

Preparing to enter the U.S.

The following information is meant for all international students outside the U.S. who are preparing to enter the U.S. as F-1 students. Students already inside the country do not need to follow the information below.

1. You will need to make sure that you have all your original documents with you (in your carryon luggage). Do not pack these documents in your checked luggage as you will not have access to them before going through U.S. immigration. These include your I-20, passport and the government also recommends that you have evidence of financial support and paper receipt from I-901 payment.
2. Either on the airplane or at the border you will receive a white document called an I-94 "Arrival/Departure Card." While you complete this document, you will want to carefully print, write in English, and make sure that the name you printed matches exactly what is in your passport and visa. If the name varies on the I-94 card this can cause problems for you in the future. Click [here](#) to learn more about the I-94 card.
3. The I-94 card is very important because it is the legal document showing your entry to the U.S. When you meet the officer at the border, he/she will take one part of the I-94 and give you the other part of the I-94. They will also stamp your date of entry to the U.S. on it and the status in which you entered the country. It should be filled out as F-1 (D/S). If you are bringing dependents (such as a spouse or children) their stamp should be F-2 (D/S). Do not leave the area until you are sure it is all correct. If it is not filled out correctly request that it be corrected before you leave the immigration area.
4. Answering questions to immigration officers is part of the entry process. It is likely that they will ask you about why you are entering the U.S. and potentially other follow up questions. Their job is to make sure that you are eligible for entering the U.S. in the F-1 category. When asked questions, you should answer truthfully. They understand that you may be nervous as this is your first time in the U.S.
5. Once you are approved for entry to the U.S. you will have to go through customs. You should have received a form asking you to declare what items you brought with you to the U.S. It is important that you not bring in any meats, fruits, vegetables, plants, soil, and products made from animal or plant materials. For more information click [here](#).

After you have entered the country if you have any difficulties with the entry process and documentation, you need to contact your International Student Advisor when you reach the campus. Your advisor will assist you with documentation.