Countdown to Chicago!

PRE-ARRIVAL COMMUNICATION FOR F-1 & J-1 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

THIS WEEK: APPLYING FOR YOUR STUDENT VISA

After you have obtained your certificate of eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019) from OIS, your next step is to apply for your student visa. Full details regarding travel and visas can be found on the OIS website.

What is a student visa?
The student visa allows nonimmigrants to travel to the U.S. to pursue a course of study. If you received an I-20 from UIC you should apply for an F-1 student visa. If you received a DS-2019 from UIC you should apply for a J-1 student visa.

Where do I get my student visa?
Student visas are issued as a stamp in your passport by a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Ideally, you will apply for your student visa at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate nearest your residence in your home country. Find the location nearest you at the Department of State website.

When should I apply for my student visa?
Because appointment wait times and visa processing times can vary by location, OIS recommends that you apply for your visa as early as possible. Additionally, it’s important to be aware of the possibility that your visa application may require additional administrative processing which can take 60 days or more to resolve. OIS recently posted a news update related to an observed increase in administrative processing cases for both initial visa applications and renewals.

What documents do I need to apply for my student visa?
All applicants will need to present an I-20 or DS-2019 issued by the school they plan to attend along with an I-901 SEVIS Fee receipt. Do not pay the SEVIS Fee or apply for a visa using an I-20 or DS-2019 from a school you will not attend. Each U.S. Embassy or Consulate will have specific document requirements so please check the website of the location you plan to visit. However, general document requirements are listed on the OIS website.

What else should I know before my visa interview?
The visa interview is not a document review but rather a conversation between you and the Consular Official. The Association of International Educators, NAFSA, has prepared a list of 10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Student Visa that you might find helpful. If for some reason your visa is denied, make sure to get the decision in writing so that OIS Advisors can best assist you.

I transferred my SEVIS record to UIC. Do I need a new visa?
If the SEVIS ID on your UIC I-20 matches the SEVIS ID on your student visa, and you will enter the U.S. before that student visa expires, you shouldn’t need to apply for a new visa. However, you are welcome to consult with your nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate for their best recommendation.
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I am Canadian. Do I need a visa?
No, Canadian citizens do not need a visa to study or participate in an exchange program in the U.S. However, Canadian citizens do need to present an original I-20 or DS-2019 along with additional documentation when entering the U.S.

ORIENTATION
Registration for spring 2018 New International Student Orientation is live! Visit the OIS website and register today.

QUESTIONS?
Still have questions? Contact the New International Student Team at newintl@uic.edu or give us a call at +1 (312) 996-3121. If you're already in Chicago, feel free to visit us during Open Advising.