

# Vaughn College

of aeronautics and technology

## Important Visa and Travel Information For New International Students

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*The Office of Admissions welcomes you as a new student to Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology, and is pleased to provide you with the following important visa and travel information. Please read it carefully as you plan for your arrival.*

If item 3 of your I-20 indicates "initial attendance" or if your DS-2019 indicates "begin a new program" you are required to pay the new Federal SEVIS fee of \$200 and have a printed receipt that proves payment prior to your visa interview.

### **CONTENTS:**

- 1. Planning for Arrival**
  - a. Travel Documents
  - b. Your Passport
- 2. Applying for Your U.S. Visa**
- 3. When to Apply**
  - a. What to Bring With You to the Visa Interview
  - b. Strategies for the Visa Appointment
  - c. Visa Denial or Visa Delay
  - d. Special Note for Citizens of Canada
- 4. If you are Currently in the United States**
  - a. F-1 and J-1 Students
  - b. All Other Non-Immigrant Visa Classifications
- 5. Health Requirements and Health Report**
- 6. Things to Bring**
- 7. Things to Leave at Home**
- 8. Arrival in the United States**
  - a. Port of Entry Procedures
  - b. Money
  - c. Temporary Accommodations
- 9. Review of Important Information**

# PLANNING FOR ARRIVAL

## Travel Documents

Enclosed with this brochure is your Certificate of Eligibility, either Form I-20 or Form DS-2019. This form is necessary to apply for the appropriate visa for entry into the United States. Most students will apply for a F-1 Student Visa, however, there are some important exceptions. If you are coming to Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology as an exchange student or as a degree student on home-country government sponsorship (other than personal or family funds), your Certificate of Eligibility is Form DS-2019 necessary for acquiring a J-1 visa. If you have been awarded a fellowship or scholarship from an international organization or the U.S. government, you will receive a Certificate of Eligibility DS-2019 from your sponsoring agency.

Your Certificate of Eligibility indicates the latest date by which you should report to Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology. This date is generally the first day of classes for new students. We recommend you arrive in advance of this date, to allow enough time for you to locate suitable accommodations before classes begin.

***Important Note:*** If your plans change, and you decide not to attend Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology, return the Certificate of Eligibility to the Office Admissions. If you wish to defer your admission to a subsequent semester, you will need to put the request in writing.

Unless you are a Canadian citizen, you must obtain a passport and a visa before you will be permitted to enter the United States. (Canadian citizens should see the special section that pertains to them).

## Your Passport

You must have a passport valid for travel to the United States and with a validity date for at least six months after your proposed date of entry into the United States.

# APPLYING FOR YOUR U.S. VISA

## When to Apply

If you are currently abroad, and do not yet have a valid U.S. student visa, you generally apply for one at the U.S. embassy or consulate with jurisdiction over your place of permanent residence. Although visa applicants may apply at any U.S. consular office abroad, it is generally more difficult to qualify for the visa outside the country of permanent residence.

You should apply for your student visa well in advance of the date you would like to depart for Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology. **Remember that you are required to show proof of having paid the new Federal SEVIS Fee when you appear for your visa interview (see the separate Federal SEVIS Fee Information Sheet).** The months of May - August is a very busy times at the US embassies and consulates world wide, and it is important for you to have your visa in time to arrive and begin classes. Appointments are now mandatory for all student visas, and some U.S. embassies and consulates require that appointments be made at least four to eight weeks in advance. All U.S. embassies and consulates have a website where you can read the latest information on visa procedures. Visit: <http://www.usembassy.gov/> to locate the embassy or consulate near you. For information on waiting times for student visa appointments, visit the following link:

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait\\_4638.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html)

## What to Bring With You to the Visa Interview

Be sure to bring the following with you to the visa appointment:

- Passport
- required photo(s)
- visa fee or proof of visa fee payment
- Federal SEVIS Fee payment receipt
- U.S. non-immigrant visa application forms (unless you will completing it at the consulate or embassy)
- Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology admission letter
- Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology SEVIS I-20 or SEVIS DS-2019
- test scores and academic records
- proof of English proficiency
- proof of financial support
- evidence of ties to your home country
- any other documents required by the embassy or consulate

Remember that if you plan to attend Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology, you must present the visa officer with an I-20 or DS-2019 issued by

Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology. You cannot apply for a U.S. visa using another school's I-20 or DS-2019 and then try to attend Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology as that is considered to be a fraudulent entry by the U.S. Immigration authorities.

## **Strategies for the Visa Appointment**

You are well advised to consider the following matters prior to your visa appointment, as you may be asked about each item.

