

## ARRIVAL PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS OR EXCHANGE VISITORS

### DEFINITIONS

**F-1 Academic Students** enter the United States to pursue a full course of study at one of the following types of DHS-approved academic institutions in the United States:

- Established college or university
- Seminary
- Conservatory
- Academic high school (or, for F-3 students, elementary school)
- Language Training Program

Attendance at a public elementary school, a publicly funded adult education program is prohibited. Study at a public secondary school is time-limited and requires reimbursement to the local educational agency.

**M-1 Vocational Students** enter the United States to pursue a full course of study at one of the following types of DHS-approved nonacademic institutions (other than language training programs) in the United States:

- Community college or junior college which provides vocational or technical training and which awards recognized associate degrees;
- Vocational or other nonacademic high school;
- Post-secondary vocational or business school;
- School that provides vocational or nonacademic training other than language training;
- School that offers both vocational and academic courses, as long as the student's primary intent is to study vocational courses.

Language training qualifies only when taken at the same school for the purpose of enabling the student to understand the vocational or technical course of study.

**J-1 Exchange Visitors** are foreign nationals who have been selected by a Department of State (DOS) designated program sponsor to participate in an exchange visitor program in the United States. This program is designed to promote mutual understanding between the United States and other countries through the interchange of persons, knowledge, and skills.

### 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 nonimmigrant 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 nonimmigrant visa classification may only be admitted up to 30-days prior to the program start date.
- ✓ When you receive your U.S. nonimmigrant 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 nonimmigrant visa;
- SEVIS Form I-20AB, I-20MN, or DS-2019;
- Visa exempt nationals presenting a SEVIS Form I-20AB, I-20MN or DS-2019 issued on or after September 1, 2004, who are entering the United States for the first time should have a Form I-797, Receipt Notice or Internet Receipt verifying SEVIS Fee payment. For additional SEVP/SEVIS Program Information, refer to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement website at <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/students/index.htm>
- Evidence of financial resources, In addition, it is **recommended that you also carry** the following documents:
  - Evidence of Student/Exchange Visitor status (recent tuition receipts, transcripts);
  - Name and contact information for Designated School Official (DSO) or Responsible Officer (RO) at 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 Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record for immigration,

before you land at your initial point-of-entry in the U.S. 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, **ensure that you have:** passport, SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019; completed Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record; and, CF-6059 Customs Declaration Form available for presentation to the CBP Officer. The Form I-94 should reflect the address where you will reside (not the address of the school or program sponsor).

If you are entering through a land or designated seaport, the Customs and Border Protection Officer will provide the necessary CF-6059, Customs Declaration Form and Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record at the port-of-entry. If you do not understand a form, ask the CBP 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 CBP 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 optional practical training, this should be reflected on page 3 of your SEVIS Form.

Once your inspection is complete, the inspecting officer will:

- Stamp your SEVIS Form for duration of status (“D/S”) for F and J visa holders;
- Stamp your SEVIS Form for 30-days beyond program end date for M visa holders, not to exceed one-year;
- Stamp the Form I-94 and staple it in the passport;
- Return the SEVIS Form.

## **SECONDARY INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS**

If the inspector cannot automatically verify your information or you do not have all of the required documentation, you may be escorted to an interview area known as “secondary inspection.” Secondary inspection allows inspectors to conduct additional research in order to verify information. Verifications are done apart from the primary inspection lines so that an individual case will not cause delays for other arriving passengers.

It is recommended that you have readily available the name and phone number of the foreign student advisor at your school or the person responsible for your J-1 Exchange Visitor Program in case your admission/participation needs to be verified. In the event

you arrive during non-business hours (evenings, weekends, holidays), you should have a phone number where this individual can be reached during non-business hours.

Failure to provide proper documentation and to comply with entry/exit procedures is cause to refuse the student or exchange visitor admission into the United States. In limited circumstances, if a student or exchange visitor is mostly, but not fully in compliance, he/she may be issued a Form I-515A, Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor. This form authorizes temporary admission for 30 days into the United States and requires the student or exchange visitor to take immediate action to submit proper documentation. Noncompliance with the directions contained on these forms can result in future adverse action.

### **CONTINUING STUDENTS**

Continuing students who are going to travel outside of the United States must see their foreign student advisor and obtain an endorsement from the DSO or RO. The endorsement will be made on page 3 of the SEVIS Form I-20 or page 1 of the DS-2019. When returning to the United States, a continuing student/exchange visitor must present a valid SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019 with the DSO or RO signature showing that the student is active and in good standing with the school or program.