

New client onboarding checklist

Every new client, the same 23 steps, so nobody is chasing an IRD authority in week six.

Client	_____	Engagement partner or	
Entity type and year end	_____	bookkeeper	_____
		Start date	_____

1. Before you accept the engagement

- ☐ Conflict of interest check done (related parties, competitors, past disputes)
- ☐ Customer due diligence completed under the AML/CFT Act: identity and address verified, beneficial owners and controllers identified, source of funds asked for where the rules require it
- ☐ Scope, fees and turnaround agreed in writing (use the fee proposal in this library)
- ☐ Engagement letter signed by the client and filed
- ☐ Professional clearance letter sent to the previous accountant or bookkeeper, reply received

2. Access and information

- ☐ Client linked to the practice as tax agent in myIR, with the right account types (income tax, GST, PAYE)
- ☐ Accounting software access granted at the right role; subscription ownership confirmed
- ☐ Bank feeds live for every bank and credit card account; read-only internet banking if feeds are not available
- ☐ Payroll system access, employee records, KiwiSaver and ESCT settings
- ☐ Prior year financial statements, tax returns, fixed asset register, GST returns, loan statements, lease agreements
- ☐ Companies Office, IRD and other registry log-ins or authorities recorded securely
- ☐ Opening balances agreed to the previous accountant's closing balances

3. Setting expectations, in writing

- ☐ A named person the client contacts, and who covers when they are away
- ☐ Response time stated (and kept): questions answered within [1] working day
- ☐ Monthly cut-off: when the client's receipts and answers are due to us, and what happens if they are late
- ☐ Deadline calendar sent: GST, PAYE and payday filing, provisional tax, year end, with who does what
- ☐ How to send documents (receipt-capture app or upload, not photos by text), and how not to
- ☐ Fees, invoicing date and payment method confirmed one more time, out loud

4. First 30 days

- ☐ Chart of accounts reviewed and tidied before the first month is coded
- ☐ First month closed on the date promised; management report sent with two sentences of what it says
- ☐ Check-in call at week four: what is working, what the client did not understand, what to change
- ☐ Deadline calendar for the next 12 months checked against IRD and confirmed
- ☐ After the first milestone the client is happy with, ask for a referral or a review. Not before

In 6,190 positive publicly posted reviews of NZ accounting and bookkeeping practices, being easy to reach is praised in 42.5% and responsiveness in 29.4%. Section 3 is where that is decided.