Office of International Services (OIS)
New International Student Information Session
Spring 2021

For students who are in the U.S.
Overview

• About OIS
• Maintaining immigration status
• F-1 employment options
• Immigration documents
• Registration holds
• Cultural adjustment
• Living in the U.S.
• Resources for international students
International Student Enrollment at USC

USC Cosmopolitan Club, 1919
About OIS

Immigration Status

Navigating Life in the U.S.

Advising & Support

Opportunities to Get Involved
Maintaining Immigration Status
Maintaining Immigration Status

How to maintain immigration status:

• Be registered for a full course of study during the fall and spring semesters
• Fulltime enrollment in summer session is required if it is a student’s first semester at USC
• Classes must meet degree requirements
Maintaining Immigration Status

Minimum unit requirement by degree level:

- Undergraduate students – 12 units
- Master’s students – 8 units
- Graduate Certificate students – 8 units
- Ph.D. students – 6 units
- Master’s/Ph.D. students with an assistantship – 6 units
Maintaining Immigration Status

Online Course Restriction

No more than 3 units of online course(s) per semester is applicable to the full-time enrollment.

• Undergraduate students, to meet the 12 unit full-time minimum, must enroll in at least 9 units of in-person courses—plus at least 3 additional units (online or in-person)
• Master’s students, to meet the 8 unit full-time minimum, must enroll in at least 5 units of in-person courses—plus at least 3 additional units (online or in person)
• Doctoral students, to meet the 6 unit full-time minimum, must enroll in at least 3 units of in-person courses—plus at least 3 additional units (online or in-person)

After meeting the full-time enrollment minimum for each level as described above, any additional units of coursework may be either in-person or online.
Maintaining Immigration Status

***TEMPORARY UPDATE TO ONLINE COURSE LIMITATION***

The following information is based on the existing guidance issued by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for the fall 2020 semester. DHS may change their guidance for spring 2021 without advance notice.

Course Enrollment Requirements for Spring 2021

- Students must enroll in a full course load:
  - Bachelor’s – 12 units
  - Master’s – 8 units
  - Graduate Certificate – 8 units
  - Ph.D./Doctorate – 6 units

- If currently in the US:
  - Enrollment in 100% online classes is permitted
  - Can study in F-1 status; SEVIS record will be activated
Maintaining Immigration Status

Exceptions to the Full Course Load Requirements

There are only a few exceptions to the full-time enrollment requirement for the fall and spring semesters.

Each exception (category) has its own criteria, which are outlined on the next slides.
Reduced Course Load (RCL)

Category 1: Final Semester
OIS may authorize a final semester RCL for students who are in their final semester of study and only have a few units remaining to meet academic program requirements. Students may request an RCL due to final semester only once per degree level.

Category 2: Medical Reasons
OIS may authorize a medical RCL due to a temporary health (physical or mental) condition(s) with an appropriate doctor’s letter recommending the RCL for medical reasons. To submit a medical RCL, F-1/J-1 students must email their completed RCL form and doctor’s letter to ois@usc.edu.
Maintaining Immigration Status

Reduced Course Load (RCL)

Category 3: Academic Difficulty
Students must be registered in a minimum of 6 units (undergraduate), 4 units (graduate), 3 units (doctorate).

These reasons can be used only once per degree level.

- Initial difficulty with reading requirements—can only be used during first year of program
- Initial difficulty with the English language—can only be used during first year of program
- Unfamiliarity with US teaching methods—can only be used during first year of program
- Improper course level placement
Maintaining Immigration Status

Reduced Course Load (RCL)

Submission Deadline
• RCL submission deadline is the add/drop deadline of each semester (3rd week of the semester)
Maintaining Immigration Status

U. S. Address Updates
Moving to a new address?

Update your new address in OASIS within 10 days.

For instructions on how to update U.S. address, please refer to the OIS website.
Maintaining Immigration Status

Travelling Abroad

• Students may travel internationally during scheduled university breaks
• Students returning to the U.S. from a temporary break should ensure they have the required documents to re-enter the country
Maintaining Immigration Status

Required Documents for Re-entry to the U.S.
- Valid Passport (valid for at least 6 months beyond the date of the re-entry to the U.S.)
- Valid F-1/J-1 visa in passport (except students from Canada)
- I-20/DS-2019 with a valid travel signature from OIS

Recommended Supporting Documents
- Financial support documents (proof of funding)
- USC acceptance letter
- Paper receipt of Form I-901: SEVIS fee payment
- Copy of USC transcript and/or proof of course registration
F-1 Employment Options

On-campus Employment
• Does not require a separate work authorization
• Fall/spring semesters: limited to 20 hours per week
• Summer/vacation: up to 40 if approved by USC department

