ZE practical guide

International student guide

Study starts with the right institution and programme, then moves into EMGS and Immigration procedures. Do not book travel or build family plans before understanding the official order and deadlines.

For: For international students and guardians before selecting an institution and starting study and travel files.

Last reviewed: 2026-08-27 | 3 official sources

Do you have an offer from an institution authorised to enrol international students and a checked programme, or are you still choosing study options?

Decision brief: academic admission and the pass are linked but not a single step

The guide brings together the official sequence from academic checking to the Student Pass, with a clear distinction between admission, immigration, and post-arrival actions.

18 months
Passport validity for a new application[1]

Listed by EMGS for a new application; check the current list before applying.

Outside Malaysia
Higher-education applicant location[2]

Immigration states the applicant must be outside Malaysia when the application is submitted.

7 days
Post-arrival medical[2]

Immigration states the post-arrival examination must be completed within seven days.

2.0 / 80%
Published renewal markers[1]

EMGS lists CGPA of at least 2.0 and overall attendance of at least 80% for renewal, subject to institution and case context.

Identify the study route before organising the visa

Route	Suitable for	Key point	First move
Higher education	A public university or private higher-education institution authorised to enrol international students.	The route runs through admission, EMGS/eVAL, and Immigration; nationality determines whether a Single Entry Visa is needed after eVAL.	Check programme, institution, and offer letter before opening any travel file.[2][3]
School or guardian	School-level students and parents or guardians within categories described by Immigration.	Documents and who submits may differ, and relationship, custody, or parent evidence can form part of the file.	Ask the school for the case-specific checklist and authorised institutional representative.[2]
Master's or PhD with dependants	A postgraduate student considering family accompaniment under the official publication.	Immigration states that only Master's or PhD Student Pass holders may bring dependants in higher education.	Separate the student file from each dependant file, and check dependant work restrictions, housing, and insurance planning.[2]

From programme choice to Student Pass endorsement

1

Check programme and institution

Student and guardian

Use MQR as a qualification-check source and review direct admission conditions with the institution; the register does not decide individual admission.[3]

Output: Defined programme and institution

2 Obtain the offer letter — Institution

Obtain a letter stating programme, campus, and start date because EMGS lists the offer letter among core documents.[1]

Output: Clear admission letter

3 Prepare for EMGS — Student and institution

Prepare passport, photographs, health declaration, academic record, English evidence, and any case- or nationality-specific items.[1]

Output: Upload-ready EMGS file

4 eVAL and visa where needed — EMGS, Immigration, and student

Follow the institution and EMGS sequence; after eVAL, check Single Entry Visa requirements for your nationality from the official source.[2]

Output: Confirmed travel stage

5 Arrive and complete endorsement — Student and institution

Complete the examination within the deadline, then follow the institution's instructions for Student Pass endorsement and registration; retain every correspondence copy.[2]

Output: Confirmed study status

Student file: clear lists before upload and travel

Identity and admission[1]

Open a correct file and match data

- Valid passport and a white-background photograph under the EMGS list.
- Institution and programme offer or admission letter.
- Clear digital copies of passport and offer for retention during travel.

Academic and language record[1]

Evidence for background and VAL or admission conditions

- Certificates and transcripts required by the institution or EMGS.
- English-language evidence from accepted tests where applicable.
- Any translation or attestation the source or institution requires in writing.

Health and arrival[1][2]

Avoid disruption after entry

- Health declaration and insurance under the checklist or institution instructions.
- eVAL and visa confirmation where nationality requires it.
- Post-arrival medical appointment plan and institution contact details.

Special situations needing early follow-up

Student Pass renewal[1]

- EMGS presents CGPA and attendance markers for renewal, and the institution may need an explanation letter when either is not met.
- **Action:** Start renewal review well before expiry; do not wait for a semester result or passport expiry to prepare the file.

Part-time work[2]

- Immigration states it is available to specified public-university or private-higher-education students with separate hours, locations, and approval.
- **Action:** Do not accept work or build your budget around it before checking institutional eligibility and required Immigration approval.

