



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

Protecting America & Upholding Public Safety

International Students

October 1, 2004

FACT SHEET

ARRIVING AT A U.S. PORT OF ENTRY ... WHAT AN EXCHANGE VISITOR CAN EXPECT

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's **Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)** is committed to facilitating your stay in the United States while you take advantage of our nation's academic, educational, and cultural offerings. To enhance security without slowing legitimate travel, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has instituted some changes in U.S. entry and exit procedures. Careful planning and preparation by international students can ensure that any delay based on these procedures is minimal.

PLAN YOUR ARRIVAL

Exchange Visitors are prohibited from entering the United States more than 30 days in advance of the program start date identified in Item 3 of the DS-2019. Some Exchange Visitors Program sponsors may restrict early entry to less than 30 days. Please check with your sponsor for specific requirements.

ALWAYS HAND CARRY YOUR DOCUMENTS

Do not check the following documents in your baggage. If your baggage is lost or delayed, you will be unable to present the documents at your port of entry. As a result, you may not be able to enter the United States.

1. **Your passport, valid for at least six months beyond the date of your expected stay and**
2. **If re-entering the United States, the DS-2019.**

In addition, it is strongly recommended that you also hand carry the following documentation:

1. Evidence of financial resources;
2. Letter of acceptance as a participant in the Exchange Visitor Program;
3. Paper receipt for the SEVIS fee, Form I-797; and
4. Name and contact information for your sponsoring organization, including a 24-hour emergency contact number.

For greater detail on procedures for traveling and arriving in the United States, visit:

<http://educationusa.state.gov/predeparture/travel/customs.htm>

COMPLETE YOUR ENTRY PAPERWORK

If Arriving By Air: Flight attendants will distribute Customs Declaration Forms (CF-6059) and Arrival-Departure Record Forms (I-94). These must be completed prior to landing.

If Arriving By Land or Sea: The CBP Officer at the port of entry will provide the necessary Customs Declaration Forms (CF-6059) and Arrival-Departure Record Forms (I-94) to be filled out upon your arrival.

AS YOU ARRIVE AT THE PORT OF ENTRY

Proceed to the terminal area for arriving passengers. Have the following documents available for presentation: your passport; the sealed envelope that contains your DS-2019; Arrival-Departure Record Form (I-94); and Customs Declaration Form (CF-6059). The Form I-94 should reflect the address where you will reside, not the address of the program.

All visitors entering the United States must state their reason for wishing to enter the country. 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 exchange visitor.** Be prepared to include the name and address of the school program where you will enroll/participate.

Once your inspection is successfully completed, the inspecting officer will:

- **Stamp your SEVIS Form for duration of status (“D/S”) for J visa holders with date and port of entry**
- **Stamp the Arrival-Departure Record Form (I-94) and staple it in the passport**

FOLLOWING ADMISSION INTO THE UNITED STATES

Exchange Visitors must report to their Exchange Visitor Program sponsor within 30 days of the program begin date identified in line 3 of the DS 2019 to have their participation in the program activity validated. Exchange Visitors in programs beginning with “G” listed in item 2 of the DS 2019, and who are being sponsored for less than 30 days, must have their sponsor validate their participation prior to the end date listed in Item 3 of the DS 2019. Failure to have participation validated will result in an automatic invalidated SEVIS record.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SECONDARY INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

If the CBP officer at the port of entry cannot initially verify your information or you do not have all of the required documentation, you may be directed to an interview area known as “secondary inspection.” Secondary inspection allows inspectors to conduct additional research in order to verify information without causing delays for other arriving passengers.

The CBP officer will first attempt to verify your status by using the Student and Exchange and Visitor Information System (SEVIS). In the event that the CBP officer needs to verify your admission/participation with your sponsor **we strongly recommend** that you have the **name and telephone number of your J-1 Exchange Visitor Program sponsor available.** In the event you arrive during non-business hours (evenings, weekends, holidays), you should also have the emergency phone

number.

Failure to comply with U.S. government entry-exit procedures may result in your being denied entry to the United States. Under certain circumstances, the CBP officer may issue a “Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor” Form (I-515A), which authorizes temporary admission into the United States. Work with your program sponsor to submit proper documentation without delay.

US-VISIT

All nonimmigrant visitors holding visas-regardless of race, national origin, or religion -participate in the US-VISIT, a comprehensive registration tracking system for entries to and exists from the United States. The program involves obtaining a scan of two index fingerprints and a digital photograph. For more information: www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/editorial/editorial_0440.xml

NATIONAL SECURITY ENTRY-EXIT (NSEER) REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Some individuals will be asked to provide additional information under the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, or NSEERS. A packet of information will be available at the port of entry explaining the registration procedure. For more information:

www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/editorial/editorial_0440.xml

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.



