

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS

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 or 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.

Students seeking admission to Polk State College must complete all the required admission procedures. Once the procedures are complete and verified, the Designated School Official (DSO), also known as the International Student Advisor, will issue the student a SEVIS I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status – For Academic and Language Students, an acceptance letter from Polk State College, a form I-901 to pay the SEVIS fee, Arrival Procedures, and an application for medical insurance.

- Complete the I-901 procedure. Once you have the I-901 receipt, make an appointment at the nearest US embassy or consular office to apply for your F-1 visa.
- When you go to the embassy for your appointment, **you must have the following items with you:** the correct fee, your passport, your SEVIS I-20, your I-901 receipt, your acceptance letter, and your proof of financial support. **Also recommended** is a short written goal statement, proof of ties to the home country, and a letter from a potential employer that you would be “*considered for employment*” in a company upon your return.
- Once your visa has been approved, make a copy of your I-20 and send it along with the completed application for medical insurance. You may request that the insurance company send your card to Mary Westgate at the college address if you believe you may be in transit to the US.

ADVANCE PREPARATION PRIOR TO ENTRY

FOR INITIAL ENTRY OF NEW STUDENTS

Careful planning and preparation by students can ensure that delays in the established procedures are minimal. If you are a non-immigrant student, 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 a U.S. embassy or consulate to obtain a new visa.
- ✓ Students entering the United States for the first time under their nonimmigrant F-1 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 (CBP) Officer at the U.S. port-of-entry will open the envelope.**
- ✓ When you travel, you should carry some specific documents (listed below) 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-20;
- Visa-exempt nationals presenting a SEVIS Form I-20 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.
- Acceptance letter to Polk State College;

In addition, it is **recommended that you also carry** the following documents:

- Evidence of student status (recent tuition receipts, transcripts);
- Name and contact information for the Designated School Official (DSO) at your intended school;
- 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 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, sealed envelope from the embassy, SEVIS Form I-20; 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).

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 an international student at Polk State College. Be prepared to include the name and address of the school where you will enroll and what you plan to study (Winter Haven: Polk State College, 999 Avenue H NE, Winter Haven Florida 33881, or Lakeland: 3433 Winter Lake Road, Lakeland, FL 33803).**

If you are participating in 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 and write on it “F-1” in the visa classification section and duration of status (“D/S”) in the valid until section.
- Stamp the Form I-94 and write on it “F-1” and “D/S” and staple it in the passport;
- Return the SEVIS Form and the passport to you.

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 know 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 International Student Advisor at your campus (**Winter Haven: Mary Westgate, office phone: 863-292-3758, personal cell phone: 863-287-3552 or Lakeland: Simmi Johnson, office phone 863-669-2822, personal cell phone 863-738-5202**) in case your admission/participation needs to be verified. In the event you arrive during non-business

hours (evenings, weekends, or holidays), and you experience difficulties, you should contact your International Student Advisor on her cell phone.

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 the International Student Advisor and obtain an endorsement from the DSO. The endorsement will be made on page 3 of the SEVIS Form I-20. When returning to the United States, a continuing student/exchange visitor must present a valid passport, a valid visa, and a SEVIS Form I-20 with the DSO signature showing that the student is active and in good standing with the school or program.

REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTING TO SCHOOL

Once you have arrived to the United States and have been admitted as an F-1 student by the Customs Inspector at the port of entry, you must report within a few days to Polk State College. Upon arrival to the College, you will need to report to the International Student Office to complete any additional admission requirements. Please bring with you the following items:

- your passport with a valid F-1 visa,
- your I-94 Arrival/Departure card, and
- your stamped SEVIS I-20.

These documents will be photocopied for your file.

It is recommended that you report within 3 weeks prior to the first day of the semester, but no later than 5 days after the semester begins. At the time of reporting to the school, you will complete placement testing. Within a few days, you will attend orientation, where you will register for your first semester of classes. Please bring to orientation sufficient funds to pay for your first semester's tuition and books, approximately \$5000 USD.