Changing programme or institution[1][2]

- A change can require variation/progression steps, clearance, or new requirements; it is not merely an internal academic change.
- **Action:** Request written instructions from the current and new institutions before withdrawal, transfer, or travel.

Start with the institution and offer, not the visa

A sound study file starts with a suitable programme and an institution authorised to enrol international students, then moves to

EMGS and Immigration. Do not confuse academic admission with travel approval or a Student Pass.

Choosing and checking the study route[1][2][3]

- Check the programme and institution through MQR, then review actual entry requirements with the institution. The register shows qualification-accreditation information; it does not decide individual admission or every subject equivalency.
- Obtain a clear offer or admission letter that identifies the programme, campus, and start. The offer letter appears among EMGS's core documents.
- Ask the institution early about any Sabah or Sarawak requirements, as well as student pickup, medical examination, and registration after arrival.

The initial file EMGS reviews[1]

- EMGS lists a white-background photograph, specified passport pages, the offer letter, health declaration, certificates, and transcripts; additional documents may be required by case.
- For a new application, EMGS states passport validity must be 18 months or more. Review the passport before paying admission costs or booking travel.
- Some nationalities have extra requirements, and an English-language certificate is required for the VAL stage according to the published list. Do not delay checking these items until after admission.

Understand the EMGS, eVAL, and travel sequence

Changing the sequence or travelling before the relevant authority verifies the stage can cause delay. Follow the institution's or

EMGS's instructions and official page at each stage, especially where nationality or state differs.

From pass application to entry[2]

- Immigration states that a higher-education applicant must be outside Malaysia when the application is submitted, and that the institution or student uses the institution system or EMGS portal.
- After EMGS academic screening, complete applications are forwarded to the Student Pass Unit for eVAL approval, with travel-document and security checks remaining part of the process.
- If the nationality requires a visa, official guidance links the post-eVAL stage to a Single Entry Visa through the official eVISA portal. Check nationality rules before travelling, not through an unofficial source.

The first days after arrival[2][1]

- Immigration states that a post-arrival medical examination must be completed within seven days; the institution then submits the Student Pass endorsement after the examination and EMGS support letter.
- Do not treat housing, connectivity, and institutional registration as replacements for immigration requirements. They are parallel settlement steps taken under the institution's instructions after entry status is confirmed.
- Keep digital copies of the offer, EMGS correspondence, passport, insurance, and medical documentation, as these records recur during registration, enquiries, and renewal.

Renewal, work, and dependants: check your specific rule

These items are specific to category, level of study, and institution. Put them in the study plan early and do not rely on another

student's experience or marketing material.

Published limits that need review[1][2]

- For renewal, EMGS lists a CGPA of at least 2.0 and overall attendance of at least 80%, with an institution explanation letter potentially needed if either is not met.
- Immigration limits part-time work to eligible public-university or private-higher-education students, with separate hours, locations, and approval; it is not automatic for every Student Pass holder.
- The official page allows dependants for Master's or PhD holders in higher education only, with restrictions on dependant work. Check the category page before basing a family plan on this.

Review before renewal or changing studies[1][2]

- Begin renewal review well before pass expiry with the institution, and confirm the current checklist for passport, results, attendance, and insurance.
- If programme, institution, or campus changes, ask the education provider to clarify the variation/progression route or clearance letter required before moving.
- Keep a timeline for admission, eVAL, arrival, medical examination, endorsement, and renewal so deadlines and expired documents are noticed early.

Final checklist

- ✓ Checked programme and institution
- ✓ Clear offer letter
- ✓ Passport valid for 18 months or more
- ✓ Certificates, transcripts, and English proof
- ✓ Arrival, medical, and registration plan

Official sources

[1] **Required documents for a student visa** — Education Malaysia Global Services — EMGS
https://visa.educationmalaysia.gov.my/guidelines/required-documents

[2] **Student Pass** — Immigration Department of Malaysia
https://www.imi.gov.my/index.php/en/main-services/pass/student-pass/

[3] **Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR)** — Malaysian Qualifications Agency — MQA
https://www2.mqa.gov.my/mqr/

This is an informational guide and does not guarantee academic admission, visa issuance, or a pass. Institution, nationality, and state requirements can add items; check EMGS, Immigration, and the university before each step.