Congratulations on your admission to Old Dominion University. The entire campus community wishes to ensure your seamless arrival and transition to ODU. Please use this guide, in addition to the international admitted website, for planning and preparation. Again, we extend our warmest welcome to the USA, Virginia and the Monarch community.
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Information current in April 2013.
F-1 student status is defined as a nonimmigrant individual academically admitted and pursuing a full course of study as a full-time student at an accredited academic institution or language program in the United States that has been designated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and approved by the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Upon completion of their course of study, F-1 students are expected to return to their home country of residence.

Developed by the Fulbright-Hayes Act of 1961, the J Exchange Visitor program was created to increase mutual understanding among the countries of the world through educational and cultural exchanges. Administered by the U.S. Department of State (DOS), the J-1 student status is defined as a nonimmigrant individual academically admitted and pursuing a full course of study at an approved exchange visitor educational program in the United States. Home residency requirements will vary among J visa categories.

First Steps

OBTAINING A STUDENT VISA

Education USA
www.educationusa.state.gov

U.S. State Department
www.travel.state.gov

U.S. Embassies and Consulates
www.usembassy.gov

In order to apply for a student visa, you must have a SEVIS generated certificate of eligibility, which will be either form I-20, used to obtain an F-1 student visa, or a form DS-2019, if participating in a J-1 exchange visitor program. It is highly recommended you apply for a visa appointment as soon as you receive the appropriate documents from your chosen program of study. The Non-immigrant visa application (DS-160) is electronic, and will require uploading a digital photo image. Visa application and issuance fees are non-refundable, and will vary, so check country reciprocity schedules. A face to face interview at the embassy or consular office is likely required. During the interview, a digital (non-ink) fingerprint scan and photo are taken. The process moves quickly, so preparation is critical. Be honest and confident. Consulting with your local Education USA office is highly advised for the student visa application and interview resources.
SEVIS I-901 Fee
Student & Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)
www.ice.gov/sevis/i901
fmjfee.SEVIS@dhs.gov

F-1 ODU SEVIS code: WAS214F10145000
J-1 ODU SEVIS program code: P103464

All students and exchange scholars/visitors in F-1 or J-1 status with forms I-20 or DS-2019 beginning new programs of study are required to pay the I-901 SEVIS fee. Dependents (F-2/J-2) and students transferring between U.S. institutions are exempt. The SEVIS fee should be paid at least three business days prior to your U.S. embassy/consulate visa interview, and is valid for one year. Bring the SEVIS fee payment receipt to your visa appointment, as the SEVIS fee cannot be paid at the consular office, U.S. embassy or port of entry.

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST
• Applicable visa application and issuance fees
• Form DS-160 confirmation page with barcode
• SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019
• SEVIS fee I-901 payment receipt
• Photo ID
• Passport (valid at least six months beyond your expected duration of stay)
• Birth and/or marriage certificate if bringing a spouse or child in F-2/J-2 status.

THE VIS A INTERVIEW
Planning and timing are crucial to ensuring a successful visa interview. Students should contact the closest U.S. consulate or embassy well in advance for specific visa application procedures.
• F-1 student visas will not be issued earlier than 120 days or less in advance of the program start date listed on form I-20.
• J-1 student visas can be issued anytime before the program start date listed on form DS-2019.
• Initial F and J visa holders are eligible to enter the U.S. no more than 30 days in advance of the program start date listed on forms I-20 or DS-2019.
INTENT TO RETURN

It is the student’s burden to demonstrate nonimmigrant intent during the visa interview. Be ready to show intent to return home after completing your course of study. We recommend you prepare a written statement explaining your purpose of study in the U.S. and how this degree will benefit you upon your return home. Some other examples of nonimmigrant intent include strong family ties, financial assets, real estate ownership or future employment prospects or guarantees.

FINANCIAL ABILITY

Be prepared to show financial solvency on demand for the estimated costs of your first year of study, in addition to renewable funds to cover future years of study. You may also be asked to provide past itemized statements of account activity. Remember, all financial documentation must be original (not copies). It’s best to obtain two sets of original financial documents; one set for ODU, the other for the visa interview and travel.

