

Important Visa and Travel Information For New International Students

The Office of International Programs (OIP) welcomes you as a new student to California State University Monterey Bay, and we are pleased to provide you with the following important visa and travel information. Please read it carefully as you plan for your arrival.

If item 3 of your I-20 indicates "initial attendance" you are required to pay the new Federal SEVIS fee of \$100 and have a printed receipt that proves payment prior to your visa interview. To read more about the Federal SEVIS Fee Requirements, visit: <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/index.htm>

CONTENTS:

1. Planning For Your Arrival
2. Travel Documents
3. Your Passport
4. Applying For Your F-1 Student Visa
5. When To Apply
6. What To Bring With You To The Visa Interview
7. Strategies For The Visa Interview
8. Visa Denial Or Visa Delay
9. Special Note For Citizens Of Canada
10. If You Are Currently In The United States
11. Health Insurance & Immunization Requirements
12. Things To Bring With You
13. Things To Leave At Home
14. Arrival In The United States
15. Port Of Entry Procedures
16. Money
17. Temporary Accommodations
18. Review Of Important Information

PLANNING FOR YOUR ARRIVAL

Travel Documents

The "Certificate of Eligibility" (Form I-20), which you will receive from California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB), is necessary to apply for an F-1 student visa required for entry to the United States. New students coming to the

U.S. for the very first time will need to apply for an F-1 student visa at the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate in their home country.

Your Certificate of Eligibility indicates the latest date by which you should report to CSUMB (item #5). This date is generally the first day of classes. We recommend that you arrive 2-3 days in advance of this date, to allow enough time for you to settle into the dormitories or to locate suitable accommodations before Orientation and registration activities begin. Make sure that you make arrangements with the [Residential Life](#) (student housing) Office if you plan to move in prior to the normal move-in date or have special needs.

Important Note: If your plans change, and you decide not to attend CSUMB, return the Certificate of Eligibility (I-20) to the Office of International Programs (OIP) and notify the Admissions Office of your decision. If you wish to attend CSUMB for a future semester, you will then need to re-apply for admission by submitting a new completed and signed application form, \$55.00 application fee and updated financial documentation from your sponsor. After you have been re-admitted to CSUMB, a new SEVIS I-20 form will be sent to you.

Unless you are a Canadian citizen, you must obtain a passport and a visa before you will be permitted to enter the United States. (Canadian citizens should see the special section that pertains to them).

Your Passport

You must have a passport valid for travel within the United States and with a validity date for at least six months after your proposed date of entry into the United States.

APPLYING FOR YOUR U.S. VISA

When to Apply

If you are currently abroad, and do not yet have a valid U.S. student visa, you generally apply for one at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate with jurisdiction over your place of permanent residence. Although visa applicants may apply at any U.S. Consular office abroad, it is generally more difficult to qualify for the visa outside the country of permanent residence.

You should apply for your student visa well in advance of the date you would like to depart for the U.S. Remember that you are required to show proof of having paid the new Federal SEVIS Fee when you appear for your visa interview (please see the separate information on the SEVIS Fee at:

<http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/index.htm> Also, the Christmas and New Year holiday periods are very busy times at the US Embassies and

Consulates world wide, and it is important for you to have your visa in time to arrive at CSU Monterey Bay to attend our International Student Orientation Program. Appointments are now mandatory for all student visas, and some U.S. Embassies and Consulates require that appointments be made at least four to eight weeks in advance. All U.S. Embassies and Consulates have a website where you can read the latest information on visa procedures. Visit: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies_1214.html to locate the embassy or consulate near you. For information on waiting times for student visa appointments, please visit the following link: http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors_wait.php

What to Bring With You to the Visa Interview

Be sure to bring the following with you to the visa appointment:

- Passport
- required photo(s)
- visa fee or proof of visa fee payment
- Federal SEVIS Fee payment receipt
- U.S. non-immigrant visa application forms (unless you will complete it at the consulate or embassy)
- CSUMB admission letter
- CSUMB SEVIS I-20
- test scores and academic records
- proof of English proficiency
- proof of financial support
- evidence of ties to your home country
- any other documents required by the embassy or consulate

Remember that if you plan to attend CSUMB, you must provide the visa officer with an I-20 issued by California State University Monterey Bay. You cannot apply for a U.S. visa using another school's I-20, and then try to attend CSUMB as that is considered to be a fraudulent entry by the U.S. immigration authorities.

