in your supervision; or they know you well outside work (such as from high school or in a sporting team).
- If you are having difficulty finding suitable referees, please contact your local Law Society Branch for guidance.

Other documents you need to provide or complete

Criminal Conviction Check

- A New Zealand **criminal conviction check** is compulsory for all applicants, a link will be sent to you to complete this online.
- Please include any other names you are or have been previously known by when you complete the link.
- If you don't include all relevant names or you do not spell your names correctly, you may be asked to do complete this again. This might also require you to pay the relevant fee again.

Statutory Declaration

- If your **name has changed officially** in any way, please provide appropriate documents (e.g. marriage certificate or birth certificate)
- If you are known informally by other names, please provide a [statutory declaration](#) to support this.
- The Statutory Declaration should explain the use of the name. What names you are using, in what circumstances, the reasons for this, and how long you have used the informal or adopted name.
- Make sure [all name variations](#) are on your application form. Your name is advertised to the legal profession and listed on the NZLS website.

Documents for admission

These documents are required as part of your application for admission:

- Certificate of Character (from New Zealand Law Society)
- Certificate of Character receipt
- Certificate of Completion (from NZ Council of Legal Education)
- LA1, (LA2 or LA3) and (LA4 or LA5)

All information and forms you require can be found on the [NZLS website](#) and this includes court documents

Questions

If you have any questions regarding the process, please contact Nick Houghton-Brown

nick.houghton-brown@lawsociety.org.nz

or ph (04) 889 7740