FULL COURSE OF STUDY

Show your intent to report and enroll in a full course of study at the institution which issued your I-20 or DS-2019. If admitted to several schools, be sure to use the immigration documents of your chosen institution for the visa application process. For initial entry into the U.S., the institution listed on your visa must match your I-20 or DS-2019. You may also be asked to present your letter of admission, previous academic transcripts or standardized test scores.

STUDENTS FROM CANADA

Canadian citizens are not required to obtain a student visa for U.S. entry to begin studies. However, be prepared to present your I-20 or DS-2019, proof of identity, citizenship, financial support and the SEVIS I-901 fee payment receipt at the port of entry. Make certain the immigration official stamps your I-20, DS-2019 or travel document as either F-1 or J-1 status. Do not enter the U.S. on a tourist visa (B) to begin an academic program of study.
Before You Leave Home

ARRIVAL ASSISTANCE
Office of Intercultural Relations (OIR)
www.odu.edu/oir
oir@odu.edu

The Office of Intercultural Relations (OIR), in partnership with several ODU student organizations, will strive to coordinate airport pickup and temporary accommodations for new international students in need. Arrival assistance can include a pickup from the airport or bus terminal in Norfolk and/or placement in temporary accommodations. Please note that these services are only offered during specific times prior to the beginning of the fall and spring terms. Special requests may be approved, but cannot be guaranteed. Transportation from the Norfolk International Airport and temporary accommodations are contingent upon availability and require advance notification.

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING
Office of Housing & Residence Life
www.odu.edu/housing
housing@odu.edu

On-campus housing offers the true Undergraduate collegiate experience. Options range from traditional dormitories to shared and single suites and apartments. All include amenities such as secured entry, dining plans, furniture, air conditioning, cable, Wi-Fi and laundry facilities. Apply for on-campus housing EARLY. Nine-month binding contracts must be reserved in advance of your arrival. A separate housing application and housing deposit is required. You must confirm your offer of admission prior to submitting the on-campus housing application.

IMMUNIZATION FORMS
Student Health Services
www.odu.edu/studenthealth

Virginia state law requires that all students submit a health history and immunization record showing proof of immunization against certain diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, meningitis and hepatitis B. State law does give students the option of waiving the meningitis vaccine and hepatitis B vaccine if the student chooses not to be vaccinated against these diseases. Old Dominion University also requires students to complete a tuberculosis (TB) risk assessment on their health history form, and if indicated, to be screened for TB with a tuberculin skin test (PPD) no more than two months prior to the start of classes. If you have a positive PPD skin test, a chest x-ray is required no more than two months prior to starting classes. Many international students have received a BCG vaccine and are under the impression that they should not receive the PPD skin test. The BCG vaccine does not exclude you from receiving a PPD skin test. The immunization forms should be completed by your health care provider, verifying
that you received all required immunizations. If you do not obtain this verification before you arrive, you will be required to have the immunizations and PPD skin test here, which is expensive and inconvenient for you. The completed health history/immunization record should be returned directly to Student Health Services by August 1 for students beginning the fall term and the first week in January for the spring term.

Tuition Payments
Office of Finance
www.odu.edu/finance
tuition@odu.edu

Tuition is payable on strict deadlines following course registration: mid-August for the fall term and early January for the spring term. Payment options include credit card (MasterCard and Visa), cash, check or money order. All funds should be available prior to payment deadlines, as money transfers may take several weeks. Advance deposits cannot be accepted. Readily exchangeable funds are best carried via travelers’ checks. Carrying large amounts of cash is highly discouraged. Note that bringing over $10,000 USD of money in any form (cash or check) into the U.S. must be declared to the U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP). All payment forms must be payable in U.S. dollars. A payment plan (fall and spring term only) is available which allows you to pay tuition and on-campus housing charges in four installments.

Direct Wire Payments
Before you depart, review any governmental or bank regulations/restrictions regarding international currency or wire transfers, and verify all required forms or authorizations are secured well in advance. All transactions must be in U.S. dollars, and ODU will assess a transaction fee of $50 USD. List your name and UIN (University Identification Number) on all paperwork, as ODU will not be liable for penalties incurred if wire payments are received without appropriate identification. Please allow 7 to 10 business days for funds to be applied to an account. Contact the Office of Finance
directly for wire transfer details concerning account, routing and SWIFT code authorization.