COVID-19 Exceptions
• Students may engage in on-campus employment remotely while in the U.S.
• Actual jobs on USC’s campus will be limited in spring due to restrictions in access to campus and remote operation of most services
F-1 Employment Options

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
• Paid internships
• Authorized during a student’s degree program

Optional Practical Training (OPT)
• Can be paid or unpaid
• Employment option after student graduates
• Requires OIS and USCIS authorization
• Needs to be related to field of study
• Review information on the [OIS website for eligibility requirements](#)
F-1 Employment

Social Security Number (SSN)

- 9-digit number issued to citizens, permanent residents and temporary (working) non-residents by the Social Security Administration (SSA)
- Primary purpose on an SSN is to track individuals for taxation purposes; it is not intended to be used for identification purposes
- If a student finds a paid job in one of the categories mentioned under F-1 employment options, they are eligible to apply for the SSN

Students and scholars who are not eligible for a SSN may be eligible for a Tax Identification Number (ITIN) to use for filing taxes during tax season reporting.
Immigration Documents

Passport Verification (PPV): Submitting Immigration Documents to OIS

All new international students are required to submit the following documents to OIS upon arrival to the United States:

1. Photocopy of Valid Passport
2. Photocopy of F-1/J-1 Visa
3. Photocopy of Page 1 and 2 of USC I-20 or DS-2019
4. Printout of I-94 Arrival Information
5. Printout of I-94 Travel History

Refer to the Passport Verification (PPV) page on the OIS website for document submission instructions.
Immigration Documents

Passport
Immigration Documents

F-1 Visa
Immigration Documents

SEVIS and the Form I-20/DS-2019

- Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS): a web-based system of the federal government that maintains information on international students (F-1/J-1 visa holders) while in the United States
- SEVIS creates the Form I-20 for F-1 students and Form DS-2019 for J-1 students/scholars
**Immigration Documents**

**SAMPLE**

**SEVIS ID:**

**FULL NAME:**

**preferred name:**

**PREFERRED NAME:**

**Country of Birth:**

**City of Birth:**

**Sex:**

**Sex:**

**School Information:**

**School Name:**

**Address:**

**City:**

**State:**

**Phone:**

**School OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL:**

**Degree Level:**

**Program of Study:**

**Major 1:**

**Major 2:**

**Program End Date:**

**Start of Courses:**

**Financial Aid:**

**Institutional Average Costs for 12 Months:**

**Subtotal:**

**Comments:**

**School Attestation:**

**Date:**

**Signature:**

**STUDENT ATTERTATION:**

**ICE Form I-20 (04/09/2010)**
Immigration Documents

DS-2019
Immigration Documents

I-94 Arrival Record

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Securing America’s Borders

Get I-94 Information

The following information is required to retrieve your I-94 information. Enter the information as it appears on the travel document you used to enter the United States.

This website provides information maintained in CEP systems. The information returned may not reflect applications submitted to or benefits received by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services or Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

- Last/Surname:
- First (Given) Name:
- Birth Date: (YYYY) - (MM) - (DD)
- Passport Number:
- Country of Issuance:

Note: For security reasons, we recommend that you close your browser after you have finished retrieving your I-94 number.

Get Most Recent I-94 | Get Travel History
# Immigration Documents

## I-94 Travel History

**Travel History Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2020-05-16</td>
<td>Departure</td>
<td>LOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 2020-01-07</td>
<td>Arrival</td>
<td>LOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 2019-12-18</td>
<td>Departure</td>
<td>LOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 2019-08-10</td>
<td>Arrival</td>
<td>LOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 2019-04-27</td>
<td>Departure</td>
<td>LOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 2018-09-07</td>
<td>Arrival</td>
<td>LOS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you have a pending Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for your U.S. travel history? FOIA is a law that gives the public the right to request access to records from any federal agency. [Learn more](https://www.cbp.gov/site-privacy-notice/foia).

A FOIA request is a written or electronic request received by CBP from any individual or entity requesting records including databases held or believed to be held by an agency. You can find additional information about FOIA and FOIA requests at [https://www.cbp.gov/site-privacy-notice/foia](https://www.cbp.gov/site-privacy-notice/foia). If you submit a formal request through the FOIA office at CBP to obtain travel history and received a FOIA number, you can cancel your request on this website if the information you received satisfies that request. You must enter your FOIA number in the space provided and click the "Submit FOIA Cancellation" button. The FOIA case numbers begins with CBP and is followed by the year submitted and 6 alphanumeric characters (e.g., CBP-2014-xxxxxx). The cancel button is only located in the travel history section. When you chose this option, your FOIA request will be formally cancelled. You will not hear back from the FOIA office.

