Guidelines for International Students – Travel Study Programs

Last updated May 2016

The University of Delaware encourages all students to study abroad. Non-U.S. citizens may require additional visas to enter or study in another country. The details and requirements differ greatly depending on your citizenship and the program site. But the following general guidelines offer an overview of the questions you should consider, and the paperwork that is often required (see here for a printable PDF version).

**STEP 1 – CHECK YOUR U.S. VISA**
(for all non-U.S. citizens except permanent residents/Green Card holders)

As soon as you have applied to study abroad, take your passport to OISS. Ask them to check the following:

**Question 1:** Do you have a valid U.S. visa? If not, renew it now. Renewing your U.S. visa needs to be done in your country of citizenship, so plan enough time for a trip home. To apply for a visa to another country, you need a valid U.S. visa in your passport by at least 90 days before your program departs the U.S.

**Question 2:** Is your U.S. visa valid until after the end of your study abroad program? To be safe, we recommend that your U.S. visa be valid until at least 1 month after your return to the U.S. at the end of study abroad.

**Question 3:** On your I-20, do you have a current, valid signature for travel? You will need this signature before you may apply for a visa to another country.

If you have any questions regarding your visa status, or feel your situation is a bit complicated, ask to schedule an appointment with an OISS Immigration Advisor to discuss any concerns about how your U.S. visa status may impact your plans to study abroad.

**STEP 2 – YOUR VISA FOR STUDY ABROAD**

**Find out if you will need a visa:** Check the embassy or consulate pages for all countries you will visit to see if citizens of your home country require a visa. Be sure to check transit countries too. If your flight will include a stop in another country (such as a layover in Toronto or London), you may need a Transit Visa for that country.

**Choose the type of visa:** Most students on winter, summer or spring break programs require only a Tourist Visa or Short Stay Visa, since you will not be enrolled in an overseas university. Students studying abroad for spring or fall semester typically require a Student Visa.

**Note for students studying in Europe:** Check if your program country is included in the Schengen Zone (a Schengen visa allows you to visit all countries in this zone). If your program visits multiple countries, apply for your Schengen visa at the U.S.-based Consulate for the country where you will stay the longest (i.e. for a program that spends 5 days in France and 10 days in Germany, apply at the German Consulate).

**What you need to do:** Carefully read the “visa information page” for the U.S.-based Consulate, and answer the questions below. If you cannot find the answers on-line, call their office. Most consulates take calls during limited hours, so you may need to call a few times before you reach a person.

Questions for the Consulate?

- **How early can you apply?** (now, or only within 90-days before the program start date)
- **How long** does the visa application process usually take? (i.e. 2-3 weeks, 2-3 months)
- **How much** will the visa cost, and what **forms of payment** are accepted? (i.e. cash, check, money order)
- **What paperwork is required?** (differs by country - see the chart below for standard required documentation information)
- **Where** should you submit your application? Each Consulate handles a different part of the U.S. – go to the Consulate with “jurisdiction for the state where you live in the U.S” (Delaware, Pennsylvania, etc.).
- Must you **apply in-person**, or can you **apply by mail**? If in-person, do you need an appointment, and how can you schedule this? If by mail, where should you send everything, and with which carrier (USPS, FedEx, UPS)?
- Do you need to **pick up your visa** in-person, or can it be mailed to you? If by mail, do you need to provide a return shipping label and prepaid envelope? (i.e. USPS, FedEx, UPS)
- Does anything need to be **notarized**? If yes, you can get documents notarized for free in IGS. Call 302-831-2852 to schedule an appointment with the notary.
- Does anything need to be **translated** into a different language (other than English)?

**Standard visa paperwork – and who provides it:**

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<th>Standard visa paperwork</th>
<th>More questions for the Consulate</th>
<th>IGS provides</th>
<th>You complete</th>
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<tr>
<td>Forms</td>
<td>How many copies are required? Are the forms available on-line?</td>
<td>You would research &amp; complete all forms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passport photos</td>
<td>How many are required? Specific photo instructions that you need to follow?</td>
<td>You would prepare this.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proof of participation</td>
<td>IGS will provide a letter on official letterhead confirming your participation in the program, the dates of the program, and the Program Fee inclusions. <strong>If your host country requires other information in the letter, please let your Program Coordinator know</strong> (<em>only for Study Abroad, UDaB and Exchange - not Registration Only participants).</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proof of health insurance</td>
<td>IGS will provide proof of health insurance only for the official dates of the program (<em>only for Study Abroad or UDaB, not Exchange or Registration Only participants).</em></td>
<td>If you travel early – or stay later – you would need to buy separate insurance coverage for those extra days, and submit this proof with your visa application. For information on how to buy additional insurance, ask <a href="mailto:studyabroad@udel.edu">studyabroad@udel.edu</a> to send you the GeoBlue/HTH enrollment instructions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proof of accommodation (with addresses)</td>
<td>IGS or your program’s Faculty Director can provide this for the official dates of the program.</td>
<td>If you travel early – or stay later – you may need to book accommodation for those extra days, and submit proof of the booking with your visa application.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proof of travel (plane ticket)</td>
<td></td>
<td>You may need to purchase your plane ticket before you can apply for your visa. We strongly recommend purchasing Trip Cancellation Insurance (to cover the cost of your ticket should your visa be denied).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proof of funding</td>
<td>How much do you need to confirm, and must the bank account be in your name or your family’s name?</td>
<td>You would prepare this.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal affidavit or fingerprints</td>
<td>If this is required, please look for detailed instructions.</td>
<td>You would prepare this.</td>
<td></td>
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