**MONEY ARRANGEMENTS**

The estimated costs of attendance listed on an I-20 are for the nine-month academic year, which includes tuition, fees, mandatory health insurance (12 months), personal and living expenses. These estimates do not include tuition or living expenses for the three-month summer term. Consider these figures very carefully when planning a budget, as they are conservative estimates. You must be able to meet first semester expenses upon arrival. Do not assume employment or another funding source will be available.

Additional expenses to consider:
- Transportation
- Tips on meals and taxi fares
- Household items
- Winter clothing
- Summer (Holiday) term
- Sales tax (VA-5%)
- Security/utility deposits for off-campus housing
- U.S. federal and state taxes (if working on campus)

**FIRST-SEMESTER EXPENSES (ESTIMATED)**

Cost estimates for F-1 and J-1 students are based on full-time enrollment at the out-of-state tuition rate; 15 credit hours for undergraduate and 9 credit hours for graduate. Living and incidental costs will vary, while tuition and health insurance expenses are billed either per semester or through multiple payments via an ODU payment plan. Tuition rates are set in mid-June for the academic year. While form I-20 estimates your total first-year costs, you should plan to have roughly half that amount readily available upon arrival. Form DS-2019 lists your total program costs, so it is advisable to consult with your sponsor for appropriate funds before arrival. All estimates are subject to change and do not include Summer (holiday) term costs.
THIRD PARTY OR GOVERNMENT SPONSORSHIP

If sponsored by an employer, government or private organization, and direct billing of your tuition and fees is requested, Old Dominion must have current billing authorization. Such authorization is presented in the form of a financial guarantee. These guarantees are renewed annually, and must be dated and written on official letterhead, clearly stating the total funding amount, duration and any other terms or restrictions. Note that financial guarantees submitted for the purpose of I-20/DS-2019 issuance often will neither authorize direct billing nor provide adequate billing contact information. Always keep an extra copy of your funding letter for your records.
A number of banking institutions, either on campus or within close proximity, accept international money transfers for account holders. Processing fees usually apply. Larger, national banks often do not require a Social Security number to open a bank account. Additionally, a Western Union branch is located close to campus. Navigating the U.S. banking system is reviewed during the international student orientation.

**ODU Credit Union**  
1544 North Mall  
Webb University Center  
T: 757-683-0530  
On campus  
www.oducreditunion.org

**Bank of America**  
3717 Hampton Blvd.  
Norfolk, VA  23508  
T: 757-664-1688  
0.60 miles (1.0 km) from campus  
www.bankofamerica.com

**Chartway Federal Credit Union**  
4702 Hampton Blvd.  
Norfolk, VA  23508  
T: 757-552-1000  
On campus  
www.chartway.com

**SunTrust Bank**  
777 W. 21st St.  
Norfolk, VA  23517  
T: 757-622-6047  
1.5 miles (2.4 km) from campus  
www.suntrust.com

**Western Union**  
c/o Rite Aid Pharmacy  
770 W. 21st St.  
Norfolk, VA  23517  
1.5 miles (2.4 km) from campus  
www.westernunion.com
The offices of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), the English Language Center (ELC), Study Abroad and International Admissions are located in Dragas Hall, Bldg. 127.
Upon Arrival

US-VISIT & CUSTOMS
U.S. Customs & Border Control (CBP)
www.cbp.gov

All nonimmigrant visa holders must participate in the US-VISIT program, a biometric registration system used for tracking entries and departures to and from the United States. At the port of entry, the US-VISIT system matches the digital finger scans and photograph taken during the visa process. You will be asked to state your reason for entering the United States, in addition to contact information regarding your final destination. Be sure to tell the port of entry official that you will be a student at Old Dominion University.

