

ENTERING THE U.S.

When to Arrive

When making travel plans, please be aware that F-1 visa holders entering the U.S. for a NEW program, may not enter the U.S. earlier than 30 days before the begin date of their I-20 (F-1) documents.

Students who are either continuing an on-going program or transferring from another U.S. school to Coppin State are not subject to the 30-day arrival limit.

When you travel, carry your documents with you; do not check them in your baggage! If your baggage is lost or delayed, you will not be able to show the documents and, as a result, may not be able to enter the United States.

Required Documents

Be prepared to present the following documents to the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officer:

- Passport with nonimmigrant visa
- Form I-20
- Visa exempt nationals (such as Canadians) should have a Form I-797, Receipt Notice or Internet Receipt verifying SEVIS Fee payment.
- Evidence of financial resources

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 for immigration, 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.

I-94 Arrival/Departure Document

When completing this form, write your name and other information exactly the same as it appears on your passport. Inconsistency in your name and information can cause serious problems and delays after your arrival.

The officer will stamp your I-94 and make a notation of the type of status you are being given as well as the expiration date. For F-1 students, you will be given an expiration notation called "D/S" (duration of status). Keep the I-94 stapled in your passport or in a safe location. It is proof of your legal entry into the U.S.

If you have any problems during your entry, please notify the International Student Services Office as soon as you arrive on campus.

APPLYING FOR A VISA



All nonimmigrant visitors are required to have a valid visa in their passports to be allowed entry into the U.S.* you may need to make an appointment for a visa interview at a U.S. consulate or embassy abroad to get your visa. Visas cannot be obtained within the U.S. For general information about getting a visa, see the **Department of State** web site.

F-1 Visas

Getting an F-1 entry visa involves three main steps:

1. Obtaining your I-20 (F-1) from Coppin State University
2. Paying the **SEVIS Fee**, if applicable
3. Making a visa appointment and going to an interview at a U.S. consulate.

*Canadian Citizens

Canadian citizens are not required to apply for a visa to enter the U.S. as an F-1, but must still pay the **SEVIS Fee** and present the Certificate of Eligibility (I-20) at the U.S. port of entry. However, if you have "Landed Immigrant" status in Canada, you must obtain a U.S. visa.

Visa Appointments

Read the U.S. Department of State web site for more information about the visa application process at:
http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/temp_1305.html

Visa Wait Times

Since visa appointments are limited and **visa processing times** can be lengthy, you should make your appointment as early as possible. Consulates will generally accept appointments up to 120 days prior to the start of your studies. There may be long waiting periods for appointments, especially during May through August. However, consulates will give priority to F-1 student applicants if requested.

Visa Interviews

When you go for your visa interview, in general you will need:

- Passport (valid at least six months into the future)
- Certificate of Eligibility I-20 (F-1)
- Proof of admission or a Coppin State appointment letter
- Evidence of your financial support
- Visa application forms and fees
- **SEVIS Fee** Receipt (F-1)

Some consulates may require additional documentation, so check the consulate web site for visa application instructions. Visa application forms and fees can be found on the consulate web site.

Security Clearances

In some cases the consulate may require a security clearance on your visa application. Your visa may be approved, but cannot be issued until the security checked is cleared. It is common for the security clearance to take a couple of weeks to a couple of months. If you are subject to a security clearance, please email Coppin State Office of Admissions <http://www.coppin.edu/Admissions/> so they can advise you on the implications of your delayed arrival.