

Welcome to Clemson Email Series  
Email #1 | November 27, 2024

Congratulations on your admission to Clemson University! We, in International Services, are so excited to have you as a member of our Clemson Family!

International Services is the office on Clemson’s main campus that provides guidance to international students on how to maintain their F-1 and J-1 student visa status. We are also here to help answer any other questions as well. Clemson is a big school, and we realize it is a lot for a new student to navigate, so we are here to help you.

Over the next several weeks, International Services will send you a series of communications as part of our *Welcome to Clemson* email series. This series will contain various resources, videos, and helpful tips from offices and individuals across campus to help make your arrival and transition to Clemson as easy as possible.

This email contains information on the following:

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**International Student Arrival Guide:**

To help you prepare for your Clemson Experience, the International Student Services team developed an [International Student Arrival Guide](#), which offers resources to help you with the transition to living and studying at Clemson University.

**U.S. Arrival Date:**

International students are allowed to arrive in the U.S. no earlier than 30 days prior to the start of classes. Clemson University will begin classes on **January 8, 2025**, so new students can enter the U.S. on or after **December 9, 2024**. If you are an international student transferring your active SEVIS record to Clemson University from another U.S. school, you can remain in the U.S. this winter or return to the U.S. with a Clemson I-20 prior to December 9, 2024.

**Applying for an F or J Visa:**

Once you have your Form I-20 or DS-2019, you must apply for the appropriate U.S. visa to begin your academic studies. The visa will be issued by a U.S. Embassy or Consulate outside the U.S. for a specific length of time based on your country of citizenship and the type of visa you are requesting. You must have a valid visa to enter the U.S. unless you are a citizen of Canada or Bermuda.

*Important Items to Remember regarding the visa applications:*

1. **Make sure your immigration documents are correct.** To avoid delays in visa issuance and entering the U.S., the spelling of your name and your date of birth must be the same on your Form I-20 as reflected in your passport. If your name or date of birth does not appear correctly on your documents, you must notify [International Services](#) immediately.



- The Form I-20 or DS-2019 indicates International Services has created an immigration record for you in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to permit you to study at Clemson University for a specific period, at a specific academic level, and in a specific program of study.
  - You will find your unique SEVIS ID number in the upper right-hand corner of the first page of your Form I-20 or DS-2019.
  - If you have dependent family members (spouse or child under the age of 21) who will be traveling with you to the U.S., they will receive their own Form I-20 or DS-2019 to apply for their F-2 or J-2 visas.
2. **Pay the SEVIS Fee [here](#).** We strongly recommend that you pay the fee online with a credit card whenever possible to secure an immediate receipt. This fee must be paid to schedule your visa interview appointment at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.
  3. **Initiate the visa application process at the nearest [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](#).** Citizens of all countries except Canada and Bermuda are required to have a valid visa stamp inside their passports to request entry into the U.S.
    - It is strongly recommended that you review the website of the specific consular post to learn about your visa application procedures, documentary requirements, and deadline.
    - Refer to the [U.S. Department of State](#) website that provides information on visa appointment wait times at specific consulates and embassies, as well as any additional fees required. Fees and wait times can vary depending on the country of citizenship and visa classification.
    - If you are a citizen of Cuba, Iran, or Syria and are applying for a U.S. visa, please see additional information provided by the U.S. Department of State [here](#).
  4. **Schedule an Appointment at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate.** Most initial visa applicants are required to schedule a personal interview where a consular officer will review your admission letter, Form I-20/DS-2019, financial documents, passport, etc. Most interviews take between 3-5 minutes.
    - Prior to the interview with the consular officer, it is recommended that you practice answering questions in English about your visa application, what you will study in the U.S., and your plans after you complete your studies and return home.
    - Please review these [interview tips](#) to better prepare you for your F/J visa interview.
    - If you plan to bring your dependent spouse or children to the U.S., be prepared to answer questions on how you will financially support them while in the U.S.
    - Be positive and polite and respond to questions with clear and concise answers.
  5. **Be patient. The visa process may take some time.**
    - U.S. Embassies and Consulates try to adhere to the visa wait times listed on the U.S. Department of State [website](#).
    - Qualifications for an Expedited Interview Appointment or an Interview Waiver can be found [here](#).
    - Please note that consular officers can request additional security clearance for visa applicants at their own discretion. If you become subject to additional security clearances, you must wait until you receive a response from the consular post.
      - The decision to subject a person to a security clearance can be based on several different factors, including, but not limited to, information in your visa application forms, international travel patterns, and your field of study or research.



### **Upcoming Office Closure Dates:**

As we approach the Holiday Season, please note our office will be closed and our staff will be unable to respond to emails during the following dates:

- Thursday, November 28, 2024 – Friday, November 28, 2024
- Monday, December 23, 2024 – Friday, December 27, 2024
- Wednesday, January 1, 2025

We hope you find the information above useful and helpful. If you have any questions regarding the information above, please [contact us](#). We are available for questions via phone, email, and/or Zoom meeting. Once again, the International Services Team is very excited to meet you and welcome you to Clemson University!

We will be sending more helpful information throughout the following weeks!

Take care,

**Lindsey Hill**, Director

**Taylor Rigot**, Associate Director

**Wasim Gendi**, International Services Advisor

**Nathaniel Hazel**, International Student Advisor

**Phyllis Lawless**, Administrative Assistant

