Pre-Arrival Information



Office of Global Programs

Pre-arrival Information for New International Students & Scholars

Concordia University Irvine

1530 Concordia West

Irvine CA 92612

Admin 120

Welcome to Concordia University Irvine campus!

The following information has been provided to answer many of the questions frequently asked by new international students preparing to come to CUI. Please read it carefully and thoroughly.

PRE ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

Read all of the information in the F-1/J-1 Scholar Pre-Arrival Information. All of the items listed below are discussed in further detail in this guide.
Verify that all the information on your I-20/DS-2019 is correct. Note the program begin date and notify your inviting department and OGP immediately if your travel plans have changed.
Pay the SEVIS FEE* online at <u>www.fmjfee.com/i901fee</u>
Apply for a F-1/J-1 Visa at the nearest U.S. Consulate of Embassy to your home residence.
Make plans to purchase medical insurance coverage. (Fill out CUI insurance form)
Arrange for your housing needs. (Fill out Housing application)
Schedule your mandatory F-1/J-1 orientation with OGP for a date shortly after your arrival in CUI.

* SEVIS FEE

All F-1/J-1 visa applicants must pay the SEVIS fee of \$200 (F1)/ \$180 (J1). The SEVIS fee must be paid at least three business days before the scheduled visa application interview at the US Consulate. For most individuals, the SEVIS fee can be paid by electronically completing the Form I-901 and paying with a credit card through the Internet at www.fmjfee.com/i901fee. You will need the information from your I-20/DS-2019 in order to complete the SEVIS Fee payment.

Please print the electronic receipt immediately after payment has been made. You must show the receipt to the consular office at the time of the interview. Spouses and dependent children (F-2/J-2s) do not pay this fee. The SEVIS fee is not a visa application fee. It is used to operate and maintain the SEVIS system. The fee is non-refundable, even if the visa application is denied.

CONTACT INFOMRATION

Office of Global Programs Concordia University Irvine TEL: 949-214-3473

FAX: 949-214-3473 Email: <u>haeri.chee@cui.edu</u>







OBTAINING YOUR VISA:

Now that you have been admitted to your degree program and/or Exchange visitors programs at CUI, your next step is to apply for a F-1/J-1 visa to enter the U.S.

VISA TYPE: F1 STUDENT VISA v.s. J1 EXCHANGE VISITOR VISA

F1 visa is issued to international students pursuing full time studies in the U.S. Majority of CUI international students should apply for an F1 student visa. J1 visa is issued to internationals in a wide variety of categories under the Exchange Visitor Program administered by the U.S. Department of State. CUI degree students sponsored by government agencies, certain international organizations or on exchange programs are advised to apply for a J1 visa in the category of —student, college/university unless a sponsor advises otherwise.

A WORD ABOUT U.S. VISA AND IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS

Rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of State (DOS) may seem unnecessarily complex to those coming to the U.S. for academic and scholarly visits. In addition to standard visa and immigration rules, F and J visa holders are subject to special procedures of the DHS's Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Information on SEVIS can be found at http://www.ice.gov/sevis/index.htm.

Although the Office of Global Programs (OGP) tries to clarify and simplify these regulations by providing relevant information and advice, students who plan to study in the U.S. in F-1or J-1 status should be aware that it is the legal responsibility of each individual student to comply with federal regulations governing his or her stay in the U.S., and that failure to comply is likely to jeopardize his or her legal status in the U.S.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS for Visa application:

Your Name Must Be the Same on All Legal Documents.

The easiest way to avoid unnecessary bureaucratic problems in the U.S., is to ensure that ALL of your legal documents list your name exactly the same way as it is listed in your passport. The spelling of your name should be exactly the same on your passport, your Form I-20 or DS-2019 and your F1 or J1 visa stamp.

Passport

Your passport is an essential travel document issued by your home government. As passports are small and easily misplaced, it is wise to make and keep a photocopy of your passport in a safe place in a location separate from where you keep your passport itself.

Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 Generated Through SEVIS

Form I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status is for you to obtain an F-1 student visa; Form DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status is for you to obtain a J-1 visa. If your name on the Form is not exactly as it appears in your passport, do NOT use this I-20 or DS-2019 to apply for a visa—instead, contact the CUI Office of Global Programs (OGP) and request an amended I-20 or DS-2019 be sent to you before you apply for your visa.

(Note: All Forms I-20 and DS-2019 are generated through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), an Internet-based system that the U.S. Federal Government uses to maintain accurate and current information on international students, exchange visitors, and their dependents. SEVIS enables schools and program sponsors to transmit mandatory information and event notifications via the Internet, to the Department of Homeland Security and Department of State throughout a student or exchange visitor's stay in the United States.)

SEVIS Fee Payment Confirmation Receipt

All F-1 and J-1 visa applicants who are beginning a new academic program must pay a mandatory SEVIS fee to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Enclosed with your Form I-20 or DS-2019 you should find instructions on how to pay the SEVIS fee. You must obtain and present proof of having paid the fee in order to apply for a visa and in order to enter the U.S. If you choose to pay online, be sure to print out the online "confirmation" receipt at the time it appears on your computer screen, as this will be the only chance you will have to access the confirmation receipt! Once you leave that screen, you will not be able to access it again.

Regardless of whether you pay online or by another method, be sure to make several copies of the payment confirmation receipt for your records.

SPECIAL NOTES:

F1/J1 students and scholars who attended another U.S. school before coming to CUI:

You MUST request your previous school to transfer your SEVIS record to CUI. You do not need to apply for a new visa if not traveling abroad during the transition, or if your current F1 or J1 visa in your passport is still valid upon returning from travel abroad.

<u>Canadian citizens</u>: Canadian citizens are NOT required to obtain a U.S. visa to enter the United States. However, when you come to attend school, you must present the following documents for inspection either at a pre-inspection site in Canada or upon entry to the United States:

- Canadian passport
- Admission letter to Concordia University
- Original I-20 or DS-2019
- SEVIS Fee Payment Receipt
- Financial documentation upon inspection, you must obtain a stamped I-94 card marked "F1/DS" or "J1/DS")

VISA APPLICATION

Where to Apply for F1 or J1 visa

Visa applicants should apply at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate, generally in their country of permanent residence.

Visa Application Forms:

<u>DS-160</u>: The DS-160 Online is a new Nonimmigrant Visa Electronic Application. The implementation of DS-160 is being phased-in during 2010. Not all U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad will be required to use the form at the same time. To learn which Embassies or Consulates are requiring the form, go to this website: http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/forms/forms 4230.html

<u>Form DS-156</u>: At the Embassies or Consulates where DS-160 is not required, the basic U.S. visa application is Form DS-156; some F-1 and J-1 visa applicants may be required to complete additional forms (DS-157 and/or DS-158). For more information about the forms, go to this website: http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/forms/forms 1342.html

Application Fee: There is generally an application fee for a U.S. visa. For information on fees that may apply to you, go to the website of the U.S. consulate at which you'll apply for your visa. All U.S. consulate websites are accessible by link from: http://www.usembassy.gov/

Personal Visa Interview

Most F-1 and J-1 visa applicants will be required to have a personal interview at the U.S. consulate. Waiting times for these interviews vary, depending on the specific consulate and time of year. For details on average visa waiting times at U.S. consulates throughout the world, go to the following website: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait/4638.html

For additional visa information and instructions on how to apply for a visa, go to: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/info/info 1304.html

Additional Documents Needed for the Visa Application

Go to: http://www.usembassy.gov/ and check the website of the U.S. consulate at which you will apply for a visa prior to submitting your application to ensure that you have all necessary documents. Even if not listed on the website, you should also plan to present the following:

☐ Admission Letter from CUI

Proof of funding as listed on Form I-20 or DS-2019 (not needed if admission letter notes full funding from CUI)

☐ If available, documentation indicating your intent to return home at the end of your studies



ENTERING THE UNITED STATES / ARRIVAL INFORMATION

Enter U.S. within 30 days before program starting date on I-20 or DS-2019

DO NOT attempt to enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the program starting date on your I-20 or DS-2019! Although you may apply for an F-1 visa up to 120 days prior to the I-20 start date and you may apply for a J-1 visa at any time after receiving the DS-2019, F-1 and J-1 visa holders are NOT permitted to enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the start date on yourI-20 or DS-2019. Also, entry to the U.S. after the first day of classes requires permission from University officials and may require issuance of a new I-20 or DS-2019 form.