Strategies for the Visa Appointment

You are well advised to consider the following prior to your visa appointment, as you may be asked about each item.

1. Academics: Be definite and clear about your educational plans. You should be able to explain precisely what you wish to study and why you chose CSUMB for your education. Be especially prepared to explain reasons for studying in the United States rather than your own country.

2. English: Anticipate that the visa interview will be conducted in English. Do not bring parents or family members with you to the visa interview. The consular

official will want to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf.

3. Ties to Your Home Country: Demonstrate convincing reasons for consular officials to believe that you intend to return home after studies in the United States. Emphasize ties to your home country such as employment, family obligations, property or investments that you own or will inherit, and clear explanations of how you plan to use your education to help your country or pursue a career when you return home.

4. Financial Documentation: Be prepared to prove financial ability to pay for your education and living expenses. While some students will be able to work part time during their studies, such employment is incidental to their main purpose of completing their education. You must show the consular officer that you have the required funds to study in United States dollars as listed on your I-20 form. Your financial evidence should be in the form of bank statements, affidavits of support, scholarship award letters, etc.

5. Be concise: Because of the volume of visa applications, all consular officials are under considerable pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impression they form during the first minute or two of the interview. Consequently, what you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers short and to the point.

6. Not all countries are the same: Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the United States as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. Statistically, applicants from these countries are more likely to be intending immigrants. Remember, as an applicant for an F-1 visa you are seeking non-immigrant status for the purpose of study.

7. Dependents Remaining at Home: If you have a spouse and/or children remaining behind in your home country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. This can be an especially tricky area if you are the primary source of income for your family. If the consular official gains the impression that you family members will need you to remit money from the United States in order to support them, your student visa will almost surely be denied.

Visa Denial or Visa Delay

The vast majority of California State University Monterey Bay students will be successful in obtaining their student visas. Despite this, a small number of students may have their visa applications denied.

The most common reasons for visa denial are:

- failure to prove sufficient ties to your home country, or
- failure to provide sufficient evidence of financial support

The visa officer must verbally inform you of the reason for the visa denial. If your visa is denied, please send an e-mail message to richard_donovan@csumb.edu or call 831.582.3512 and provide the date and location of your visa interview, and details regarding the reason given by the visa officer for the denial.

Much more common than a visa denial is a visa delay. This is why it is so important to apply for your visa EARLY! Here are some of the most common reasons for visa delays:

- Closings or reduced hours at U.S. visa issuing posts abroad due to security concerns
- Closings or reduced hours at U.S. visa issuing posts abroad due to political instability in the host country
- Student record does not appear in the SEVIS system at the U.S. embassy or consulate, even though the student or scholar presents a SEVIS I-20 form.

If you are told that your record does not appear in the visa officer's SEVIS system, immediately contact the Office of International Programs at 831.582.3512 or richard_donovan@csumb.edu and provide the date and location of your visa interview. We will, in turn, contact the appropriate authority to have your SEVIS record re-submitted directly to the location where you have applied for your visa.

- Student not presenting proof of Federal SEVIS Fee payment
- The need for a security clearance prior to visa issuance if the visa applicant is determined to be pursuing a "sensitive area of study" as indicated on the State Department's Technology Alert List. The fields usually include the sciences and Engineering.
- The need for a security clearance prior to visa issuance if the visa applicant has ever been arrested in the United States, or if the applicant has a name identical to or similar to a person with a previous arrest record.
- The need for a security clearance prior to visa issuance if the visa applicant is male, between the age of 16-46 and a citizen of or born in one of the designated

countries requiring security clearances (Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen).

- The need for a security clearance for any non-immigrant visa applicant male or female, age 16 or older who is a national of or permanently residing in Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan or Syria. Such individuals will not be issued visas unless the applicant can show evidence that he or she is not a threat to U.S. national security.
- The new U.S. Department of State requirement that all applicants for non-immigrant visas be interviewed. This new policy has created delays at visa issuing posts around the world.

