

*****IMPORTANT – YOU MUST READ THIS*****

USA Port of Entry Procedures

Once you have received your visa from the US Department of State, you are able to come to the United States and request permission to enter. Please be aware that your visa only allows you to apply for entry into the USA. It does not guarantee your admission into the USA. However, if you are prepared and all of your papers are in order you should not have any problems.

The flight attendants on your airplane will give you some immigration and customs documents to complete prior to your arrival to the United States. One of the forms will be Form I-94 (Arrival-Departure Record). The Form I-94 is rectangular in shape and WHITE in color. It will have a computer generated “Admission Number” on the top and will ask you for some basic demographic information (name, country of citizenship, passport number, etc.).

Upon your arrival into the USA, you will go through an Immigration and Customs checkpoint. It is here that you will use your visa to request permission to enter and stay in the United States. It is important that you have all of your papers in order at this point to show the Immigration Inspector. You should present the following items to the Immigration Inspector

- Passport with your valid visa
- Form I-20 – all 3 pages (for F-1 students only)
- Form DS-2019 – all pages (for J-1 students only)
- Form I-94 (the white document you completed on the airplane)
- Customs Documents (given to you on the airplane)
- Financial Support Documentation (just have this with you in case the Immigration Officials ask to see it)
- SEVIS fee receipt – I-901 Form
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The Immigration Inspector will review all of your paperwork and may ask you some questions like “What college will you be attending,” or “What do you plan to study?” Do not be alarmed by these questions – the inspector is only trying to make sure that your answers match the information given on your paperwork. Keep these answers simple and direct.

You may also be asked whether you are bringing in any food. Do not bring any food with you. Food you received on the plane should be left on the plane. It is forbidden to bring perishable foodstuffs, such as fruit, vegetables, and meat or plants into the US. Also forbidden, are articles made from certain protected species of animals.

If you bring in more than us\$10,000 in US or foreign currency you must declare the amount to customs upon entering or leaving the country.

If you use medications that contain narcotics or which are administered by syringe, carry a signed prescription from your physician with the medicine. Also, tell your physician about your upcoming visit to the US, since he/she may have to prescribe alternate medications

(Some controlled substances are prohibited, even in medicine). Penalties for smuggling narcotics are severe.

If everything is in order, the following things should happen:

- The Immigration Inspector will stamp your passport
- If you are a F-1 student, the Inspector will stamp your I-20
- If you are a J-1 student, the Inspector will stamp your DS-2019
- The Inspector will stamp your Form I-94, returning the small bottom portion to you. **DO NOT LOSE THIS CARD!** Once you are in the United States the Form I-94 is **MORE IMPORTANT** than your visa. This is the piece of paper that grants you permission to remain in the United States.
- The stamp should include this notation, “F-1 D/S or J-1 D/S”. We will go over what this means during orientation.

If you are missing any of the documents necessary for entrance, the Immigration Inspector has the ability to deny your entrance into the United States. However, this is not common practice. Instead, he /she will follow all of the steps listed above with the following exception:

- You will be granted permission to enter the USA for only 30 days. The stamp notation will read, “F-1 or J-1 with a DATE of 30 days after the day of your arrival”
- If this happens to you, **DO NOT PANIC**. Just make sure that you let the International Student Services Office know as soon as you arrive on campus so we can take care of it.

Once you go through the Immigration checkpoint, you will be asked to retrieve your luggage and proceed through Customs. You may be asked to open your suitcases. You should not be carrying any meat or plant products with you.

Once you have passed through these checkpoints, you will continue on your way to your final destination!

Male students who are from certain countries may need to go through one more step in addition to the ones above. This step is called “Special Registration.” It is part of “NSNEERS”, the National Security Entry/Exit Registration System. It involves a fingerprint scan and a picture. Please follow the instructions of the immigration officer. If you are asked to go through the Special Registration process, you must. Sometimes this creates delays. If by chance you are delayed and miss a connecting flight because of Special Registration, then you will be put on the next available flight. Please contact ISS at the number provided on the Arrival Form, if this happens.