Hand-carry the following items for easy access:

• Valid passport (six months beyond the date of your expected stay) and visa stamp
• Endorsed SEVIS form I-20 or DS-2019 and SEVIS I-901 fee payment receipt
• Evidence of financial solvency (for F and J visas)
• ODU letter of admission, academic transcripts and standardized test scores
• Form CBP-6059B (customs declaration form-if applicable)*
  *If arriving by air, this form will be distributed on the aircraft before landing.

Once these forms are successfully inspected at the port of entry, the immigration official will stamp your travel document (formerly form I-94) for duration of status (D/S) with date and port of entry, indicating your entry visa status. Be sure these documents are stamped, and kept in a safe place, as they are proof of your legal entry and authorized stay in the United States; for F-1 and J-1 visas, this is proof of your status as a full-time student at Old Dominion University. You are required to report to ODU no later than the program start date listed on your I-20 (line 5) or DS-2019 (line 3).

CAMPUS CHECK-IN
International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)
www.odu.edu/issss
intlstu@odu.edu

All new degree seeking students must check in with International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS), the University contact for all matters pertaining to your lawful immigration status while in the U.S. Course registration cannot proceed until you have presented your immigration and visa documentation. Check in times will vary; reference Important Dates to plan accordingly. New F-1 and J-1 students must also register for and attend a
special mandatory informational session outlining student visa regulations.

**Late arrivals**

Visa and flight delays are sometimes unavoidable, however, arriving more than a few days beyond the program start date listed on your immigration document will make the course registration and advising process very challenging, and any missed mandatory orientations must be repeated. Those unable to arrive by the course registration deadline must defer their admission to a future term. If you are unable to report to ODU by the program start date listed on your visa document, notify International Admissions (intladm@odu.edu).

**Documentation required at check-in:**

- Current U.S. address (even if temporary)
- Passport
- I-94 card or CBP Admission stamp (www.cbp.gov/I94)
- Form I-20 or DS-2019/all visa documentation*
- F-1/J-1 SEVIS I-901 fee payment receipt
- For new graduate, research or teaching assistants: your offer letter
- Any outstanding admission documents (original transcripts, diplomas or test scores)

*Those pending permanent U.S. residency must present their I-485 receipt or green card at the time of new student check-in. Asylum seekers must show their asylum petition or approval notice. DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) individuals must show they have submitted the appropriate application materials to USCIS.
TOEFL EXAMINATION
English Language Center (ELC)
www.odu.edu/esl
elc@odu.edu

Students admitted with the condition of full-time English course enrollment must check in directly with the English Language Center (ELC) in 1108 Dragas Hall. You will have an opportunity to take the institutional TOEFL exam on campus during the week before the academic term begins. Registration is in-person at the English Language Center. Students admitted into either the undergraduate or graduate Bridge Programs are encouraged to take the institutional TOEFL before the semester begins.

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING SERVICES
Office of Housing and Residence Life
www.odu.edu/offcampushousing

The majority of international students choose to live off campus and there are many options available; however, it will take some effort on your part to find a place of residence. The international orientation reviews common types of off-campus housing locations, and deciphers contract lease language. The International Student Housing/Roommate Message Board from the ISSS website lists roommate opportunities as well as houseware items for sale from current ODU students.

INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION & ORGANIZATIONS
Office of Intercultural Relations (OIR)
www.odu.edu/oir
oir@odu.edu

The Office of Intercultural Relations (OIR) conducts a mandatory orientation for all incoming international students for the fall and spring semesters. Sessions are presented to help your transition to living in the U.S. and studying at ODU. Additionally, Old Dominion’s international student population is represented by approximately 108 different nationalities. Many organizations actively sponsor events and activities
with a distinct international focus, in addition to assisting new students with their transition to ODU. We encourage you to contact any ODU club or organization of interest before your arrival on campus.

**UNDERGRADUATE ORIENTATIONS & PLACEMENT TESTS**

Student Transition & Family Programs
www.odu.edu/preview
preview@odu.edu

Freshman (undergraduate/bachelor’s) degree-seeking students (not subject to conditional full-time intensive English language instruction) must preregister for Preview, ODU’s undergraduate academic orientation program. Transfer students (possessing at least 24 transferable course credit hours) are strongly urged to attend. Attendance is mandatory for majors within the College of Business and Public Administration. During this event, students will become familiar with campus services, meet with academic advisors and register for classes. Those not attending Preview will be responsible for coordinating their own academic advisement following ISSS check-in.