1. **Academics:** Be definite and clear about your educational plans. You should be able to explain precisely what you wish to study and why you chose Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology for your education. Be especially prepared to explain reasons for studying in the United States rather than your country.
2. **English:** Anticipate that the visa interview will be conducted in English. Do not bring parents or family members with you to the visa interview. The consular official will want to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf.
3. **Ties to Your Home Country:** Demonstrate convincing reasons for consular officials to believe that you intend to return home after studies in the United States. Emphasize ties to your home country such as employment, family obligations, property or investments that you own or will inherit, and clear explanations of how you plan to use your education to help your country or pursue a career when you return home.
4. **Financial Documentation:** Be prepared to prove financial ability to pay for your education and living expenses. While some students will be able to work part time during their studies, such employment is incidental to their main purpose of completing their education. You must show the consular officer that you have the annual amount in United States dollars listed on your I-20 or DS-2019 form. Your financial evidence should be in the form of bank statements, affidavits of support, scholarship award letters, etc.
5. **Be Concise:** Because of the volume of visa applications, all consular officials are under considerable pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They usually make a decision, for the most part; on the impression they form during the first minute or two of the interview. Consequently, what you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers short and to the point.
6. **Not all countries are the same:** Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the United States as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. Statistically, applicants from these countries are more likely to be intending immigrants. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities in the United States.
7. **Dependents remaining at Home:** If you have a spouse and/or children remaining behind in your home country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. This can be an especially tricky area if you are the primary source of income for your family. If the consular official gains the impression that your family members will need you to remit money from the United States in order to support them, your student visa will almost surely be denied.

## Visa Denial or Visa Delay

The vast majority of Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology students will be successful in obtaining their student visas. Despite this, a small number of students may have their visa applications denied.

The most common reasons for visa denial are:

- failure to prove sufficient ties to your home country, and/or
- failure to provide sufficient evidence of financial support

The visa officer must verbally inform you of the reason for the visa denial. If your visa is denied, please send an e-mail message to Celso Alvarez at [Celso.alvarez@vaughn.edu](mailto:Celso.alvarez@vaughn.edu) and provide the date and location of your visa interview, and details regarding the reason given by the visa officer for the denial.

Much more common than a visa denial is a visa delay. This is why it is so important to apply for your visa EARLY! Here are some of the most common reasons for visa delays:

- Closings or reduced hours at U.S. visa issuing posts abroad due to security concerns
- Closings or reduced hours at U.S. visa issuing posts abroad due to political instability in the host country
- Student or scholar's record does not appear in the SEVIS system at the U.S. embassy or consulate, even though the student or scholar presents a SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019. **If you are told that your record does not appear in the visa officer's SEVIS system, immediately contact Celso Alvarez, Director of Admissions at [celso.alvarez@vaughn.edu](mailto:celso.alvarez@vaughn.edu) and provide the date and location of your visa interview. We will in turn contact the appropriate authority to have your SEVIS record re-submitted directly to the location where you have applied for your visa.**
- Student or scholar not presenting proof of Federal SEVIS Fee payment
- The need for a security clearance prior to visa issuance if the visa applicant is determined to be pursuing a "sensitive area of study" as indicated on the State Department's Technology Alert List. The fields usually include the Sciences and Engineering.
- The need for a security clearance prior to visa issuance if the visa applicant has ever been arrested in the United States, or if the applicant has a name identical to or similar to a person with a previous arrest record.

- The need for a security clearance prior to visa issuance if the visa applicant is male, between the age of 16-46 and a citizen of or born in one of the designated countries requiring security clearances (Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen).
- The need for a security clearance for any non-immigrant visa applicant male or female, age 16 or older who is a national of or permanently residing in Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan or Syria. Such individuals will not be issued visas unless the applicant can show evidence that he or she is not a threat to U.S. national security.
- The new U.S. Department of State requirement that all applicants for non-immigrant visas be interviewed. This new policy has created delays at visa issuing posts around the world.

Similar to a visa denial, the visa officer must verbally inform you of the reason for the visa delay. If your visa is delayed, please send an e-mail message to [vincent.papandrea@vaughn.edu](mailto:vincent.papandrea@vaughn.edu) and provide the date and location of your visa interview, and details regarding the reason given by the visa officer for the delay. The U.S. Department of State has prepared information on student visas on its web site which may be useful to you.

