Preparing for your summer in Berkeley

Presented by:
Berkeley International Office
2299 Piedmont Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94720
internationaloffice.berkeley.edu
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Get your passport ready

Renew your passport if it will expire in the next 6 months.

Photocopy the biographic page to carry with you after arrival in the U.S.
Understanding your I-20

SEVIS ID number
Log into VSIS to view the SEVIS number.

You may enter the U.S. up to 30 days before the start date.

Expiration Date
You are allowed 60 days to depart the U.S. or transfer to a new school after the expiration date.

Carry it with you when you travel. Do not pack it away in your luggage!
Understanding your I-20

Make sure you keep all I-20 pages together.

Travel Signature
Located on page 3 of the I-20.
Pay the SEVIS fee

Pay SEVIS (i–901) fee at least 3 days prior to visa interview.

Visit the SEVIS fee web page for more details.

Make copies of the SEVIS fee receipt (i–797) & carry during travel.
Make a visa appointment

Apply for a Visa
Read our Applying For A Visa webpage.
Visit the U.S. Department of State website.

Plan ahead!
Visit the U.S. Department of State for more details at least one month in advance.
Visa type: F-1
Expiration date
Number of Entries allowed: M = multiple

The visa is used only for entering the U.S.
If it expires while you are here, there is no need to renew it.
If you leave the U.S., your visa must be valid for re-entry.

Check visa for accuracy
Keep documents safe

- Photocopy ALL your documents.
- Store originals and copies in two separate and safe locations.
- Carry photocopies of all your documents at all times.
- Take your original documents when traveling out of the area.

*Keep all original documents. You could be asked to present them at future visa interviews!*
Arrange housing early

Housing in the Bay Area is very competitive. It is important to plan ahead.

Visit the Berkeley Summer Session website for more information about Options for Student Housing During Summer Session.
Purchase health insurance

The US healthcare system is complex and can get extremely expensive.

**Health Insurance Requirement**

J1/J2 visa holders are held to strict, and higher, health insurance minimum requirements:

**J1/J2 coverage details**

[Overview of the US Healthcare System](video).
Buy a ticket

Recommended Arrival: 1 week before classes

30-Day Arrival Limit:
New F-1 students are NOT allowed to enter earlier than 30 days prior to program start date.

Plan Ahead! Refundable tickets are a good option should delays arise
Plan transportation from the airport

Most students arrive at: 
San Francisco Airport or Oakland Airport

Here are some options for getting to UC Berkeley from the airport.

Airport Express Shuttle
Bay Porter

Bay Area Rapid Transit: BART

Transit Trip Planner: http://511.org/
Follow the Arrival Procedures for Students as outlined by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Be sure to read:
- Advance Preparation Prior to Entry
- Documents you should carry on you (do not pack away in your luggage)
- Tips on completing customs forms
At the U.S. port of entry

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officer places a stamp in your passport.

This shows your immigration status as F–1 or J–1 and “D/S.”

D/S is an abbreviation for “Duration of Status.”

It means you are legal to stay in the U.S. until the expiration date on your I–20 and as long as you remain a full–time student.
At the U.S. port of entry

I-94: Arrival–Departure record. Your Proof of Legal Entry into the U.S.

You will be asked to complete the Form I-94 and present it at the port of entry.

Electronic Record
✓ Preparing for your summer in Berkeley

Review the other Summer Tutorials!

• Arrival Essentials
• Finding your way on campus
• Making changes to your course schedule

internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/students/summer