



ST. JOHN'S
UNIVERSITY

The International Student and Scholar Services Office (ISSSO) I-20 Prearrival Packet

- General Information
- I-20 Information
- How to Apply for a Student Visa
- Arriving as an F-1 Student
- Checking in with the ISSSO
- Campus Map

PLEASE NOTE:

The earliest you can enter the US is 30 days before the start date on your I-20. You cannot enter the US later than the start date on your I-20.

PLEASE SIGN I-20 IN BLUE INK ONLY.



ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

General Information

The International Student and Scholar Services Office ([ISSSO](#)) is the first place to contact whenever you need help or information during your stay in the United States and at St. John's University. We are here to help you; consider us your "home away from home."

Our office acts as the University liaison with the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the US Department of Homeland Security. We provide you with the information you need to maintain lawful status while you are in the United States and answer any immigration questions. We organize a variety of informative programs and work with the Division of Student Affairs to plan social activities to help you get involved in campus life.

Our staff is always available to listen and help you with the daily challenges of being far away from home. We understand your needs and concerns and are committed to helping you make the most of your international educational experience at St. John's University. Advisors are available for emergency "walk-ins" and for scheduled appointments.

Queens Campus

Marillac Hall, Room 210

Tel 718-990-6083

iss@stjohns.edu

Public Safety 24-hour emergency hotline: 718-990-5252

Schedule an appointment with an advisor online at www.stjohns.edu/isssoappt.

Hours of Operation

Monday, 8:30 a.m.–7 p.m. during the regular semester,

8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. during breaks

Manhattan Campus

Email iss@stjohns.edu to schedule an appointment.

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I-20 Information

CONGRATULATIONS! Enclosed is your I-20. Read the following instructions carefully, and contact us with any questions. We look forward to welcoming you to St. John's University.

1. REVIEW AND SIGN YOUR I-20.

Review your I-20 to ensure all information is listed correctly. Notify ISSSO immediately if it contains any errors. **Sign and date your I-20 in blue ink at the bottom of the first page.**

2. APPLY FOR A STUDENT VISA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Most international students are required to obtain an F-1 student visa (if you have a Form I-20). To apply for a visa, visit travel.state.gov to find the US Consulate or Embassy nearest you. You must apply for the visa in the country of your permanent residence. You will not be granted a visa if you apply more than 120 days before the start date on your I-20. Application procedures, requirements, and processing times vary, so contact your local US Embassy or Consulate on how to obtain a student visa. Visa wait times can be found [here](#). Citizens of Canada and Bermuda do not require visas to enter the US as students.

3. PAY THE \$350 SEVIS I-901 FEE.

To pay online

- Visit fmjfee.com.
- Complete the [I-901](#) form online and submit payment using a Visa, MasterCard, or American Express. Be sure to write your name EXACTLY as it appears on your Form I-20. Make certain to include the SEVIS ID number and St. John's University's school code (located under "School Information" page 1 of your I-20).
- Print a copy of the online receipt and bring it with you to your visa appointment and when you travel to the US.

To pay by mail

- Obtain a Form [I-901](#) "Fee Remittance for Certain F, J, and M Nonimmigrants" online at fmjfee.com.
- Complete the Form I-901. Be sure to write your name EXACTLY as it appears on your I-20. Make certain to include the SEVIS ID number and St. John's University's school code.

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- c) Prepare a check, international money order, or foreign draft (drawn on US banks only) in the amount of \$350 USD, made payable to "I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee." The check should be for the exact amount plus the amount required if you wish for Department of Homeland Security to return the receipt to you via courier service.
- d) Mail the completed Form I-901 and payment to the address listed on Form I-901.

To pay using Western Union Quick Pay

- a) Visit the [US Immigration and Customs Enforcement \(ICE\) website](#) and follow "SEVIS I-901 Fee Payment by Western Union Quick Pay Instructions."
- b) Print a copy of the payment coupon and bring it to your local [Western Union](#).
- c) Travel to the nearest Western Union agent location. Use the Agent Locator or call the telephone number of the Western Union Commercial Services Network Agent in your country.
- d) Complete a "Payment Services" or "Quick Pay" form (typically blue) printed in the applicable local language. Fill out all appropriate information. Make certain to include your name exactly as it appears on your Form DS-2019 and complete each section accurately. Make certain to include your SEVIS ID number and your date of birth and the St. John's University code (P-1-03576) exactly as it appears on the sample form.
- e) Make the payment at the Western Union Agent location and retain the Western Union receipt to use as temporary proof of payment until you receive the Form I-797 receipt.
- f) After your payment is processed, you will visit the [SEVP I-901](#) website to retrieve and print your payment receipt.

NOTE: THE SEVIS FEE MAY INCREASE.

