

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR SERVICES

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PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION FOR NEW F-1 STUDENTS AT UCONN (UCAELI)

Congratulations on your admission to UCAELI! Please read this pre-arrival guide and following pages of the enclosed Form I-20. Contact International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) at international@uconn.edu if you have questions related to your F-1 status prior to arrival.

FORM I-20 INSTRUCTIONS AND VISA

Enclosed is Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status. Carefully read Pages 1, 2 and 3, sign and complete the STUDENT CERTIFICATION at the bottom of Page 1.

Important! Please check your I-20 Certificate of Eligibility and notify UCAELI immediately BEFORE you apply for your visa if there are any errors. We will send you a corrected I-20 to use to apply for your visa.

SEVIS I-901 FEE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) charges a \$200 fee to new F-1 STUDENTS. **This fee is IN ADDITION TO the visa fees charged by the U.S. consulate or embassy.** The SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) I-901 fee must be paid and you must print your receipt before you apply for your student visa if you are outside the U.S. or before you apply for a change of status if you are in the U.S. If you are transferring from another U.S. institution you do not need to pay the SEVIS fee again UNLESS you receive a new Form I-20 AND a new SEVIS ID number. Your F-2 dependents do not need to pay a separate SEVIS fee. The fee can be paid online by credit card (<http://www.fmjfee.com>), and you must have a printer ready to print the electronic receipt at the time of payment. The fee can also be paid by mail with Form-I-901 or by Western Union. See the ICE website at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm>.

ARRIVING FROM ABROAD

If abroad, pay SEVIS fee (see above) and consult the website of the closest U.S. embassy or consulate for instructions on applying for an F-1 visa stamp. The visa stamp is a travel document that you will need to seek entry to the United States for the purpose of studying at UCAELI. You will need to bring your passport (valid at least 6 months into the future), your Form I-20, your proof of funding and any other required support documentation specified on the embassy/consulate website to your visa interview. Please see the website of the consulate where you will apply for your visa for the full list of supporting documents you will need for your visa interview. For links to all U.S. Embassies and Consulates worldwide, see: U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide <http://usembassy.state.gov/>

Citizens of Canada are visa-exempt and do not have to apply for an F-1 visa stamp before traveling to the U.S. to begin their F-1 program. Citizens of Canada *do* need to pay the SEVIS fee and present the Form I-20, passport and proof of funding to enter the U.S. with F-1 status at the start of the academic program.

Plan ahead as the visa application process can take several weeks, and sometimes longer. Because most visa applicants are required to appear for a personal interview it can take a long time to schedule an appointment and security checks can delay visa issuance by several weeks or months. Current appointment and average processing times can be found here: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en.html>

When you receive a visa, please immediately verify if the information on your visa is accurate, such as your name spelling/order, date of birth, etc. If any errors are found, contact the consular office that granted your visa immediately to fix them.

It is strongly discouraged to purchase your flight tickets before your visa is granted.

Other helpful websites:

F-1 Student Visa Program

<http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/>

ISSS Visa Application Guidance

<http://iss.uconn.edu/students/newstudents/new-students-apply-for-a-visa/>

SEVIS I-901 Fee

<https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/>

Visa Denials

<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/denials.html>

ARRIVAL IN THE U.S.

After you obtain the visa you may travel to the U.S. up to 30 days before the program start date indicated on box 5 of your Form I-20. You should plan to arrive at UConn BEFORE the program start date. Please contact your academic department (UCAELI) and ISSS if you will arrive after your program start date. Please notify ISSS if you have received a Form I-20 from UCAELI but decide not to attend. You must return the form to ISSS.

As you near the U.S., you will be given a customs declaration form during the flight. On the customs declaration form, you must provide information found in your passport as well as your U.S. address. Again, if you do not have a U.S. address, you may use the ISSS office. Be sure to print clearly. Also on the form, you must declare the amount of money you are bringing with you IF it is \$10,000 or more. Be sure to tell the truth. There is no penalty for bringing this much money but it MUST be declared. You must also include on the form the total value of any goods that you are bringing into the US. You don't have to be specific, you can use general terms (i.e. clothing, books, gifts). You can estimate the value of the items. You do not have to pay a duty fee on totals less than \$1,000.

When you travel please carry with you your Form I-20, passport, visa, I-901 SEVIS fee receipt, admission letter or offer letter and funding documentation. **Do not pack these documents into your checked luggage.** Present your passport and Form I-20 to the U.S. immigration officer, who will stamp and annotate your documents with "F-1" and "D/S" (Duration of Status). Be sure that the officer admits you using your F-1 visa by checking the entry stamp in your passport - if the officer stamps your passport with any other entry than F-1 and a specific expiration date (not D/S) please go back to have this corrected BEFORE you leave the immigration booth.

