

STUDYING IN THE STATES “A FEW THINGS TO THINK ABOUT”

It is always good to know what to expect and be prepared. Below you will find some helpful tips and hints that should make the overall process much easier for you. Of course, you can always contact the campus you plan to attend and receive additional information or advice.

Be sure to apply and take the materials to the Embassy or Consulate up to 120 days before the College registration date.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security regulation requires that all initial students may not enter the U.S. more than thirty days in advance of the course of study start date (registration date). This date is shown on the I-20.

Students must register for classes on or before the specified registration date. If you do not register within seven (7) days of this date, the I-20 is cancelled and you must leave the country **IMMEDIATELY**.

For information about student (and dependent) health insurance go to www.isoa.org.

Advance Preparation Prior to Entry

Careful planning and preparation by students and exchange visitors can ensure that the delay based established procedure is minimal. If you are a non-immigrant student or exchange visitor, here are some things you should do:

- Before leaving your country, confirm that your passport and non-immigrant visa are still valid for entry into the United States. The passport should be valid for at least six months beyond the date of your expected stay.
- Check to see that your visa accurately reflects your correct visa classification.
- If the visa states the name of the institution you will attend or identifies the exchange program in which you are participating, verify that this information is accurate, as well. If your review indicates any discrepancies or potential problems, visit the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to obtain a new visa.
- Students and exchange visitors entering the United States for the first time under their respective non-immigrant visa classification may only be admitted up to 30 days prior to the program start date.

- When you receive your U.S. non-immigrant visa at the Embassy or Consulate in your country, the consular officer will seal your immigration documents in an envelope and attach it to your passport. **You should NOT open this envelope!** The Customs and Border Protection Officer at the U.S. port-of-entry will open the envelope.
- When you travel, you should carry some specific documents on your person. Do not check them in your baggage! If your baggage is lost or delayed, you will not be able to show the documents to the Customs and Border Protection Officer, and as a result, may not be able to enter the United States.

Documents you should carry on your person:

- Passport (including attached envelope of immigration documents) with non-immigration visa;
- SEVIS Form I-20 AB, I-20 MN, or DS-2019;
- Evidence of financial resources;
- Evidence of Student/Exchange Visitor status (recent tuition receipts, transcripts);
- Name and contact information for Designated School Official or Responsible Officer of your intended school or program;
- Writing instrument (pen).

If you are traveling by aircraft, the flight attendants on board will distribute CF-6059 Customs Declaration Forms and I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Forms for immigration before you land at your initial point of entry in the United States. Complete these forms while you are on the aircraft and submit them to the appropriate Customs and Border Protection Officer upon your arrival. If you do not understand a form, ask the flight attendant for assistance.

Upon arrival at the port-of-entry, proceed to the terminal area for arriving passengers for inspection. As you approach the inspection station, have your: passport, SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019, Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record, and CF-6059 Customs Declaration Form available for presentation to the Customs and Border Protection Officer. The Form I-94 should reflect the address where you will reside, not the address of the school or program.

If you are entering through a land or designated sea port, the Customs and Border Protection Officer will provide the necessary CF-6059 Customs Declaration Forms and I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Forms at the port-of-entry. If you do not understand a form, ask the Customs and Border Protection Officer for assistance.

Like all entering visitors, you will be asked to state the reason you wish to enter the United States. You will also be asked to provide information about your final destination. It is important that you tell the Customs and Border Protection Officer that you will be a student or exchange visitor. Be prepared to include the name and address of the school or exchange visitor program where you will enroll/participate.

If you are authorized for optional practical training, this should be reflected on page two of your SEVIS form.

Once your inspection is complete, the inspecting officer will approve or deny your request for a student visa.

Upon arrival to the U.S., promptly notify the College official or the Admissions Director that you have been working with during your admissions process.

Some campuses employ a separate International Student Advisor, or those responsibilities are assigned to a specific staff designee.

There may be a need to visit prior to registration for a tour, introductions, and also possible course/program placement evaluations to determine specific class schedules.

International students must register for classes within five-seven days of the approved registration date or the I-20 is cancelled.