Enter U.S. on F1 or J1 visa only

DO NOT enter the United States on B-1/B-2 visitor visa or F-2 dependent visa even if you have one in your passport. You will not be allowed to attend school on B-1/B-2 or F-2 visa in the U.S. US Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) would deny your application to change status from B-1/B-2 to F1 or J1 if you have evidence of intending to go school prior to your arrival, such as having applied for school or requested a Form I-20 or DS-2019.

Use CUI I-20 or DS-2019 when entering the U.S.

DO NOT enter the United States with an I-20 or DS-2019 issued by another school! If it is the first time you attend school in the U.S., your F1 or J1 visa stamp should bear CUI name. If you have already obtained a visa with another school's name listed on it, please contact PDSO by email at haeri.chee@cui.edu or by phone at (949)214-3473.

Procedures at the Port of Entry

Before you arrive at the U.S. port of entry (airport or immigration check-point at the border), you will be asked to complete a —Arrival/Departure Form (I-94 card) which consists of two identical parts. Be certain to write your name on the Form I-94 exactly the same as it appears in your passport and on your F1 or J1 visa.

At the port of entry, you will go through immigration and customs inspection lines, and you will need to present your passport, I-20 or DS-2019, and I-94 form. After stamping your documents the Immigration Officer will return your passport, I-20 or DS-2019 and one part of your I-94 card.

Check Your Documents After the Immigration Officer Gives Them to You

U.S. Immigration Officers handle thousands of people every day and, like all of us, they occasionally make mistakes. We strongly recommend that you check your documents before leaving the inspecting officer's desk to ensure they have been processed correctly. Errors on these documents will cause complications at a later date if you apply for a U.S. Social Security Number or a California Driver's License. *Your documents ARE correct if all of the following are true*:

Your I-20 or DS-2019 has been stamped with your arrival date, AND the Immigration Officer has handwritten two items on the stamp:(1) your correct immigration status (F-1 or J-1) AND (2) the notation —D/S.
Your I-94 Arrival/Departure Form (little white card stapled in your passport by the Immigration Officer) ALSO bears the same stamp as your I-20 or DS-2019, and ALSO has your immigration status (F-1 or J-1) AND the notation —D/S handwritten on it.
Your passport has been stamped with an entry date.

Keep all these documents (the I-94 card, and your I-20 or DS-2019 stamped and returned to you by the inspecting officer) together with your passport at all times. Carry all of these documents with you each time you travel.

TRANSPORTATION FROM AIRPORT TO CUI

IF YOU ARE FLYING IN

If you are flying in to one of the local airports, there are several options for getting to campus: **LAX** – You have three (3) options.

- OGP pick up: (Must fill out 'Arrival Information Form' and pay \$50.00(cash only) upon arrival)
 - CUI will arrange pick up services for international students who will arrive on the Move- in date (TBA). If you want to be picked up by the OGP, please contact the OGP for further assistant.
- ☐ You may use one of the many shuttle services available. It is best to call 24 hours before your flight to ensure pick up. Call for rates and information.
 - Suggested Services:
 - Advantage Ground Transport Corp (800-752-5211)
 - Prime Time Shuttle (800-733-8267)
 - Super Shuttle (800-258-3826)
- Orange County Airport (John Wayne/Santa) The best and easiest thing to do is to fly into Orange County Airport if at all possible. Concordia University is about 10 minutes away from the airport. After you arrive at the airport, you can take a taxi to the campus for approximately \$35.

Please keep in mind that you are responsible for making your own travel arrangements.

Transportation Needs

If you need to get around Orange County, bus transit is available for you for a small fee. Check local schedules: (800) 636-7433 or long on to www.octa.net. Want to travel by train? A schedule can be found at: www.metrolinktrains.com or www.amtrack.com.

