

What a Student or Exchange Visitor Can Expect Upon Arrival at a U.S. Port of Entry

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), an office of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection and the Department of State, wishes to assist you in your entry into the United States.

Careful planning and preparation by students and exchange visitors can ensure that the delay based on these procedures 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 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.
- Also, check to see that your visa accurately reflects your correct visa classification.
- When you travel, you should carry 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.

Here are the documents you should carry on your person:

- Passport (including attached envelope of immigration documents) with visa
- SEVIS Form I-20 AB or DS-2019
- Evidence of financial resources

In addition, SEVP recommends that you also carry the following:

- Evidence of Student/Exchange Visitor status (recent tuition receipts, transcripts)
- Name and contact information for Designated School Official or Responsible Officer 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 before you land at your initial point of entry in the United States. 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 at one of the Department of Homeland Security stations. As you approach the inspection station, have your: passport, SEVIS Form DS-2019, Form and CF-6059 Customs Declaration Form available for presentation to the Customs and Border Protection Officer.

If you are entering through a land or designated seaport, the Customs and Border Protection Officer will provide the necessary CF-6059 Customs Declaration Forms and I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Forms at the port of entry. If you do not understand a form, ask the Customs and Border Protection 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 Customs and Border Protection 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 have multiple visas within your passport, be sure to turn to your J-1 visa when you hand your documents to the officer.

Once your inspection is complete, the inspecting officer may stamp your visa with J-1 and D/S. (Image below)



Secondary Inspection Requirements: If your information cannot be automatically verified by the inspector or you do not have all of the required documentation, you may be directed 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.

In the case your admission/participation needs to be verified, our office can be contacted at the numbers below.

- Office #: 864-656-3614
- Campus Police (Will route to our Director or Associate Director): 864-656-2222

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 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 denied entry.

Following Admission into the United States:

Students should report to their school as soon as practical and register for courses or validate their intended participation.

Exchange visitors should report to their exchange program Responsible Officer within (but no later than) 30 days after the "Program Begin Date" listed on their Form DS-2019, for validation of intended program participation with the Foreign Student Advisor.