[Yes] [No]
Registration Holds

**STU50 Hold**
- Placed on graduate students
- Restricts course registration

**STU60 Hold**
- Placed on undergraduate students
- Does not restrict course registration

**ALI01 Hold**
- Placed on all students who have not met English proficiency requirement
- Restricts course registration
- Questions email askali@usc.edu
Registration Holds

ADM40 Hold – Degree Verification Requirement
• Does not restrict course registration
• Submit previous degree documents to IERF
  • Website: http://www.ierf.org
  • Email Address: usc@ierf.org
  • Phone Number: (310) 258-9451
• Deadline: End of student’s first semester
Cultural Adjustment

STAGE 1
• HONEYMOON

STAGE 2
• CONFLICT (CULTURE SHOCK)

STAGE 3
• CRITICAL (ADJUSTMENT)

STAGE 4
• ADAPTATION
Cultural Adjustment

STAGE 1: Honeymoon Stage

- Taking care of practical matters
- Observing new culture/environment
- Meeting new friend/staff/professors
- Seeing/trying new things
- Able to understand/be understood (if English is not first language)
Cultural Adjustment

STAGE 2: Conflict (Culture Shock) Stage

- Negative feelings (isolation, frustration and depression)
- Homesickness
- Problems with subtleties of language
- No time to make new friends/time spent with friends from home culture
- Complain about host culture/blame for problems
Cultural Adjustment

STAGE 3: Critical (Adjustment) Stage

• Choose to explore a new culture
• Accept the challenge of self-reflection
• Assume responsibility for own cultural adjustment
Cultural Adjustment

STAGE 4: Adaptation Stage

- Language skills improved
- Better understand actions of the members of the host culture
- Made friends in the host culture
- Developed greater tolerance for strange and new environment
- Become a mediator between two cultures
Living in the U.S.

Punctuality

When is “on time?”
  • About 5 minutes early

Consequences of tardiness
  • Lose appointments, reputation

Proper notification
  • Call/email if you are going to be late
Living in the U.S.

Health and Wellness

• Medical centers and other health administrators may ask personal questions to gather information in order to provide you with better, individually-tailored health services
• Medical information legally remains confidential and private
• In the U.S., it is common and encouraged to seek professional help if needed
• Counselors and therapists are trained to listen to you and offer help; they can provide treatment for homesickness, stress, depression, social anxiety, and more
• Trojan Care for Trojans (TC4T)
• USC Health and Wellness Resources
Living in the U.S.

California Driver’s License

• Students are encouraged to obtain a California Driver’s License from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) if they plan to drive a car in the US
• California **does not** recognize an International Driving Permit (IDP), International Driver’s License or an International License as a valid form of driver’s license.
• A California driver’s license is required to purchase a car and obtain auto insurance
• Social Security Number (SSN) is not required to apply for a driver’s license
• Must pass written and driving exams
• Apply for the driver’s license after the add/drop deadline of 1st semester at USC
Beware of scammers!

Know the facts. Follow safety tips.

If you’ve been the victim of a scam or suspect you’ve been scammed, contact:
USC Department of Public Safety (DPS) (213) 740-6000

Know the Facts

IRS or other government agencies will never:
- Ask for money over the phone or online
- Request or accept payments in the form of gift cards or Bitcoin

Law enforcement agencies will never:
- Request payment of citations, warrants, etc., via the phone

Safety Tips

- Never provide your credit card information or your Social Security number over the phone or online to someone you don’t know
- If you visit a website that asks for your Social Security number, don’t provide it
- If you receive an email from a stranger or company asking you to click on a hyperlink and/or open an attachment and enter your financial information, delete the email
- Do not respond to friend requests from strangers
- Hang up on telemarketers
Resources for International Students

Campus Involvement and Student Organizations
- Get involved with various nationality-based or interest-based student organizations for community support
- For more information, see Campus Activities

Los Angeles (LA) Activities
- Explore LA museums, visit amusement parks and enjoy the numerous beach/hiking trails

International Update (IU)
- Stay up-to-date with the weekly OIS e-newsletter
  - Subscribe today
Due to COVID-19, the Office of International Services is providing remote assistance to our international community via email, one-on-one advising, or through group advising sessions. The physical offices at UPC and HSC are closed until further notice.

**OIS Live (Virtual Front Desk/Drop-in Advising via Zoom)**
OIS Advisors are available for one-on-one consultation Mondays through Fridays via Zoom. Advising hours and Zoom meeting link are posted [here](#). No appointment necessary.

**Zoom Group Advising**
OIS will offer group advising sessions via Zoom. Refer to the [OIS eCalendar](#) to view upcoming session topics.

**Email**
For all F-1 student related inquiries: ois@usc.edu
For all J-1 student related inquiries: J1exchg@usc.edu