If you travel through a land border by car you will receive a Form I-94 in addition to the entry stamp in your passport. This form must be annotated the same as in your entry stamp "F-1 (or F-2)" and "D/S".

Self Service Kiosks or Global Entry Program: If your immigration is processed through a self-service kiosk, you may need to elect the type of visa that you enter on. Pay special attention that you process your self-service admission using the correct visa/visa type. Please check the kiosk for any receipts issued to you upon processing your entry, and do not misplace this receipt!

After arriving in U.S., confirm your admission record online <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94>. Please print your online admission record (Form I-94) and keep it for your records.

ARRIVAL AT UCONN AND CHECK-IN

IMPORTANT! You must check in with ISSS by the program start date on your Form I-20. ISSS must register your arrival in SEVIS, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) database. To check in, you must do the following AFTER arriving in the U.S.:

- 1) Update your "Current Local" address field in Student Admin: <http://students.uconn.edu>
- 2) Complete the online check-in form on the ISSS website: <http://iss.uconn.edu/check-in/>

You will need to have electronic/scanned copies of your 1)passport ID page, 2)visa stamp, 3)signed Form I-20, 4) Form I-94, and 5) the entry stamp in your passport at the time you check in to upload into the check-in form. If you decide to upload photos of your documents you must be sure they are clear and that you save and name them prior to uploading. Computers are available in the UConn Library for scanning documents, and at ISSS for students to check in and update addresses. ISSS is located in room 183 of McMahon Hall at the main UConn

campus in Storrs. *Failure to check in within 30 days (or 15 days if you are an F-1 student with a SEVIS record transferred from another U.S. school) of your program start date on the Form I-20 may result in losing your legal F-1 status.* The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is very strict about check-in requirements.

Only ISSS can register your arrival/current U.S. address in SEVIS.

ORIENTATION

All F-1 students are required to attend a mandatory orientation to the F-1 visa regulations. Further details on the orientation schedule are provided separately.

MEDICAL (HEALTH) INSURANCE

To assist in the transition from your current medical insurance to insurance for your stay in the U.S. we recommend you purchase a travel medical insurance coverage for yourself (and family members if any) for at least the first 30 days in the U.S. All F-1 UCAELI students are required to purchase UConn insurance at the start of their program. Please contact UCAELI for further information.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN)

UCAELI students may apply for a job only on campus for a maximum of 20 hours per week. Any other work is considered unauthorized employment and is not permitted. F-1 students are eligible for Social Security numbers when employed.

DRIVING

International students may drive in the U.S. with a foreign driver's license used together with an International Driver's Permit obtained in the home country. The process to obtain a Connecticut state driver's license can take a long time and therefore students should not expect to be able to obtain a U.S. driver's license immediately after arrival. For further information please contact UCAELI.

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM

In accepting the F-1 visa, you obligate yourself to all terms and conditions stated on Form I-20 and will be admitted to the U.S. for the purpose of pursuing the academic program stated on your Form I-20. You are eligible to study on a full time basis in your program between the dates indicated on your Form I-20. Any changes to the terms of your academic program must be reported and updated on your Form I-20 after arrival.

F-1 ADVISING FOR STUDENTS

There are many rules and regulations that you must follow in order to maintain your F-1 student status after you have arrived in the U.S. ISSS is the only office on-campus responsible for advising students on their F-1 status. It is very important that you understand the terms of your student status and abide by those terms. ISSS has six International Advisors who serve the advising needs of all Storrs and regional campus students.

PRE-ARRIVAL SUMMARY

- Read thoroughly this material and your Form I-20.
- Sign your Form I-20.
- Obtain medical insurance for at least 30 days. Be prepared to pay for medical insurance for the length of your visit after you arrive.
- Apply for your F-1 visa
- Enter the U.S. in F status no earlier than 30 days before your start-date on Form I-20.
- Obtain an International Driver's Permit while in the home country.
- On your flight to the U.S., make sure to complete a Form I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record) with your name as it appears in your passport and F-1 visa.

POST-ARRIVAL CHECKLIST- FIRST THINGS TO DO

- Check In at UCAELI
- Check in ONLINE with ISSS: <http://iss.uconn.edu/check-in/>
- Contact UCAELI and ISSS if you will be arriving after the program start date on your I-20
- Attend mandatory F-1 orientation (part of your general orientation program)
- Ensure that you are registered for a full-time course load of 22 hours per week for UCAELI students