Visa Applications and Immigration Information

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Immigration documents

• Form I-20
• Visa Information
• Preparing to enter the United States
Paying your I-901 SEVIS fee

• Once you have received your I-20 or DS-2019, you will need to log on to fmjfee.com to pay the $200 (1,318 RMB) SEVIS fee before you apply for your U.S. visa

• For more information on the SEVIS fee, please visit ice.gov/sevis/i901 or fmjfee.com
Once you have scheduled your U.S. visa appointment, you will need to bring the following documents:

- Valid passport and I-20/DS-2019
- Financial documents
- Evidence of English ability (example: TOEFL or IELTS score)
- Evidence of intent to depart the U.S. after completion of studies
- SEVIS fee receipt
- Photograph
When interviewing for your Visa…

• Speak English
• Speak for yourself
• Know the program and how it fits into your long-term plans
• Be brief
• Speak of ties to home country
When applying for your Visa, remember:

- Additional documentation
- Different rules for different countries
- Employment
- Dependents remaining at home
- Maintain a positive attitude
After your Visa has been issued

- Confirm your travel arrangements to Port Columbus International Airport (CMH)
- Enter the U.S. no sooner than 30 days before the start date on your I-20 (no sooner than Monday, July 25, 2016)
Immigration restrictions and benefits
Immigration restrictions and benefits

In order to maintain F-1 student immigration status:

• Notify the Office of International Affairs of your local address upon arrival and within 10 days of any address change
• Enroll in a full course of study during the academic year
  - 12 credit hours for undergraduate students
  - 12 credit hours for graduate students with fellowship
  - Eight credit hours for graduate students with or without GA funding
Immigration restrictions and benefits

• Make normal progress toward completing a course of study
• Extend Form I-20 before its expiration, if necessary
• Obtain approval from the Office of International Affairs prior to reducing enrollment, withdrawing completely or taking a leave of absence
• Inform the Office of International Affairs and update Form I-20 due to a change in major, degree level or financial support
• Keep your passport valid for at least six months into the future
Immigration restrictions and benefits

- Follow proper procedures for transferring schools
- Abide by the F-1 grace period rules
- Limit on-campus employment to a maximum of 20 hours per week while school is in session
- Do not engage in off-campus work unless specifically authorized by an immigration coordinator at the Office of International Affairs
Online immigration course and quiz

- All newly arriving F-1 and J-1 international students are required to complete an online course prior to arriving on campus for immigration check-In with the Office of International Affairs.
- The course is posted on Carmen, the university’s online course management system.
- Failure to complete this online course may result in a hold being placed on your account, prohibiting you from enrolling in courses.
Logging into Carmen

1. Go to carmen.osu.edu

2. Log in using your Ohio State username (lastname.#) and password

3. Click the “join” link in the gray bar (located above “My Courses”)

4. Read the instructions; the course you need to join is “F-1/J-1 immigration course and quiz

5. Return to your Carmen homepage; you should see the “My Courses,” and can then click this link to access the course and quiz
Preparing for Your Journey
Columbus weather

• Summers (June–August) tend to be humid with occasional thunderstorms. High temperatures range from 75–95 degrees Fahrenheit (24–35 degrees Celsius);
• During winter, Columbus can get a mix of snow, sleet and freezing rain. Low temperatures range from 0–45 degrees Fahrenheit (-17–7 degrees Celsius)
• Spring (March–May) and autumn (September–November) temperatures fall in between
• Make sure to bring a variety of clothing, appropriate for varying types of weather
Baggage allowance

• Most airlines will allow you to pack the following,
  • one personal item (such as a handbag or backpack),
  • one carry-on bag
  • one checked bag weighing up to 50 pounds (22 kg)
• There may be additional fees for additional bags or luggage that exceeds the weight limit
Consider packing in your checked luggage…

- Dress or cultural attire for special occasions
- Electrical adaptors/converters
- Photos or items that remind you of home (no irreplaceable items)
Carry-on luggage

- A printed copy of your acceptance email to Ohio State
- Valid passport
- Valid U.S. visa
- Form I-20 or Form DS-2019
- SEVIS fee payment receipt, if applicable
- Proof of funding (financial documentation as listed on your Form I-20 or Form DS-2019)
- Official final transcripts and proof of high school graduation
- Any essential medications
- Valuables
Do not pack

U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers will not allow you to bring these items into the country:

- Fresh fruit
- Produce
- Meat
- Prepared food
- Spices
- Plants
- Large sums of cash
Arriving at the U.S. port of entry

• When you arrive at your first stop in the U.S., you will need to go through U.S. Customs

• Make sure you are ready to present the following documents—do not pack them in your suitcase:
  – Passport with valid F-1 or J-1 visa
  – I-20/DS-2019
  – Printed copy of your admission letter
  – Financial documents
Arrival