Similar to a visa denial, the visa officer must verbally inform you of the reason for the visa delay. If your visa is delayed, please send an e-mail message to the Office of International Programs (see above) and provide the date and location of your visa interview, and details regarding the reason given by the visa officer for the delay.

The U.S. State Department has prepared information about student visas on its web site which may be useful to you. Visit:

http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors_types_students2.html

Special Note for Citizens of Canada

Citizens of Canada are not required to obtain a U.S. visa to enter the United States. However, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer will inspect your papers, either at a pre-inspection site in Canada or upon entry to the United States. You must have with you:

- proof of Canadian citizenship
- your admission letter to CSUMB
- proof of Federal SEVIS Fee Payment
- your CSUMB Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 form)
- proof of financial support that corresponds to the information on your I-20

It is essential that you enter the United States in the appropriate status, so be sure to have complete documentation with you.

IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY IN THE UNITED STATES

F-1 Students:

If you already have valid F-1 student status by being enrolled at another school, college or university in the United States, you will need to request that the international student advisor at your current school release your SEVIS record to California State University Monterey Bay. Your new CSUMB I-20 form, endorsed for pending transfer, will be mailed to you as soon as the release date for your SEVIS record (as determine by your previous school) is reached. Once you are enrolled at California State University Monterey Bay and we have confirmed your registration, the transfer process will be completed. If you are in F-1 status, a new I-20 will be issued to you. Be sure to report to the Office of International Programs at CSUMB as soon as possible after your arrival.

All Other Non-Immigrant Visa Classifications:

If you are currently in the U.S. in a visa classification other than F-1, you should contact the Office of International Programs at CSUMB for information about how you may be able to change your status to that of an F-1 student.

HEALTH INSURANCE & IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

You will be informed of any health and immigration requirements when you apply for your visa. The University further requires, (before you can register for your classes), that all students have adequate health and medical insurance which has been approved by the CSUMB Campus Health Center and which meets University requirements. You must also comply with certain immunization requirements as part of this requirement. You will need to be immunized against measles, mumps and rubella (students who are 18 years of age or younger will also be required to be immunized against hepatitis B) BEFORE registering for classes! Further information about CSUMB health insurance and immunization (measles, mumps & rubella) requirements can be found at: <http://health.csumb.edu/>

International students can also purchase a health/medical insurance specifically designed for international students on line at: <http://www.csuhealthlink.com>

THINGS TO BRING

Climate & Clothing

Although California is considered to be the “land of golden sunshine,” the Monterey Bay does not have the higher temperatures of Southern California and typically enjoys mild weather all year long. Similar to the climate of San Francisco, the summer months (June-August) in Monterey are usually cool and foggy. Monterey enjoys its best (clear and warm) weather in September and

October while the winter months (December-March) bring rain and colder temperatures. Also, although Monterey's days are often mild and comfortable, nights can be cool and breezy. You should bring some warm clothing with you (a medium-weight winter coat, sweaters, etc.) as students who come from warm or tropical climates usually find Monterey's temperatures to be rather cool.

SEASON	MONTHS	TEMP. FAHRENHEIT	TEMP. CENTIGRADE
Summer	June- August	55 to 80 degrees	13 to 27 degrees
Fall	September - November	50 to 75 degrees	10 to 24 degrees
Winter	December – March	45 to 60 degrees	7 to 16 degrees
Spring	April - June	48 to 70 degrees	9 to 21 degrees

Temperatures vary considerably from year to year. During winter months, moderate periods of rainfall occur. Three basic types of clothing are essential. In winter, heavy jackets or overcoats, raincoats, hats, scarves, gloves, and umbrellas are needed. During chilly autumn and spring days, medium-weight wool coats or jackets are worn outdoors, sweaters indoors. A light-weight jacket is sometimes necessary for cool nights during spring, summer, and fall.