**Academic Enhancement**

www.odu.edu/elt
universitytesting@odu.edu

The Writing Sample Placement Test (WSPT) is an online English language essay examination required for all new undergraduate students for course placement (freshman) or diagnostic (transfer) advising purposes. The TOEFL or IELTS examination does not replace the WSPT. The Compass Math Placement Test (not required) is an examination designed for new undergraduate students who have not taken the SAT or ACT and seek a math course placement higher than MATH 101/102. Further details regarding the WSPT and Compass examinations will follow your Preview registration.
The Office of Graduate Studies offers a short, general overview of University resources and services relevant to new graduate students. While not mandatory, attendance is encouraged. Additionally, many of the individual graduate programs conduct their own orientation/welcome programs. It is the graduate students’ responsibility to coordinate their own academic advisement following ISSS check-in.

**GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT INSTRUCTORS INSTITUTE (GTAI) & SPEAK EXAMINATION**

Recipients of graduate assistantships requiring classroom instruction must register for and attend the Graduate Teaching Assistantship Instructors Institute (GTAI). Additionally, non-native English speakers must take and pass the SPEAK test, administered by the on-campus English Language Center. All employment paperwork related to graduate, research or teaching assistantship eligibility is processed by International Student & Scholar Services. Planning your date of arrival is very important, as you must physically reside in the United States for at least 10 days before a Social Security card application can begin. Various taxes may be withheld from your stipend, so budget accordingly. Keep in mind that personal funds may be temporarily required as tuition payments are often due before your stipend is completely processed.

**EXCHANGE STUDENTS**

Many policies and procedures are unique only to non-degree exchange students, and the Office of Study Abroad is the primary source of assistance throughout your entire stay at Old Dominion University. The Office of Study Abroad will assist with all inquiries concerning reciprocal exchange agreements, including campus arrival and check-in, orientation, housing, course registration and all tuition payment matters.
HEALTH INSURANCE

Old Dominion University requires students to maintain a year-round University-approved health insurance policy. You are automatically enrolled for continued coverage once you register for classes; insurance costs are added to your tuition bill. Payment plans, as well as waivers (in very limited circumstances) are available. While dependents in F-2 status are not required to purchase the University plan, ODU strongly encourages coverage for your spouse and dependents at all times. Those in J-2 status must maintain health coverage that meets Department of State requirements.

DEPENDENTS

Students may request documentation from ODU which allows a spouse and/or dependent child to join them in the United States in F-2 or J-2 status. In general, it is best for students to arrive first, and then bring your family after living and schooling arrangements are finalized. The academic year for local public schools runs September through June. A variety of immigration laws and University policies guide the issuance of dependent documents. Dependent visa documents for new students will not be issued until two months after the start of the semester, and your University account must be free of registration holds. A meeting with an ISSS advisor is required to review dependent financial requirements, health insurance, employment and study restrictions. In order to maintain current SEVIS records, dependents must bring their passports, I-94 (CBP Admissions Stamp) cards and any other visa documents to the ISSS office for photocopies within one week of their campus arrival.

SEVIS TRANSFERS BETWEEN U.S. SCHOOLS

If you are currently attending another U.S institution, an electronic SEVIS transfer process must be initiated. Along with original, sufficient financial documentation, submit ODU’s SEVIS Transfer-in Form, which should be fully completed by both yourself and your current school’s international official. This will confirm the date on which your current institution will transfer your electronic SEVIS record to ODU. Be sure to verify when classes begin, as your record should be transferred in advance of that date. ODU will issue a transfer pending I-20 for your records. Once enrolled, a continuing attendance I-20 is issued, completing the transfer process. There is no transfer pending form DS-2019 for J-1 students. Your SEVIS ID does not change. If traveling and re-entering the U.S. to attend ODU, please make sure to enter the U.S. on an initial immigration document issued by Old Dominion University.
CHANGE TO F-1 STATUS

Students can apply to change to F-1 status without leaving the U.S. if you can prove that you have maintained your current nonimmigrant status and that you qualify for F-1 status. Additionally, you must also show that you did not falsify your entry into the U.S. by claiming one activity, with the intent to do another. For example, an individual who enters on a tourist “B” visa, and immediately applies for a change to F-1 status will probably be denied. Individuals who enter the U.S. on the Visa Waiver Program may not change to another nonimmigrant status inside the U.S. Processing a change of status petition with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services may take between two months and six months. An appointment with an ISSS advisor is required.