• Once you are permitted to enter the U.S., your passport will be stamped “F-1” or “J-1” and “D/S” — make sure your documents are stamped correctly
• You will be issued an electronic I-94 card number
• Once you arrive in the U.S., you will need to print out your electronic I-94 and keep a copy for your records
  – We can assist you during your immigration check-in session if you have any questions
Arrival

• Make sure to allow for plenty of time in between your connecting flights
  – All international students must go through “secondary inspection” to verify their immigration status
  – You may experience significant delays – it is advised to plan approximately three hours between connecting flights
Tasks Upon Arrival
Arrival
Landing in Columbus, Ohio
Visit the Ohio State Airport Welcome Center located in the baggage claim area
Transportation
Transportation

- The Office of International Affairs will offer limited free transportation from Port Columbus International Airport to The Ohio State University main campus
- Meeting location will be at the Group Welcome Center in the baggage claim area
Transportation

- Ohio State’s main campus is located less than 10 miles (16 km) from Port Columbus International Airport, and taxi service from the airport to campus is relatively quick and inexpensive.
  - The cost of a taxi from the airport to campus is approximately $25 (165 RMB), and the drive should take approximately 15 minutes.
Housing
Housing

• Limited on-campus housing will be available for freshmen and upperclassmen, as well as transfer students
• Move-in day is Saturday, August 20, 2016
Housing

- For students with Ohio State housing contracts, temporary on-campus housing is available starting Wednesday, August 3, 2016

- The cost for early arrival on-campus housing is $30 per day (198 RMB)
Arriving on campus
Immigration Check-in and Orientation
Immigration Check-In and Orientation

- The Office of International Affairs encourages all students to arrive two-three weeks before the start of classes.
- Arriving early allows you to:
  - have better course availability and selection
  - more opportunities to visit local landmarks
  - additional time to network with American and international students.
- If you have not already scheduled your immigration check-in session please do so as soon as possible.
- The deadline to make your reservation is June 30, 2016.
Check-In & Orientation Dates

Undergraduate Students
August 1 - 5 - Attend Orientation #1 - August 8 - 10
August 8 - 9 - Attend Orientation #2 - August 10 - 12
August 10 - 12 - Attend Orientation #3 - August 15 - 17
August 15 - 16 - Attend Orientation #4 - August 17 - 19
Mandatory steps

• The Immigration Check-In and Orientation process includes:
  • In-person immigration check-In
  • Placement tests, if applicable
  • Three-day orientation that includes:
    – Meeting campus partners and offices
    – Mandatory health screening
    – Course registration
• You will not be able to register for classes until you have completed the above steps
Immigration check-In

You must bring the following to your Immigration check-in appointment:

• Admission letter to Ohio State
• Current passport
• Current U.S. visa
• I-94 card (print this using the number you receive when you enter the U.S.)
• Ohio State form I-20 or Form DS-2019. **Note:** if you have an active immigration record that is being transferred from another college or university in the U.S. to Ohio State, please also bring your Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 from your previous school
• Form I-20(s) or Form DS-2019(s) of your dependents (spouse and children), if applicable
• Student Record Form (Download, complete and print the form before arriving. Bring the form to check-in; failure to complete the form before your arrival could result in a longer wait at check-in)
Orientation

• One of the goals of orientation is to provide you with information on university requirements
  - These requirements include the mandatory health screening, placement tests, how to pay tuition and fees, and more

• In addition to helping you organize these required tasks, we also provide opportunities for you to make new friends and feel connected to the Ohio State community prior to the start of the semester
Helping you start to feel at home

• In addition to helping support check-in and orientation programs, Orientation Leaders organize their own trips around campus and around Columbus, and you are invited to join them.

• There will be a variety of activities, such as tours of the city and campus, a visit to the Columbus zoo, sporting events, dinner at local restaurants, grocery shopping trips and more.
Events and activities

• At the welcome booth, you will receive a Calendar of Events that will provide details regarding each of these events
• On-going events will help you:
  – Learn about your new home in Columbus
  – Meet current international students
  – Meet American students
  – Get to know other new international students
• All of these trips are optional and are free or low cost, so please feel free to attend as many as you like
Recap

• Important dates
• Action items
Recap of important dates

- Thursday, June 30: Deadline to register on-line for Immigration Check-In Appointment
- Friday, July 1: Deadline to complete the online ESL Composition Exam
- Monday, August 1: Priority immigration check-In begins
- Tuesday, August 16: Priority immigration check-In ends
Recap of important dates

• Tuesday, August 16: Tuition payment is due (one week prior to the start of the term unless otherwise noted on your statement of account)
• Tuesday, August 16: Health insurance coverage begins
  – Consider purchasing interim insurance coverage if you will arrive before this date
• Saturday, August 20: Residence hall move-in day
• Tuesday, August 23: First day of autumn semester
Action items

• Activate your Ohio State email account
• Register for an immigration check-in session
• Enroll in “F-1/J-1 immigration course and quiz” located in your account in Carmen
• Pay your SEVIS fee
• Apply for your U.S. student visa
• Confirm your travel arrangements
• Confirm your housing arrangements