Preparing for your summer in Berkeley

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Get your passport ready

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

Photocopy the biographical 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 the I-20 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.
Check visa for accuracy

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.
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 Sessions website for more information about Options for Student Housing During Summer Sessions.
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/
At the U.S. port of entry

Be sure to present your I–20 and show your **F–1 visa** to the officer. Let them know you are requesting **F–1 status**.

Follow the [Arrival Procedures for Students](#) as outlined by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.
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

internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/students/summer