Visa Application Information

Students & scholars, who WILL apply for a U.S. visa during their trip abroad, please consider all of the following:

1. Do not assume that the procedure and time frame for applying for a new visa will be the same as it was the last time you applied! Citizens of certain countries may find significant delays due to security measures, as well as students in certain "high technology" or "sensitive scientific" subject areas. All visa applicants are required to have a personal interview prior to being issued a visa. Before traveling, it is recommended that you review the website of the U.S. consulate or embassy where you will be applying for your visa to determine if that consulate or embassy has specific requirements or procedures (some consulates require advance appointments, special documentation, etc.) The following website links to all U.S. consulates and embassies worldwide: [http://www.usembassy.gov/](http://www.usembassy.gov/)

   - The Department of State website [http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html) lists the average wait times for non-immigrant visa applications at each consulate or embassy. Keep in mind, however, that your case might not be average.

2. If your field of research or study is technologically sensitive, your visa application may be subject to a security clearance. Such clearances are taking, on average, less than one month to be resolved -- keep in mind, however, that your case might not be average. Be prepared to answer specific questions about your research plans in the U.S. during your visa interview.

   - If your field of study or research is technology or science-related, we recommend you get a letter (on letterhead) from your supervisor, department chair, center director or graduate program director to submit with your visa application. The letter should explain as much about your program of study and research as possible with the goal of demonstrating that your research does not threaten national security. If you are working on a grant, the letter can name the Principal Investigator and the granting agency, grant number and grant name. It should also explain the purpose of the grant research. The more information or evidence the letter can offer to convince the DOS that your work does not threaten national security, the better it will be. The letter will not allow the visa officer to waive the possible required security check, but if the letter is sent along with the security check forms, it might move the process along more quickly.

3. Find out in advance what information you will need to supply on your visa application. All non-immigrant visa applicants must complete Forms DS-160 (online non-immigrant visa application) and DS-158 (contact information and work history for non-immigrant visa applicant). Others will need to submit DS-157 (supplemental non-immigrant visa application) as well. You can access all of these forms at: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/forms/forms_1342.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/forms/forms_1342.html)

4. DHS implemented a SEVIS Fee (I-901) which took effect September 1, 2004. (This fee is different from the Rutgers SEVIS Administration Fee.) All F-1 and J-1 visa applicants who present an initial attendance (F-1) or begin a new program (J-1) visa eligibility certificate (I-20 or DS-2019) with an issue date on or after September 1, 2004 are required to pay this fee before they will be issued a visa. **Students who apply for a visa with a continuing attendance I-20 or DS-2019 are NOT required to pay this fee.** *Note*: we have been informed some students and scholars are being told by the DHS that they are required to pay this fee when they are not required to do so. To avoid this confusion, we suggest you carry documentation, which outlines the specifications of the rule. You may print out details regarding who is not required to pay the I-901 SEVIS fee from the “SEVIS I-901 Fee Frequently Asked Questions” section of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement website (question #3): [http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq3.htm#_Toc81222003](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq3.htm#_Toc81222003)

5. Other useful tips when applying for a visa: [http://www.nafsa.org/knowledge_community_network_sec/international_student_3/international_student_4/practice_resources_18/general_travel_consular_1/10_points_to_remember](http://www.nafsa.org/knowledge_community_network_sec/international_student_3/international_student_4/practice_resources_18/general_travel_consular_1/10_points_to_remember)
Suggested items to take with you when applying for a visa:

- Valid Passport
- I-20 or DS-2019 recently signed by your international student adviser along with all previously issued I-20s or DS-2019s/IAP-66s. For more information about how to get a travel signature/endorsement read our hand out titled: Obtaining a Travel Signature for F-1 & J-1 Registered Students available on our website. Make sure the information (spelling of name, major, degree level, funding) on your most current document is accurate.
- Proof of financial support, original (matching the funding information on your I-20 or DS-2019)
- Unofficial university transcript with your name on it (preferably showing proof of registration for the following semester if you are traveling during the winter or summer break. https://sis.rutgers.edu/tags/)
- Center letter clarifying Rutgers full-time policy, if applicable
- For graduate students, a resume or CV, including a list of publications (if any) and a summary of past and present research. If applicable, a letter from your GPD/academic adviser discussing how your research is NOT technologically sensitive (see #2 above)
- If dependents are accompanying you, make sure their I-20s or DS-2019s are signed for travel and that you have a certified copy of your marriage certificate or birth certificates for children
- Evidence showing your intention to return to your home country upon program completion, including evidence of compelling social and economic ties to your home country.

Note: If you experience a problem when applying for a visa or at the port of entry, contact your international student adviser immediately!