4. PROTECT YOUR DOCUMENTS.

Make photocopies of important documents and keep them organized in a portable file during your entire stay in the United States. Important documents include

- passport, visa, I-20, any previously issued I-20s, and health records;
- proof of financial support, letter of admission, and any other correspondence with the University; and
- academic award and records from past study; high school, college, TOEFL, and other score reports.
- If accompanied by dependents (spouse or children), bring marriage certificates and birth certificates establishing your relationship with the dependent(s).

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How to Apply for a Student Visa

International students must obtain a student visa in order to study in the United States. You must make an appointment with your nearest American Embassy or Consulate and apply for an F-1 student visa. To locate the nearest US Embassy or Consulate, visit www.usembassy.gov. You must apply for the visa in the country of your permanent residence.

Before you apply for the visa, understand the process and rules governing its issuance. Visa applications may be denied because the student did not understand the rules or was not adequately prepared. Please read the following information carefully and contact us if you need more information or assistance.

The Procedure

1. Pay the \$350 SEVIS I-901 Fee.
2. Apply for your student visa as soon as possible to allow enough time for visa processing. The embassy/consulate will not issue your visa if you apply more than 120 days before the date you are required to report to St. John's University as shown on your Form I-20.

What if Your Visa is Denied?

Contact us with details of your denial so we may advise you on how to better prepare your next visa application.

The Rules

1. By law, you are seen as someone who plans to remain in the US permanently. A consular officer will decide whether or not to grant you a visa to come to the US. The consular officer is required by law to assume that you do not plan to return to your home country when you finish your studies. Do not be upset or take this personally. Student visas are only given to those who convince the consulate that they intend to return permanently to their home country after completing their studies in the United States. Failure to convince them of this is the NUMBER ONE REASON FOR VISA DENIAL.
2. You must have a valid academic objective in the US. You will need to provide proof of your qualifications for your program of study and how St. John's University will prepare you for a career in your home country.
3. You must provide proof of financial support to prove that you can support yourself for the entire duration of your program.
4. Be brief. Answer questions honestly, directly, and to the point.

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5. Consular officers are impersonal when administering the law. In the United States, laws are applied equally to all people regardless of status or gender. **DO NOT TRY TO NEGOTIATE OR DISCUSS PERSONAL MATTERS** with the consular officer.
6. US government officials like documents. Have all evidence of qualifications for a student visa.

Be Prepared

1. Be ready to clearly explain why you want to study in the United States at St. John's University.
 - Why do you want to study in the US?
 - Why do you want to pursue this program of study?
 - Why did you choose St. John's University?
 - What career will your studies prepare you for in your home country?
2. Present evidence of your educational qualifications for admission to St. John's University and original copies of financial documents you submitted to us. Your documents must match exactly what appears on your Form I-20.
3. Be prepared to convince the consular officer that you will return home permanently upon completing your studies. Present evidence to prove you have "ties" to your country (i.e., social, economic, and/or family) which are so strong, they will force you to return.
 - Prove that you have a permanent residence in your country that you do not intend to abandon. A photocopy of a deed or lease to your home is sufficient.
 - If your family owns a business, provide a letter from the bank describing it. If they own property, copies of the deed are helpful.
 - If you traveled to the US before as a visitor, emphasize that you returned home before!
 - If your program of study is in great demand in your country, get a letter from a possible employer saying they are interested in hiring people with the degree you will receive.
 - If you have a brother or sister who studied in the US and then returned home, provide a copy of his or her diploma and a statement from their employer.
4. Do not emphasize any ties you have to the US or to family members in the US.
5. Practice your English. Unless you are going to study English on campus and it appears on your Form I-20, you are expected to be able to speak it and show your TOEFL score to the consular officer. You may be asked to read from a US newspaper or discuss what your I-20 says.
6. Do not talk about working in the US unless you have been awarded a teaching assistantship or fellowship on campus. You are required to prove that you can support the costs of studying and living in the US. Employment is strictly controlled by immigration and is not guaranteed.
7. If you began your studies in another nonimmigrant status and you received a change of status to F-1, be prepared to discuss how your original purpose for being in the US changed to that of a full-time student. Provide copies of your transcripts to show your studies.



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Arriving as an F-1 Student

Your arrival as an F-1 student in the US will be smoother if you know what to expect. The US Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has prepared the following guide to ensure the quality of your experience.

ICE is committed to facilitating your stay in the US as you enjoy our nation's academic, educational, and cultural offerings.

Plan Your Arrival.

You may be refused entry into the US if you attempt to arrive more than 30 days before the academic program start date listed on your Form I-20.

Always Hand-Carry Your Documents.

There are documents you will need to keep with you when you arrive. Please do not check these documents with 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.