HOUSING

Concordia is proud to offer two types of residential living. The first is designed as a suite. Each unit in Chi Rho and Chi Sigma has two separate rooms with a single bath. Each side is furnished with a microfridge unit, desks, dressers, beds, and a heater. You will need to bring a pillow, desk light and bedding.

The second type of residence hall is an apartment style residence hall. Each apartment in the upper and lower quads is a two-bedroom, single-bath unit which includes a full-sized refrigerator/freezer and cupboard space. You and your roommates need to provide all other items. Each floor will have an upperclassman as a Resident Assistant (RA). His or her role is to help with any problems, academic or personal, monitor adherence to residence life policies, and plan residence hall programs. To access more information about living on campus, visit www.cui.edu/studentlife/living-oncampus/.

What We Provide

- Twin-XL bed & mattress
- Desk & chair
- Dresser
- Quads: Regular sized fridge
- Sigma/Rho: Mini-fridge and a microwave

Suggestions for What You Should Bring

- Telephone & Answering machine
- Linens (twin-XL)
- Towels
- Single-ply toilet paper
- Toiletries
- Laundry basket
- Desk lamp (floor lamp for Quad Rooms)
- Trash can and cleaning supplies
- School supplies
- Fan (there is no air conditioning and it can get warm)

OTHER HOUSING RESOURCES - Apartment guide in Irvine area (near CUI) are available through

www.rentheritagepoint.com or www.Rental-Living.com

MANDATORY ORIENTATION

CHECK-IN WITH PDSO at OFFICE OF GLOBAL PROGRAMS

It is mandatory that you check in with the Office of Global Programs (OGP) as soon as you arrive in California. As explained in the visa application section of this document, your I-20 or DS-2019 will be stamped at the airport or immigration check-point when you enter the U.S. It is important that you bring a photocopy of the stamped I-20/DS-2019, your passport, visa and I - 94 card (a small white card that you will fill out on the plane or at the immigration check-point). Your legal status in the U.S. will depend upon your completion of this mandatory—check in at OGP within the first 30-day period of your I-20 or DS-2019)! Of critical importance to all F-1 and J-1 visa holders on CUI' visa sponsorship is that federal law requires you to complete the "check in" procedure at OGP no more than 30 days after the start date on your I-20 form (for F-1s) or DS-2019 form (forJ-1s). Additional details on how to comply with U.S. government regulations are available through workshops offered by our Office upon your arrival.

If you will not be able to complete this check-in before the 30-day deadline, you MUST notify OGP in advance by email or phone to protect your future entry and legal status.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION

A mandatory new international student orientation is held before each Fall or Spring semester begins. Detailed information is sent to new students through separate emails. The international orientation is specially designed with a focus on specific issues and needs for international students on F1 or J1 visas such as how to maintain legal status in the U.S. and how to engage employment legally as a student on visa, etc.

The international orientation is different from the academic orientation that is organized either by your individual graduate school for graduate students or by the University for undergraduate students. It is very important that you attend BOTH the international and academic orientations. You will receive information essential to your transition to your new life at CUI and in the U.S. You will become familiar with the University and its resources, meet with advisers to plan your curriculum, get settled, learn about University procedures and regulations, register for courses, recover from travel fatigue, make new friends and have a smooth start of your education at CUI.

Please note that if you are unable to attend the orientation program, you are still required by federal law to complete a "check in" procedure at OGP upon arrival. As noted above, entering the U.S. after the starting date specified on your I-20 or DS-2019 may require issuance of a new form. Contact OGP if you must arrive after the starting date on your form. If you cannot arrive in the first week, you must contact the admissions office immediately as you may need to reapply for readmission the following semester.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER FOR EMPLOYMENT

If you have been granted Teaching Assistantship or Graduate Assistantship, you will be considered to be EMPLOYED by CUI University. Everyone who is employed in the U.S. should have a U.S. Social Security Number (SSN). Because it takes at least 10 days for port-of-entry data to appear in the Social Security Administration's database, we suggest that individuals who need to apply for an SSN wait at least 10 days after entering the U.S. to make the SSN application. When you complete your —check in at OGP, ask for instructions on applying for an SSN. When you complete your SSN application, be sure that you spell your name exactly the same as it is spelled on your passport, I-20 or DS-2019, visa, and I-94 card.

