



What to Expect at a U.S. Port of Entry

Visit studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students for more detailed information on procedures for traveling to the U.S.
It is important you always monitor for changes to immigration entry requirements and procedures.

Before you leave your country:

- If you are an initial student entering the U.S. to attend school for the first time, **you cannot enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the program start date indicated on your form I-20.**
- Your passport must be valid for at least *six months beyond* the date of your expected arrival.

Documents you should carry with you at all times:

- Passport with visa (Canadian students will not have a visa stamped in their passport).
- Original I-20 signed in [blue ink](#) and the SEVIS I-901 fee receipt.
- Proof of financial resources (scholarship letter, sponsor's bank statements, loan letter, etc.)
- SUNY Morrisville admission letter and any other documents to show your student status.
- A pen to complete customs documents.

Immigration Procedures

There have been many recent changes to the entry procedure. First, you will pass through immigration where you will present the above listed documents to the officer. Your photograph and fingerprint scan will be taken (see OBIM section below), you will be asked to state the reason you wish to enter the U.S., and to provide information as to where you will be staying. It is important that you tell the immigration officer that you will be an F-1 student at SUNY Morrisville and you will be living on-campus or locally in Morrisville, NY 13408.

Entering the U.S. via Airport

After the officer reviews your documents and admits you, your passport will be stamped and notated with your visa status and duration of status. **Before leaving, be sure to check that the notation says "F-1 D/S."** If there is a discrepancy, be sure to ask the officer for clarification. You will not receive any other document that indicates your visa status. You will be able to print a paper Arrival/Departure Record (commonly known as an I-94) by visiting cbp.gov/i94. Upon arrival to campus, you will need to provide a copy of your I-94 to the PDSO during your check-in appointment.

Entering the U.S. via Land Crossing

You will be given a paper Form I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record) at the port of entry which you will complete and give to the immigration officer. If admitted, the officer will stamp your I-94 with your visa status and duration of status. **Before leaving, be sure to check that the notation says "F-1 D/S."** If there is a discrepancy, be sure to ask the officer for clarification.

(Note to Canadian Citizens: Since you do not have an F-1 visa in your passport, you will apply for F-1 status at the port of entry. It is important that you present the officer with your I-20 and let them know that you want to enter the U.S. as an F-1 student. Do not enter the U.S. as a tourist under the visa waiver program as you would need to depart the U.S. and reenter as an F-1 student before you would be permitted to study.)

Customs Procedure

After passing through the immigration inspection, you will collect your luggage and proceed to Customs. You will give the Customs Declaration Form (provided to you at the port of entry) to the officer and you will not get it back. It is possible that your bags may be randomly searched. In the case that your bags are selected for a search, be sure to comply with the officer's instructions.

Secondary Inspection

If your information cannot be automatically verified by the immigration officer or if you do not have all of the required documentation, you may be directed to an interview area known as "secondary inspection." Secondary inspection allows immigration officers to conduct additional research in order to verify your information.

Temporary Admission

Failure to provide proper documentation and/or to comply with entry/exit procedures are causes to refuse a student admission to the U.S. In limited circumstances, if a student is mostly, but not fully in compliance, the student may be issued a Form I-515A "Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor." This form authorizes temporary admission to the U.S. and requires the student to take immediate action to submit proper documentation. Noncompliance with the directions contained in these forms may result in denied reentry. If you receive an I-515A, it is important that you contact the PDSO as soon as you arrive at Morrisville

OBIM

In March 2013, the Office of Biometric Identity Management was created to replace US-VISIT. OBIM maintains a comprehensive entry-exit registration system at all international airports throughout the U.S., pre-clearance inspection facilities, and designated seaports servicing cruise ships. All nonimmigrant visitors holding visas, including students, will participate in the biometrics program involving a scan of two index fingerprints and a digital photograph. Race, national origin, and religion are not factors in the biometrics program, as it applies to all nonimmigrant visa holders. For more information, visit: <https://www.dhs.gov/obim>.

Upon arrival to SUNY Morrisville

Once you arrive on campus, you will need to check-in according to the orientation schedule. Make sure to bring all of your immigration documents with you to your appointment with the PDSO so that a copy can be made for your immigration file. At that time, your SEVIS record will be activated. If there are any issues, please do not wait to contact the PDSO.