### **Special Note for Citizens of Canada**

Citizens of Canada are not required to obtain a U.S. visa to enter the United States. However, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer will inspect your papers, either at a pre-inspection site in Canada or upon entry to the United States. You must have with you:

- proof of Canadian citizenship
- your admission letter to Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology
- proof of Federal SEVIS Fee Payment
- your Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019)
- proof of financial support that corresponds to the information on your I-20 or DS-2019

It is essential that you enter the United States in the appropriate status, so be sure to have complete documentation with you.

## **IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY IN THE UNITED STATES**

**F-1 and J-1 Students:**

If you already have valid F-1 student or J-1 student status by being enrolled at another school, college or university in the United States, by now you have already completed the required Transfer Verification Form and requested that the international student advisor at your current school release your SEVIS record to Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology. Your new Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology I-20 or DS-2019, endorsed for pending transfer, is mailed to you as soon as the release date for your SEVIS record (as determined by your previous school) is reached. Once you are enrolled at Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology and we have confirmed your registration, the transfer process will be completed. If you are in F-1 status, a new I-20 will be issued to you. Be sure to report to the Office of Admissions as soon as possible after your arrival.

**All Other Non-Immigrant Visa Classifications:**

If you are currently in the U.S. in a visa classification other than F-1 or J-1, you should contact the Office of Admissions for information

## HEALTH REQUIREMENTS AND HEALTH REPORT

You will be informed of any health and immigration requirements when you apply for your visa. The College further requires, as a condition of enrollment, that all students have an Immunization record that includes two measles, one mumps and one rubella shot.

## THINGS TO BRING

**Climate and clothing :** New York State has a varying climate with four distinct seasons:

SEASON	MONTHS	TEMP. FAHRENHEIT	TEMP. CENTIGRADE
Summer	June - September	50 to 90 degrees	10 to 32 degrees
Fall	September - November	20 to 80 degrees	-7 to 26 degrees
Winter	December - March	0 to 45 degrees	-18 to 7 degrees
Spring	April - June	40 to 72 degrees	4 to 22 degrees

Temperatures vary considerably from year to year. During spring, summer, and fall, moderate periods of rainfall occur; snow falls periodically during the winter months. Three basic types of clothing are essential. In winter, heavy jackets or overcoats, hats, scarves, gloves, and boots are needed. During chilly autumn and spring days, raincoats or medium-weight wool coats or jackets are worn outdoors, sweaters indoors. A light-weight jacket is sometimes necessary for cool nights during spring, summer, and fall.

**Personal items:** Most students like to bring examples of arts, crafts, traditional dress, photographs, tapes or CDs, maps, or other items descriptive of their country and culture, both to show interested Americans and to provide a touch of home decoration in their new homes. You may want to bring items you use regularly that may not be readily available, or may be more expensive, in the United States--for example, eyeglasses, cameras, watches, or portable radios. You may also have the opportunity to visit a duty-free port where such items may be purchased at a reduced cost.

## **THINGS TO LEAVE AT HOME**

You can obtain a booklet on customs regulations at the consulate or embassy where you acquire your visa. Prohibited items include some food, narcotics, and items for resale. For more information, visit the website of the US Customs Service at: <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/leavingarrivinginUS/>

Since students are expected to buy required textbooks for all courses, and supplemental reading materials for review and research are available in libraries, you need not bring any books used in previous study.

It is best to purchase electrical appliances after you arrive: appliances manufactured outside the U.S. may not be compatible with the power.

## **ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES**

### **Port of Entry Procedures**

Once you have obtained your U.S. student visa, you are ready to finalize your travel plans. Be sure to have your I-20 form (for F-1 visas) or DS-2019 (for J-1 visas) and your proof of Federal SEVIS fee payment with your passport when you go through your immigration inspection at the U.S. port of entry. Remember that if you plan to attend Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology, you must present a certificate of eligibility endorsed for study at Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology.

DO NOT enter on another school's certificate of eligibility, as that is considered to be a fraudulent entry by the U.S. Immigration authorities.

DO NOT attempt to enter the United States on a visitor/tourist visa (B-2) unless it is designated "Prospective Student" by a consular officer. The U.S. Immigration Service rarely authorizes a change of status from B-2 to F-1, and you will be prevented from enrolling in school until your change of status application is approved, which could take several months.

DO NOT attempt to enter the United States under the visa waiver program, available to citizens from nearly 30 countries throughout the world. The waiver program is designed for tourists only, and attending school under the waiver program is a clear violation of U.S. immigration law; Expect to go through both immigration and customs inspection at the U.S. port of entry. You may also be required to go through a pre-inspection procedure at certain airports abroad. At the immigration booth, present your passport, your I-20 or DS-2019, your proof of Federal SEVIS fee payment, and your completed I-94 arrival/departure card (if the card was distributed on the airplane). Expect to have your index fingers scanned for fingerprint purposes and a digital photograph taken, as required by new U.S. federal regulations.

