



# CENTER FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION

## Visa Information



**It is YOUR responsibility to apply for and obtain a student visa prior to departure!**

Applying for a student visa does not automatically guarantee you will be issued one. Any country has the right to deny a student his/her visa regardless of whether or not you've been accepted into a study abroad program. Obtaining a student visa can be a long and somewhat complicated and frustrating process so it is advised that students begin the process as soon as they have been accepted into the host program. While the CGE and your host program/university will assist you in this process by providing and facilitating information as your sponsor abroad, it is solely your responsibility to complete the student visa application process.

### **What is a student visa?**

A student visa is a permission statement allowing entrance into the host country and is typically stamped inside your valid passport. It is a legal requirement of the country in which you will be studying and you must obey this requirement. Entering your host country without an appropriate student visa could put your study abroad plans in jeopardy!

### **Why do I need one?**

A student visa allows you to legally reside and study in the host country during a specified period of time. Not all countries require a student visa but most do so anticipate this requirement as you make plans to go abroad. Depending on the duration of your program, typically less than 3 months, you may not need a student visa.

### **How do I apply for a student visa?**

After acceptance into a study abroad program, you will be required to contact or visit your host country's U.S. Consulate in the jurisdiction of your permanent residence in order to verify visa application requirements and guidelines. In most cases, visiting the Consulate's website will yield this information. Go to: [http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans\\_1252.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans_1252.html) for a listing of foreign Consulates in the U.S. by country. The CGE and your host program/university will provide you with supporting documents that may be required for your visa. These documents can include (but not limited to) an official letter of acceptance from the host program/university, a letter verifying current student status and/or a statement of financial support. If you are mailing your documents to the consulate, remember to mail your Passport as well!

### **How long will it take to get the visa?**

Getting your visa will no doubt take time so begin the process immediately after acceptance into the program. Many Consulates will not issue visas more than 90 days in advance of your arrival abroad so often the window of opportunity to obtain the visa can be short. Because deadlines will vary, you should contact your Consulate to verify time estimations and requirements. Contacting foreign Consulates by phone can be frustrating as their working hours are limited and you may reach a series of automated messages. You

should be prepared to try a variety of methods to reach them: phone, email, website, and by fax. Your patience and persistence will pay off!

### **What if I am a non-U.S. citizen studying abroad?**

First, you will need to follow your government's procedures for obtaining and/or renewing a valid passport. Secondly, you will need to contact the host country's Embassy or Consulate in the U.S. for instructions on how to apply for a student visa from a third country. These requirements will not necessarily be the same as they are for U.S. citizens. Visa requirements will vary depending upon your home country's relationship to the host country where you intend to study. It is your responsibility to secure a student visa for your host country if required.

### **Final Note - Very Important!!!**

More and more Consulates now require applicants to appear in person at the Consulate in your jurisdiction when applying for the student visa and it is your responsibility to know and follow these instructions. This may require travel to Houston, Chicago, Los Angeles, etc depending on your permanent residence. You need to anticipate this possibility, make plans and budget accordingly. **Do not** attempt to enter your host country without a student visa, if it is required. If you arrive without a visa, officials may send you back to the U.S. at your own expense and could deny you future entry into the host country. The CGE cannot be responsible for changes in visa requirements or for any processing delays as the foreign Consulates are the issuing authorities on visas.