Last-minute Reminders

WHAT TO BRING

As you head to Virginia, we recommend a carry-on bag with any required medication and important documents and a change of clothes. Be sure to periodically check the admitted student website for any important updates. Bring clothing suited for various seasons, as summers tend to be hot and humid, winters cold, with mild fall and spring seasons. The local forecast is available from www.weather.com, entering “23529” as the ZIP code. Old Dominion
student groups are a good resource as to what spices, foods and supplies may be here from your home country. Books may be purchased on campus, however, you may wish to bring reference materials from home. Most housewares can be purchased inexpensively after you arrive, and many items are available through the ISSS Message Board. Check the U.S. Customs website before you leave, as most food cannot be brought into the U.S.

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SERVICES

Student safety and security is the highest priority of the ODU Police Department, which provides 24/7/365 services to the University community. As with any urban environment, vigilance and awareness are key to your safety. Campus services such as SAFERIDE vans, student patrol Escort Services and a vast network of emergency call boxes (Blue Boxes) are available to all students and staff. Additionally, BikeODU is a bike-sharing program which allows you to “check out” bicycles free of charge, and Zipcar is a vehicle rental program located on campus (fees are charged.) Students have free access to the public bus system, or Hampton Roads Transit (HRT), which connects to the Norfolk International Airport, The Tide light rail system and Norfolk’s Amtrak (U.S. national rail system) train station.
DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

- Valid passport (six months beyond the date of your expected stay) and visa stamp
- For F/J visas, planned arrival by the program start date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019.
- Second set of original transcripts, diplomas, test scores and financial documents or any outstanding academic credentials
- Official English-translated course descriptions for undergraduate course credit
- Secured availability of funds and/or sponsorship documentation
- Planned budget for the calendar year, including tuition, fees, mandatory health insurance (F/J visas), housing and personal expenses, including extra funds if accompanied by dependents
- On-campus housing application submitted, if desired
- Health history and immunization records completed by your home physician and returned to Student Health Services
- Timely requests for arrival arrangements (with flight itinerary), temporary accommodations or other services needed
- Carry-on bag with overnight change of clothes, important documents and any essential medications
- Registration confirmed for any appropriate orientation or advisement appointment
- Check in on campus with International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS), Room 2006, Dragas Hall, located at the corner of 49th Street and Hampton Boulevard

Notes

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ODU CAMPUS CONTACTS

Standard University business hours (non-holiday) are Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM (EST)

CAMPUS CHECK-IN
International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)
2006 Dragas Hall
Tel: 1-757-683-4756
Fax: 1-757-683-6198
intlstu@odu.edu ~ www.odu.edu/isss

ARRIVAL ASSISTANCE
Office of Intercultural Relations (OIR)
2109 Webb University Center
Tel: 1-757-683-4406
Fax: 1-757-683-5360
oir@odu.edu ~ www.odu.edu/oir

ELC CAMPUS CHECK-IN
English Language Center (ELC)
1108 Dragas Hall
Tel: 1-757-683-4424
Fax: 1-757-683-4640
elc@odu.edu ~ www.odu.edu/elc

EXCHANGE STUDENTS
Office of Study Abroad
2006 Dragas Hall
Tel: 1-757-683-5378
Fax: 1-757-683-5196
studyabroad@odu.edu ~ www.odu.edu/studyabroad

24-HOUR CONTACT
Campus Police
4516 Monarch Way
Tel: 1-757-683-4000
Fax: 1-757-683-5660
police@odu.edu ~ www.odu.edu/police