

Immigration & Travel Information

When you have been admitted to the University of Memphis as a student, IEI will send you an immigration form called the I-20. This form indicates your field of study (Intensive English), the length of your course, and the date when you must report to IEI. The I-20 allows you to apply for a student visa known as the F1 visa. Please note that the I-20 is not a visa, nor does it guarantee a visa.

Once you've been accepted to IEI, you need to obtain a visa to enter the United States and make travel arrangements. This sheet provides information about how to apply for a student (F1) visa, traveling to the U.S., and what to expect when you enter the U.S.

Please also see the following web sites for helpful information regarding student visas:

<http://www.ice.gov/sevis/students/index.htm>

<http://educationusa.state.gov/>

<http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/>

Applying for a visa

You should apply for your visa at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate with jurisdiction over your place of permanent residence. Although visa applicants may apply at any U.S. consular office abroad, it may be more difficult to qualify for the visa outside the country of permanent residence.

Required documentation

Each applicant for a student visa must pay a nonrefundable US\$100 application fee and submit:

1. An **application Form DS-156**, together with a **Form DS-158**. Both forms must be completed and signed and can be found on this web site: http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/forms/forms_1342.html . A separate form is needed for children even if they are included in a parent's passport. The DS-156 must have the February 2003 date. You will see both electronic and non-electronic versions of the forms. If possible, you should complete the electronic forms online and print them out. When you complete them online, the applications will print with a bar code, which can expedite the visa application process at the embassy. Some applicants will also be required to complete and sign **Form DS-157**, which can also be found on the above web site.

2. A **passport** valid for travel to the United States and with a validity date at least six months beyond the applicant's intended period of stay in the United States. If more than one person is included in the passport, each person desiring a visa must make an application.
3. One (1) 2x2 **photograph**. Please see the website below for information:
http://travel.state.gov/passport/guide/composition/composition_874.html
4. Your **SEVIS Form I-20A-B** from IEI.
5. Your **acceptance letter from IEI**.
6. **Evidence of sufficient funds**. You can use the Affidavit of Financial Support and/or a bank letter that we have returned in this packet.
7. Your **SEVIS Fee receipt**. (See the enclosed SEVIS Fee instruction sheet.)

Please check with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your country to see if you will need to bring any other documents.

What to expect at the port of entry

Once you have your U.S. student visa, you can finalize your travel plans. You will not be allowed to enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the program start date indicated on your I-20. For example, if the program start date is August 30, the earliest date that you can enter the U.S. is July 31. **When you travel, you should always carry your I-20, your passport, and evidence of sufficient funds on your person**—do not lock these documents away in a suitcase. We also recommend that you carry the name and contact information for the Director and/or Admissions Officer of IEI.

If you are traveling by plane, you will have to complete a **CF-6059** Customs Declaration Form and an **I-94** Arrival-Departure Record Form for immigration before you land in the United States. You should complete these forms while you are on the plane and submit them to the appropriate immigration officers when you arrive. If you do not understand a form, ask the flight attendant for assistance.

When you arrive at your port of entry in the US, you will go through an immigration inspection. You will be asked to present your passport, SEVIS Form I-20 A-B, Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record, and CF-6059 Customs Declaration Form. You will also be asked to state your reason for entering the United States and provide information about your final destination. **You should tell the immigration officer that you will be studying English at IEI.**

At the end of the immigration inspection, the immigration officer will stamp your SEVIS I-20 and I-94 "D/S" (Duration of Status) and the date you entered the United States. D/S means that you may stay in the U.S. as long as you maintain your status. If an expiration date is stamped on the I-94 instead of "D/S," please let us know as soon as possible. Keep the I-94 in your passport. You will also have your index fingers scanned for fingerprint purposes and a digital photograph will be taken, as required by new U.S. federal regulations.

In most cases, there will be no difficulty. In certain cases, if there is some problem with your documents, you may be issued a 30-day entry on your I-94 card and issued a form I-515, usually with instructions to see your international student advisor.