Personal items: Most students like to bring examples of arts, crafts, traditional dress, photographs, tapes or CDs, maps, or other items descriptive of their country and culture, both to show interested Americans and to provide a touch of home decoration in their new homes. You may want to bring items you use regularly that may not be readily available, or may be more expensive, in the United States--for example, eyeglasses, cameras, watches, or portable radios. You may also have the opportunity to visit a duty-free port where such items may be purchased at a reduced cost.

If you will live on campus, basic furniture is provided in campus residence halls and apartments, but bed linens, blankets, pillows, and towels are not. You may want to bring a towel with you from home country while waiting until after you arrive in the U.S. to purchase blankets, pillows, bed sheets, etc. here before moving into an on-campus residence hall or apartment.

THINGS TO LEAVE AT HOME

You can obtain a booklet on customs regulations at the consulate or embassy where you acquire your visa. Prohibited items include some foodstuffs, narcotics, and items for resale. For more information, visit the website of the U.S. Customs Service at: <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel>

Since students are expected to buy required textbooks for all courses, and supplemental reading materials for review and research are available in libraries, you need not bring any books used in previous study.

It is best to purchase electrical appliances after you arrive: appliances manufactured outside the U.S. may not be compatible with the power supply or may not be allowed inside the residence halls.

Arranging for Mail

Until you have a mailing address in the local area, you may have your letters and packages mailed to your name, California State University Monterey Bay, 100 Campus Center, Seaside, CA 93955, U.S.A. "Hold for arrival" should be marked on the envelope. When you arrive, you can check with the CSUMB mailroom for any received mail. Please note that the University cannot be responsible for the security of any mail forwarded and all valuables should be insured.

ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES

Port of Entry Procedures

Once you have obtained your U.S. student visa, you are ready to finalize your travel plans. Be sure to have your I-20 form with your passport and proof of Federal SEVIS fee payment when you go through your immigration inspection at the U.S. port of entry. Remember that if you plan to attend CSUMB, you must present a certificate of eligibility (I-20 form) endorsed for study at California State University Monterey Bay.

DO NOT enter on another school's certificate of eligibility (I-20 form), as that is considered to be a fraudulent entry by the U.S. Immigration authorities.

DO NOT attempt to enter the United States on a visitor/tourist visa (B-2) unless it is designated "Prospective Student" by a consular officer. The U.S. Immigration Service rarely authorizes a change of status from B-2 to F-1, and you will be prevented from enrolling in school until your change of status application is approved, which could take several months.

DO NOT attempt to enter the United States under the visa waiver program, available to citizens from nearly 30 countries throughout the world. The waiver program is designed for tourists only, and attending school under the waiver program is a clear violation of U.S. immigration law. It will also not be possible for you to later change your status to an F-1 student!

Expect to go through both immigration and customs inspection at the U.S. port of entry. You may also be required to go through a pre-inspection procedure at

certain airports abroad. At the immigration booth, present your passport, your I-20, your proof of Federal SEVIS fee payment and your completed I-94 arrival/departure card (which was distributed on the airplane). Expect to have your index fingers scanned for fingerprint purposes and a digital photograph taken, as required by new U.S. federal regulations.

In the vast majority of cases, there will be no difficulty. In certain cases, if there is some problem with your documents, you may be issued a 30-day entry on your I-94 card and issued a form I-515, usually with instructions to see your international student advisor. Examine your I-94 card carefully as you leave the immigration booth. F-1 students should have their I-94s marked "D/S" which means Duration of Status, along with a stamp indicating the date you entered the United States. If an expiration date is written on the I-94 instead of "D/S," and you are in F status, come to the Office of International Programs as soon as possible.

Anyone who is denied admission at a U.S. port of entry should be very cautious about arguing with the immigration official. You may risk being issued "expedited removal," which now entails a five-year bar on admission to the United States. If you are denied admission, first try to contact the Office of International Programs for assistance, but also make it known to the immigration official that you are willing to withdraw your application for admission to the country rather than be subject to expedited removal.

Money

It is a good idea to exchange currency for U.S. dollars before your departure, but you should not travel with large amounts of cash--there is too much danger of loss or theft. If you anticipate bringing large sums of money to the United States, ask a bank about the safest and most convenient means of carrying or transferring funds. If you make arrangements for funds to be transferred in U.S. dollars to a U.S. bank before you leave home, that money will be available to you when you arrive on campus. Foreign currency is not available in most U.S. cities, and the University and all local businesses accept only U.S. dollars.