Documents Needed

1. Your passport, valid for at least six months into the future
2. F-1 visa. (When you receive your F-1 visa, the consular officer may seal your immigration documents in an envelope and attach it to your passport).
If you are a citizen of Canada or Bermuda, you do not need an F-1 visa.
3. Your Form I-20

We strongly recommend that you hand-carry the following additional documentation:

- evidence of financial resources
 - evidence of student status, such as recent tuition receipts and transcripts
 - a paper receipt for the SEVIS fee, Form I-797
4. Name and contact information for your "Designated School Official," including a 24-hour emergency contact number at the school. For St. John's University, the emergency number is 718-990-6281.

For comprehensive information on procedures for traveling and arriving in the US, visit www.educationusa.state.gov.

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Complete Your Entry Paperwork.

If you arrive by air, flight attendants will distribute Customs Declaration Forms (CF-6059). These must be completed prior to landing. If you arrive by land or sea, the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at the port of entry will provide necessary Customs Declaration Forms (CF-6059) and Arrival-Departure Record Forms (I-94) to be filled out upon your arrival.

When You Arrive at Your Port of Entry

Go directly to the terminal area for arriving passengers. Have the following documents available: your passport; SEVIS Form (I-20); and Customs Declaration Form (CF-6059).

You will be asked to state your reason for entering the US and provide information about your final destination. It is important to tell the CBP officer that you will be a student, along with the name and address of the university in which you will enroll. Once your inspection is successfully completed, the inspecting officer will stamp your passport for duration of status ("D/S") for F visa holders.

Following Your Admission into the US

You should report to St. John's to register for your courses right away. Failure to do so may result in serious consequences.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Secondary Inspection Requirement

If the CBP officer cannot verify your information, or you lack some required documentation, you may be directed to an interview area known as "Secondary Inspection." This allows inspectors to conduct extra research to verify your information without causing delays for other arriving passengers. The inspector will attempt to verify your status using the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). They may also need to verify your university or program. You should keep on hand the name and phone number of your St. John's International Student Advisor. In case you arrive during nonbusiness hours, call Public Safety at 718-990-6281.

Failure to comply with US government entry-exit procedures may result in denied entry to the US. Under certain circumstances, the CBP officer may issue a "Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor" Form (I-515A), which authorizes temporary admission. Work with an International Student Advisor at the International Student and Scholar Services Office to submit the proper documentation without delay.

National Security Entry-Exit Registration System

Some nonimmigrant visitors with a visa may be asked to give additional information under the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System. At your port of entry you can obtain a packet of information explaining the registration procedure.



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Checking in with the ISSSO

ATTENTION

US federal regulations require that all international students report to the ISSSO upon arrival in the United States.

Upon arrival in the US, you need to virtually check in with the ISSSO [here](#) (scroll down to "Complete registration form in red").

To complete the check-in process, you will need the following documents:

I-20 (front and back)

We need copies of all I-20s that have been issued to you (including those from other schools).

I-94 arrival record

Upon arrival to the US, you will need to print your [I-94](#) arrival information. Each time you enter the US, you will be issued a new [I-94](#) number.

Passport

Provide copies of the identification pages, the page showing the expiration date, and the Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) stamp.

Student Visa

Port of Entry Stamp

Customs and Border Patrol will stamp your passport upon arrival into the US.

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ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

Find a Building/Location

Academic and Administrative Buildings

Belson Hall/Finley Hall
Chiang Ching-kuo Hall
D'Angelo Center
Health Sciences Center (under construction)
Lourdes Hall
Newman Hall
The Peter J. Tobin College of Business
St. Albert Hall
St. Augustine Hall
St. John Hall
St. Louise de Marillac Hall
Sullivan Hall
Sun Yat Sen Memorial Hall
Undergraduate Admission Welcome Center
University Center