PLANNING FOR YOUR STAY IN THE U.S.

Things to Bring

<u>Money</u>- If you do not have an ATM card that is able to obtain cash from a U.S. cash machine, it is best to exchange some of your own currency for U. S. dollars and traveler's checks before you leave home. Direct foreign currency exchange is not available in most U.S. cities. The University and local businesses accept only U.S. dollars. When you arrive in the U.S., you should have sufficient funds to cover your expenses for several weeks, but you should not travel with large amounts of cash to avoid the risk of possible loss or theft. Ideally, you have a U.S. –usable ATM card. If you do not have a U.S.-usable ATM card, you should estimate your first month's expenses and purchase traveler's checks in U.S. dollars for that amount at a bank or travel office in your country. You can cash traveler's checks at U.S. airports, banks and most businesses in the U.S., including hotels and restaurants. It is also advisable to carry at least \$150-\$200 in paper currency plus \$10 in coins for "change" for baggage lockers, bus fares, and tips.

<u>Linens</u> – It is recommended you purchase Linens upon arrival in the U.S., because the beds in the U.S. may not be in the same standard size as in your home country.

Items Representing Your Country - Many people enjoy having samples of arts, crafts, traditional dress, photographs, music, maps or other items descriptive of home, both to show interested Americans and to provide a familiar touch that may help release your homesickness.

Things NOT to Bring

<u>Electrical Appliances</u> - Electrical appliances manufactured outside the U.S. may not be compatible with the U.S. power supply or may not be permitted in the residence halls. It is best to purchase appliances after arrival. <u>Textbooks</u> — For students, textbooks used in previous study are not recommended because students are expected to purchase required texts for each course they take, and supplemental material is available in University libraries.

EXPENSES

Because living in the United States is expensive, you should bring at least \$1000 in traveler's checks for initial purchases (more if you plan to live off-campus). If you have a banking card that can be used in the United States upon your arrival, it is suggested that you bring it with you. You should also be prepared to pay for a full semester of tuition and fees (and, if applicable, on campus room and board) once registered in classes. A bank draft can be used to pay for these expenses, but students should bear in mind that bank drafts take at least 7 days to clear for payment and that there is a payment deadline each semester. Sponsored students must submit copies of their award letters to arrange for direct billing to the sponsor.

MARRIED STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

Married students who wish to have their families join them must realize the financial obligations of doing so. A married couple that is able to live inexpensively will require at least an additional \$5000 more per year than a single student. A minimum of an additional \$3750 is necessary for each accompanying child. The F-2 spouses of F-1 students are NOT permitted to work under any circumstances during their entire stay in the United States, nor are they permitted to enroll in an academic program while in F-2 status. J-2 dependents may apply to USCIS for employment authorization only if the income they earn will not go to the support of the J-1 principal visa holder. We advise international students to delay bringing your family until you have found housing in the community. Dependents of F-1 and J-1 students on CUI' visa sponsorship are required to have comprehensive health insurance coverage during their entire stay in the U.S. (See —Insurance section in this document.)

Schooling for Children

Education in the United States is required for children up to the age of 16, and public education is free of charge. Classes start in early September and go through mid-June. To enroll, children must be 5 years old by December 1. Bring your children's birth certificates, school and immunization records, all in English. Children must have the following immunizations: three or more diphtheria toxoid series (DPT or DT), three or more trivalent oral polio series or four salk polio vaccine series, measles, mumps, and rubella live vaccines, given on or after the first birthday, or a statement from a physician that the child has had measles or mumps, or a certified serological blood test if the child has had rubella.

HEALTH CARE

Immunization Requirement for Students

California law requires all college and university students to be vaccinated against certain diseases prior to enrolling in classes. The immunizations required for enrollment can be found at http://www.cui.edu/studentlife/wellness-center/index.aspx?id=20030. Students who do not submit immunization records are immunized at the CUI Wellness Center after arrival.