When you arrive in the United States, you should have sufficient funds to cover your expenses when you reach CSUMB. The amount depends, of course, on your travel plans. Once you have decided on your itinerary and estimated expenses, you may wish to purchase traveler's checks in U.S. dollars for the amount of money you need. Traveler's checks, obtained at banks or travel offices, can be cashed by banks and most businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and airports. ATMs are also widely used and available for withdrawing funds from participating banks and for credit card cash advances.

It is also advisable to carry a small amount of U.S. cash--at least fifty dollars in paper currency and two or three dollars in coins or "change" for telephones,

baggage lockers, bus fares, and tips. The lower denominations of U.S. paper money are: \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills; coins are 1 cent, (penny, \$.01), 5 cents (nickel, \$.05), 10 cents (dime, \$.10), 25 cents (quarter, \$.25), 50 cents (half-dollar, \$.50) and 1 dollar (\$1).

Payment of tuition, fees, and other charges is due prior to registration (when you enroll for classes). Payment may be made by cash, check or credit card (American Express, Discover, or MasterCard only). Payments can also be made online.

If you cannot make full payment at the time payment is due, you must make special payment arrangements with the Bursar's (Cashier's) Office. Sponsored students must submit copies of their award letters to arrange for direct payment by their sponsors. If you have any questions regarding payment procedures, contact the Cashier's Office at

<http://af.csUMB.edu/accounting/cashiering/index.html>

Please do not arrive at CSUMB with the expectation that you may be awarded an assistantship, scholarship, or other type of financial assistance at a later date; plan on meeting your own educational expenses for the duration of your studies. No long term loan funds are available through the University. All students must therefore bring enough money to cover their expenses. Many students do find work on-campus but such work is not guaranteed; do not assume that you will be able to earn enough while you are here to cover all your school and living expenses.

Married students who wish to have their families join them should realize their financial burdens. A married couple who can live inexpensively will require at least \$7500 more per year than a single student will. Additional funds are necessary for each accompanying child for a minimum standard of living. Visas are not issued to the family of students unless they have sufficient funds for dependents in addition to the amount required for the single student. Many students find it best to delay bringing their families until they have found housing and settled in the community.

Temporary Accommodations

If you plan to live off campus and have not yet found an apartment, you may need to stay in a local apartment, hotel or motel. A list of short term housing accommodations may be found on the Monterey Peninsula Visitors and Convention website: <http://www.monterey.com/>

REVIEW OF IMPORTANT INFORMATION

We hope this information is helpful to you as you arrange for your new educational experience. We encourage you to re-read this information carefully and to note the items that pertain to your situation. Please pay careful attention to your requirements and obligations. To summarize:

1. Make sure your travel documents are in order. Do not finalize your arrangements until you have your passport, Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 form), and visa stamp. You may enter the United States only if your Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 form) is endorsed (signed) by the university in which you intend to enroll.
2. Take care of your financial obligations and arrange for proper monetary transfer. Carefully review requirements for obtaining foreign exchange. Make sure you have adequate funds.
3. Plan to arrive on campus in time to attend our International Student Orientation Program. If you wish to live on campus, apply for on-campus housing accommodations immediately.
4. Be prepared to discuss your academic plans and interests with your department or program. Do not rely on your friends to plan your program for you, but at the same time do not register for classes without seeing an advisor during the orientation program.
5. If you do not plan to enroll at CSU Monterey Bay in the semester for which you have been admitted, return the Certificate of Eligibility (I-20) to the Office of International Programs and notify the Admissions Office of your decision.

We hope this information will be helpful to you as you plan your journey to Monterey Bay. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us via telephone at 831.582.3512, via fax at 831.582.4502, or via e-mail at richard_donovan@csumb.edu .

All of the staff at the Office of International Programs look forward to welcoming you to CSUMB and would like to assist you in any way possible. We are committed to making your stay at California State University Monterey Bay as comfortable and enjoyable as possible and wish you a safe and pleasant travel to the U.S.A!