Residence Halls

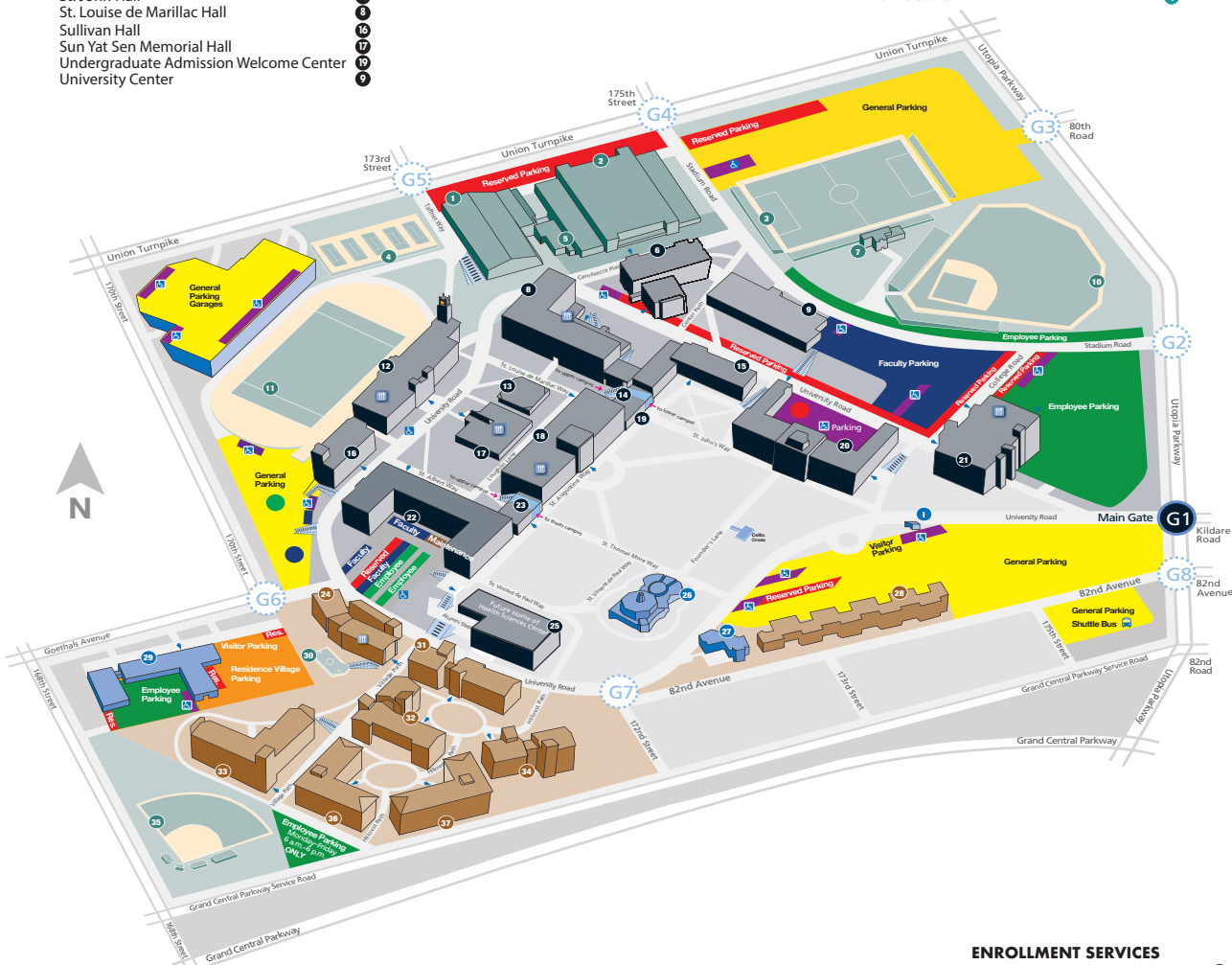
Century Hall
DaSilva Hall
Donovan Hall
Helen and Hugh L. Carey Hall
Hollis Hall
John Cardinal O'Connor Hall
Townhouses

Legend

- Academic and Administrative Buildings
- Residence Halls
- Athletic Buildings and Fields
- Other Campus Buildings
- Campus Information
- Handicapped Access
- Dining/Eateries
- Entrance/Exit Gates
- General Parking
- Employee Parking
- Reserved Parking
- Faculty Parking
- Residence Village Parking
- Handicapped Parking
- Maintenance Vehicle Parking

Athletic Buildings and Fields

Basketball Court
Belson Stadium
Bob Sheppard Press Box
Carnesecca Arena
DaSilva Memorial Field
Jack Kaiser Stadium
Janetschek Athletic Center
Red Storm Field
Taffner Field House
Tennis Courts



Find a Key Destination

GENERAL

Bookstore
Center for Counseling and Consultation
Fitness Center
Global Language and Culture Center
Health Services
Inclusivity Resource Center
Dr. M. T. Geoffrey Yeh Art Gallery
Murray House
Public Safety
ROTC Center
St. Thomas More Church
University Career Services

ACADEMICS

College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
Global Studies
The Lesley H. and William L. Collins
College of Professional Studies
Library
The Peter J. Tobin College of Business
The School of Education
School of Law
St. John's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
University Freshman Center

ENROLLMENT SERVICES

Bursar
Graduate Admission
Int'l Student and Scholar Services
Registrar
Student Financial Services
Transfer Student Services
Undergraduate Admission
Welcome Center

DINING

Einstein Bros. Bagels
Faculty Club
Law School Cafeteria
Marillac Food Court
Montgoris Dining Hall
Starbucks

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