Students who do not submit records or obtain immunization after arrival may not remain at the University. CUI requires students to show proof of required measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccinations or immunity to these diseases. In addition, all undergraduates who will live in University Housing must show proof of having received a meningococcal vaccination prior to moving into their residence hall. (The vaccine is available on campus at the University Student Health Services if it is unavailable in your home country). Also, students from countries considered to be —high risk for tuberculosis must present results of a tuberculosis skin test prior to registration. Documentation has to be in the form of school immunization records, physicians' records, or vaccination records from a public health department. When you receive the immunization forms from CUI, have them completed by a physician or other medical practitioner. Additional vaccinations may also be recommended. For complete information, see http://www.cui.edu/studentlife/wellness-center/index.aspx?id=20035.

Health Insurance

Medical care in the United States is very expensive. One visit to a doctor's office can cost \$150 or more, and one overnight stay in a hospital can easily cost \$2000 or more. It is essential to have adequate health and accident insurance to cover the cost of routine medical care as well as emergencies, and CUI' policy requires <u>ALL international students and their visa dependents are required to purchase the university-sponsored Student Health Insurance Plan.</u> You will automatically be registered for this plans.

- Fall 2012 Students cost is \$1,650 for the entire school year (August 1, 2012 to July 31, 2013).
- □ Spring 2013 Students cost is \$957 for spring/summer coverage (January 1, 2013 to July 31, 2013).

The plans are in effect from the beginning of your first semester through the last day of the semester of the following year and are paid for through your student fees. The basic plan includes a health fee covering the cost of using the student health service.

Dependents of students in F and J status are required to have comprehensive basic and major medical insurance as well. Purchase of such coverage through CUI or proof of coverage through an alternate insurance plan is required at the time an F-1 or J-1 student asks OGP to issue a visa document (I-20 or DS-2019) for the dependent(s).

Student health insurance policies do not cover 100% of all medical expenses. Major medical coverage has a —deductible (an amount the insured has to pay before the insurance company will begin paying), while certain expenses such as dental care, eyeglasses, and prescription drugs are not covered at all. Full-time students can receive free primary medical care at the CUI Wellness Center; services include physical examinations and treatment, psychological counseling, some laboratory tests, and discount pharmaceutical services.



ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

Each new student admitted to CUI is assigned an academic adviser to assist in the planning of an academic program consistent with educational and career objectives. In a large university with many resources, it is essential to build a coherent and well-thought out degree program with an adviser who is knowledgeable about academic options, procedures, policies, rules and regulations. It is your responsibility to come prepared to discuss your academic interests. Although these may change as you become more familiar with the University, advance planning and consultation will facilitate the formulation of your academic program. Undergraduate students with undeclared major receive academic advising in the Dean for Student Affairs Office; those with an undergraduate major receive academic advising in the academic services office of their school; graduate students receive it in their academic department.

International students should be certain when registering for classes to spell their name on University registration forms exactly the same as it is spelled in their passport and on their other legal documents.

OFFICE OF GLOBAL PROGRAMS (OGP)

The Office of GLOBLA PROGRAMS (OGP) is a vital reference point for international students and scholars. Members of OGP staff advise on legal, cultural, educational, social, and personal matters. OGP coordinates programs with and for international students and scholars, and serves as an advocate for the campus's international community. We hope you will maintain close ties with OGP throughout your stay.

Many details regarding your relationship to the U.S. government, to your own government, or to your sponsoring agency are handled by OGP staff. All F-1 and J-1 students on CUI'S visa sponsorship are required by U.S. law to report to OGP upon arrival and to keep OGP informed of changes in your address, curriculum, program, and status at all times.

If you have questions regarding your travel and arrival which are not answered in this brochure, write to the Office of Global Programs, Concordia University Irvine, 1530 Concordia West, Irvine CA 92612, call 949-214-3473, or email haeri.chee@cui.edu.

IF YOUR PLANS CHANGE

We hope you will enroll at CUI, but if you do not, please return the original Form I-20 or DS-2019 to the address below, and notify the admissions office of your decision: Office of Global Programs, Concordia University Irvine, 1530 Concordia West, Irvine CA 92612.

We look forward to welcoming you as you join our international community at CUI!