**Homeland
Security**

US-VISIT
Keeping America's Doors Open and Our Nation Secure

US-VISIT is a continuum of security measures that begins overseas, at the Department of State's visa-issuing posts, and continues through arrival and departure from the United States of America. Using biometrics such as digital, inkless fingerscans and digital photographs, the identity of visitors requiring a visa to travel to the United States is now matched at each step to ensure that the person crossing our border is the same person who received the visa. It also helps us know when visitors overstay the terms of their admission. Finally, the biometrics help secure the visitors' identity in the event their travel documents are lost or stolen.

US-VISIT procedures apply to visitors holding a foreign passport or visa.

For all travelers, the process is fast and simple.

The goals of US-VISIT are to:

- ★ Enhance the security of our citizens and visitors
- ★ Facilitate legitimate travel and trade
- ★ Ensure the integrity of our immigration system
- ★ Protect the privacy of our visitors

The US-VISIT process involves collecting travel information and "biometric identifiers" (such as digital fingerscans, using a simple, inkless device) from visitors to assist the Department of State Consular Officer and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer in making admissibility decisions.

The identity of visitors who travel to the United States will be matched upon their arrival and departure. These entry and exit procedures address our critical need for tighter security and our ongoing commitment to facilitate travel for the millions of legitimate visitors we welcome each year to conduct business, learn, see family, or tour the country.

By capturing visitors' "biometrics" using an inkless digital fingerscanner, we are able to conduct this matching process more quickly and with more certainty than by searching databases by name alone.

Upon Applying for a Visa

Visitors who are required to obtain a visa to travel to the United States must go through a personal interview at a visa-issuing post. This process includes enrolling in US-VISIT – having two index fingers scanned by an inkless device and a digital photograph taken. This information assists the Department of State Consular Officer in making decisions about issuing a visa.

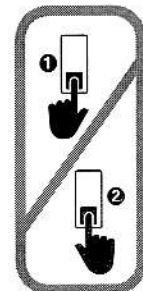
Upon Arrival

The arrival process for the most part remains unchanged and will be familiar to international visitors. At an air or sea port, travel documents such as a passport and a visa will be reviewed and a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer will ask specific questions regarding the visitors' stay in the U.S.



As part of the enhanced procedures, **visitors have their two index fingers scanned by an inkless device and a digital photograph taken.** This information is used to assist the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer in determining whether or not to admit the visitor. **These enhanced procedures add only seconds to the visitor's overall processing time.**

Visitors who enrolled in US-VISIT at the visa-issuing post will repeat the process of having their two index fingers scanned and photograph taken to ensure that the person entering the country is the same person who was issued the visa.



Upon Departure

The most notable change for international visitors will be new exit procedures.



As part of US-VISIT, **visitors will eventually need to verify their departure.** The US-VISIT system is designed to make this check-out process easy, and involves a test of automated self-service workstations and other alternatives in the international departure areas of air and sea ports. By scanning travel documents and capturing fingerscans on the same inkless device, the system matches the visitors' identity, verifies departure, and confirms compliance with U.S. immigration policy. Compliance with these new security procedures is critical because the exit information also will be added to the visitors' travel record to document their status for future visits to the United States.

About Privacy

US-VISIT will safeguard the personal information collected in a manner that is responsible and respectful of privacy concerns. Data obtained from visitors is securely stored and made available only to authorized officials on a need-to-know basis. US-VISIT conforms to all appropriate U.S. privacy laws. A US-VISIT privacy officer is available to answer questions or resolve concerns and may be contacted through www.dhs.gov/us-visit, by sending an email to privacy@dhs.gov, or by writing to the Privacy Officer, Department of Homeland Security, US-VISIT, 425 Eye Street, NW, Washington DC 20536.



US-VISIT enhances the security of the United States while facilitating legitimate travel and trade. The United States is still a nation where diversity is celebrated and people from all over the world are welcome. Today we – like most other countries – are working to keep our borders secure while we maintain the freedom to exchange ideas, keep businesses thriving, and enrich lives all over the world.

US-VISIT helps to secure our borders, facilitate the entry and exit process, and ensure the integrity of our immigration system while respecting the environment and the privacy of our visitors.

www.dhs.gov/us-visit