Finland – Visa Requirements

To study in Finland for more than 3 months you must apply for and obtain a residence permit before leaving for Finland. Citizens of the Nordic countries do not need a residence permit and citizens of EU/EEA countries will be issued residence permits by their local police.

The Finnish Immigration Service grants the residence permits for workers and students. However, you should first bring your application with the attachments to the Consulate General in New York or Los Angeles or the Embassy of Finland, Washington D.C. depending on your jurisdiction. Applicants will also be fingerprinted at the time of filing the application. The Embassy or Consulate will gather and check the documents before forwarding them for further processing to the Immigration Service. Please, read and follow the instructions carefully as incomplete applications will not be processed.

Applications for a first residence permit must be filed personally with the Finnish Embassy or Consulate General in the country of origin. The decision to grant a permit rests with the Finnish Immigration Service. All necessary attachments must be obtained in advance before filing the application. Applicants will be fingerprinted at the time of filing the application. Applications cannot be submitted by an agent or sent by post.

Please see locations of Finnish Embassy or Consulate General at the bottom of the document.

One set of documents will remain in the Embassy or Consulate General and the other set will be sent to Finland to the Immigration Service. Thus to apply for residence permit bring two (2) sets of all the following documents to the Embassy or Consulate General:

1. Fill in the Residence permit application for study (OLE_OPI). The form can be downloaded from the Finnish Immigration Service website: Application forms. Application forms cannot be faxed, they must be the originals. In addition, remember to sign them.
2. Passport sized photo glued in the OLEL_PK form. The form can be downloaded from the Finnish Immigration Service website: Application forms – Appendices.
3. Valid passport or other travel document. Please, remember to sign your passport if it is required.
4. Original letter of acceptance.
   a) For students completing their degree in Finland submit the original letter of acceptance from your Finnish school or university.
   b) In case of a bilateral agreement, submit original acceptance letters from both schools or universities.
   c) If accepted as an exchange student to a program such as ISEP, submit original statement from the Exchange Organization that you have been accepted to. The letter should also clearly state your benefits regarding school fees, food and housing.
5. Written proof of your housing arrangements in Finland.
6. Applicant’s personal bank statement to prove applicant have sufficient funds to cover his/her stay in Finland. Funds required are EUR 6000 (approximately $8,000) per year or EUR 500 (approximately $665) per month. Bank statements of the parents or shared accounts are not accepted!

Please note:
   a) Proof of funds in form of scholarships will be deducted from this amount.
   b) If all expenses are paid through an organisation, an additional sum of USD 120 should be available to you each month.

7. Written proof of any scholarship you have received.

8. Please write a cover letter stating your current contact information, your permanent address and phone number in that address to which residence permit card is to be returned.

9. Processing fee and possibly a postal fee.

10. For an applicant under 18 years old, not travelling with a parent, present a notarized parental authorization form.

11. Any student who submits a residence permit application must attach details of their comprehensive health insurance cover to their application (Read more about the health insurance) If the residence permit is not granted, the insurance fee will not be compensated to the student. Please note: The student is responsible for all the insurance fees in all cases.

Ministry of the Interior: bulletin issued to educational institutions: Information about health insurance (PDF, 73 kB)

Please note: It is a precondition for obtaining a residence permit that the student has valid health insurance cover with a reliable and solvent company or institution. The insurance policy statement to be attached with the application must show the effective dates of the insurance and also that it is valid in Finland.

For studies of less than two years in duration, a student must have private insurance which primarily covers the costs of medical treatment up to 100,000 Euros (approximately $133,000), cost level in 2007.

Where the duration of the studies is two years or more, a student will usually have a home municipality in Finland and is therefore entitled to municipal health care services. In such cases, it is sufficient for the insurance to primarily cover the cost of medicines (in practice the cover extends to doctor’s fees and costs of treatment and examination), up to 30,000 euros (approximately $40,000), cost level in 2007.

The insurance policy must include the following:
- the coverage in figures
- the effective dates
- the fact that the insurance is also valid in Finland
- insurance has to be non-deductable.
A student must have insurance cover when applying for a residence permit as without it a residence permit cannot be granted. A residence permit cannot be issued for a period exceeding the period of the insurance cover.

Embassy/Consulate may request additional documents, if needed.

Please note that students must leave the country on completion of their studies.

The Finnish Immigration Service will process your application and the process usually takes 8-12 weeks. The process cannot be started until all paperwork and payment is received. It is not advisable to make any final travel arrangements, particularly purchase of non-refundable air tickets for specific date, prior to approval of your application.

Residence application forms can be downloaded also on the Finnish Immigration Service website.

Embassy, Washington D.C.
Tel: +1-202-298 5800
E-mail: sanomat.was@formin.fi
Customer service for passports and residence permits: Mon-Fri 9.00 am-12.00 pm (passi.was@formin.fi).
Note please: As of October 1, 2011, the Finnish Embassy no longer issues visas. Visa applicants residing in Washington DC, Virginia or Maryland should contact the Embassy of Sweden, which represents Finland in visa matters.

Consulate General, New York
Tel. +1-212-750 4400
E-mail: consulate.nyc@formin.fi
Telephone inquiries for passports and visas: Mon-Fri 10.00 am-11.00 am
Visiting hours for passports and visas: Mon-Fri 9.00 am -12.00 pm
(Finnish passports Mon-Fri 1.00pm - 4.00 pm by appointment only)

Consulate General, Los Angeles
Tel: +1-310-203 9903
E-mail: passi.los@formin.fi
Customer service for passports and visas: Mon-Fri only 9.00 am-12.00 pm
Telephone inquiries for passports and consular matter: Mon-Fri 12.30 pm-1.30 pm

Updated 5-11-2012