In the vast majority of cases, there will be no difficulty. In certain cases, if there is some problem with your documents, you may be issued a 30-day entry on your I-94 card and issued a form I-515, usually with instructions to see your international student advisor. Examine your I-94 card and I-20 or DS-2019 carefully as you leave the immigration booth. F-1 students and J-1 students should have their I-94s marked "D/S" which means Duration of Status, along with a stamp indicating the date you entered the United States. The same stamp and "D/S" notation should also be on the I-20 or DS-2019. If an expiration date is written on the I-94 instead of "D/S," and you are in F or J status, come to the Office of International Student and Scholar Services as soon as possible. Anyone who is denied admission at a U.S. port of entry should be very cautious about arguing with the immigration official. You may risk being issued "expedited removal," which now entails a five-year bar on admission to the United States. If you are denied admission, first try to contact the Office of International Student and Scholar Services for assistance, but also make it known to the immigration official that you are willing to withdraw your application for admission to the country rather than be subject to expedited removal.

## **Money**

It is a good idea to exchange currency for U.S. dollars before your departure, but you should not travel with large amounts of cash--there is too much danger of loss or theft. If you anticipate bringing large sums of money to the United States, ask a bank about the safest and most convenient means of carrying or transferring funds. If you make arrangements for funds to be transferred in U.S. dollars to a U.S. bank before you leave home, that money will be available to you when you arrive on campus. Foreign currency is not available in most U.S. cities, and the College and all local businesses accept only U.S. dollars.

When you arrive in the United States, you should have sufficient funds to cover your expenses when you reach Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology. The amount depends, of course, on your travel plans. Once you have decided on your itinerary and estimated expenses, you may wish to purchase traveler's checks in U.S. dollars for the amount of money you need. Traveler's checks, obtained at banks or travel offices, can be cashed by banks and most businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and airports.

It is also advisable to carry a small amount of U.S. cash--at least fifty dollars in paper currency and two or three dollars in coins or "change" for telephones,

baggage lockers, bus fares, and tips. The lower denominations of U.S. paper money are: \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills; coins are 1 cent, (penny, \$.01), 5 cents (nickel, \$.05), 10 cents (dime, \$.10), 25 cents (quarter, \$.25), 50 cents (half-dollar, \$.50) and 1 dollar (\$1).

Payment of tuition, fees, and other charges is due prior to registration (when you enroll for classes). Payment may be made by cash, check or credit card (American Express, Discover, Visa or MasterCard only). If you cannot make full payment at the time payment is due, you must make special payment arrangements with the Student Accounts Office. If you fail to do so, you will be charged a late fee. Sponsored students must submit copies of their award letters to arrange for direct payment by their sponsors. If you wish to deposit funds in your College account before arrival, you may send a check to Student Accounts, Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology, 86-01 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave, Flushing, NY 11369, U.S.A. Write on your check the student identification number assigned to you by the College and make the check payable to Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology. If you have any questions regarding payment procedures, contact Beatriz Cruz at [beatriz.cruz@vaughn.edu](mailto:beatriz.cruz@vaughn.edu).

Married students who wish to have their families join them should realize their financial burdens. A married couple who can live inexpensively will require at least \$5000 more per year than a single student will. Additional funds are necessary for each accompanying child for a minimum standard of living. Visas are not issued to the family of students unless they have sufficient funds for dependents in addition to the amount required for the single student. Many students find it best to delay bringing their families until they have found housing and settled in the community.

## **REVIEW OF IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

We hope this information is helpful to you as you arrange for your new educational experience. You are encouraged to re-read it and carefully note the items that pertain to your situation. Please pay careful attention to your requirements and obligations. To summarize:

1. Make sure your travel documents are in order. Do not finalize your arrangements until you have your passport, Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019), SEVIS fee receipt and visa stamp. You may enter the United States only if your Certificate of Eligibility is endorsed to the university in which you intend to enroll.
2. Take care of your financial obligations and arrange for proper monetary transfer. Carefully review requirements for obtaining foreign exchange. Make sure you have adequate funds.
3. Plan to arrive on campus on the date designated.

4. Be prepared to discuss your academic plans and interests with your department or program. Do not rely on others to plan your program for you, but at the same time do not register for classes without seeing an advisor during the orientation program.

5. If your plans change, and you decide not to attend Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology, return the Certificate of Eligibility to the Office Admissions.

6. Again, we wish you a warm welcome to Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology.