



IMPORTANT PRE-ARRIVAL CHECKLIST FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Dear Student:

Congratulations on your admission! Before traveling to the United States of America please carefully read this Pre-Arrival Checklist to assist you with travel, Cultural Office registration, and transition to your school.

Thank you for your cooperation and we look forward to meeting you soon!

1. ADMISSIONS/WELCOME PACKAGE FROM THE UNIVERSITY

- a. Please take note that some students are admitted to academic studies while others are admitted to Intensive English language programs. Please check your I-20 and acceptance letters.
- b. Thoroughly read all documents: I-20, acceptance letter, and other information such as housing, immunizations, brochures, etc.
 - i. Check to ensure your name is spelled as it is on your passport and that all documents list your correct program and start date.
- c. Complete and return all the necessary forms (housing, immunization records, health waivers etc.) enclosed in your admissions packet to the school by their set deadlines. All deadlines are your responsibility.
- d. When reading your admission documents, be sure to make note of their mandatory orientation dates. You are required to attend and failing to could result in not being able to sign up for classes.
- e. You are responsible for making and finalizing your own housing arrangements and completing forms as requested by the University. NOTE: Some universities require freshmen to live in on-campus housing.
- f. ESL Students- You will have to submit an undergraduate application for academic studies. Please pay close attention to deadlines for Undergraduate University Applications as most universities require undergraduate applications to be submitted one year in advance.

2. VISA PROCEDURES

- a. You will have to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee (\$200.00 USD) before you have your interview with the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait to secure your visa. This may be paid online using a credit card. The website is <http://www.FMJfee.com>
- b. Appointment with the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait
 - i. Once you have received your I-20 and paid the SEVIS fee online, your next step is to make an appointment with the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait.
 - ii. Each embassy has different requirements, please follow instructions available through the website of the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait at <https://kw.usembassy.gov/>
- c. Visa Delays
 - i. Please inform the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) of any delays you experience during your visa process.
 - ii. Be sure to keep any documents that explain these visa delays. You may need these documents if you need to apply for a scholarship deferral.

3. ARRIVING IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

- a. **Arrival-** Our office recommends that you arrive two weeks before your school's orientation date. This will ensure that you have plenty of time to find a place to live, register with our office, and complete any pending requirements of your program. If you will be traveling to our office for any reason, be sure to plan according to the business hours. The Cultural Office's normal business hours are **Monday through Friday from 9:00 am-1:00 pm and 2:00pm-5:00pm** (10:00 am-3:30 pm during Ramadan). The office is **closed on Saturdays**

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and Sundays. Please also take into consideration the Public Holidays observed in the U.S. (e.g. Independence Day- July 4, Christmas Day- December 25, New Year's Day- January 1, etc.) as well as Kuwaiti Holidays (Kuwait National Day, Eid al-Adha, Eid al-Fitr, etc.) when making your travel arrangements. The Cultural Office is closed during U.S. and Kuwaiti holidays.

4. CULTURAL OFFICE REGISTRATION

- a. Undergraduate students sponsored by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE): Are assigned to a placement advisor based on the first letter of their first name. If your first name begins with:
- **A – E** and **O – S**: Contact Ms. Jessica Cantrell at Jcantrell@kuwaitculturela.org
 - **F – N** and **T – Z**: Contact Ms. Lupe Molina at gmolina@kuwaitculturela.org

Undergraduate students sponsored by any of the sponsors listed below, please contact Ms. Lupe Molina at gmolina@kuwaitculturela.org:

- Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET)
 - Civil Service Commission (CSC)
 - Kuwait Petroleum Company (KPC)
 - Public Authority for the Disabled
 - Prime Minister
 - Kuwait Fire Service Directorate
- b. Students must register with our office upon their arrival in the United States to receive health insurance, official financial support and verification of income letters (if applicable per sponsorship), monthly allowance (if applicable per sponsorship), and to be assigned to an academic advisor with our office.

Failure to register with the cultural office in a timely manner may result in being dropped from classes or late registration fees that will be the sole responsibility of the student.

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- i. If traveling to Los Angeles and registering in person at the Cultural Office:
- Bring clear copies of the six (6) required registration documents to the Cultural Office
 - Students have the option of attending orientation at 11:30 am or 3:30 pm; please arrive 30 minutes prior to your desired orientation. At this time, students can ask questions or address concerns. This orientation takes approximately an hour, so please arrange your travel plans accordingly. Please be advised that the office is closed for lunch from 1:00pm- 2:00pm.
 - Please understand that registering in person at the Cultural Office does not speed up the release of allowances or any other scholarship benefits. Registrations are processed in the order in which documents are received.



ii. If reporting directly to your location of study:

- Email scanned copies of the six (6) required registration documents directly to your placement advisor.
- Submit your registration documents only after you have arrived in the United States, do not send your documents while you are still in Kuwait.
- Send all six (6) of your documents together in one (1) email and in PDF format. Kindly ensure that your documents are clear and legible. If you send us documents in a different format, it may delay processing of your file and we may require you to resend your document to us in an acceptable format.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION:

1. Completed Registration Checklist Form –Click [here](#)
2. Copy of passport
3. Copy of F-1 visa
4. Copy of page #1 of I-20
5. Copy of I-94 (arrival/departure record) –Click [here](#) to retrieve I-94
6. Copy of Direct Deposit Form (issued by your banker in the United States)

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR STUDENTS BORN IN THE USA:

1. Completed Registration Checklist Form –Click [here](#)
2. Copy of Kuwaiti passport
3. Copy of US passport
4. Copy of your flight itinerary and boarding pass
5. Copy of Direct Deposit Form (issued by your banker in the United States)

IMPORTANT:

1. Please be advised that it may take 7-10 business days for your allowances and other scholarship benefits to be released. Please plan ahead and make sure you have funds to use while your allowances are in the process of being released.
2. If you fail to send all required registration documents to your placement advisor, you will experience a delay in receiving scholarship benefits and will be asked to submit all documents required before any benefits can be released.
3. It is important to know that registering with our office is mandatory and is your responsibility. Any late fees that accrue due to registering late will be your responsibility.

In case of an emergency or after hours please contact the General Consulate of the State of Kuwait, at (310) 279-3644.



**IMPORTANT INFORMATION for INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
U.S. IMMIGRATION & CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT**

BEFORE arriving in the United State of America:

- 1) Confirm that your passport and visa are valid for entry to the U.S. Your passport should not expire for at least six months after the date you plan to enter the United States.
- 2) While you are traveling, you should have the following documents and information with you on the plane and ready to present to the immigration official at the U.S. Port of Entry:
 - a. Valid passport and F-1 visa
 - b. Original I-20
 - i. If you are under 18 years of age, you and your guardian must sign your I-20
 - c. SEVIS I-901 Fee Payment Receipt
 - d. Evidence of financial resources (Kuwait Cultural Office Prospective Financial Support Letter, or family financials)
 - e. Name and contact information for your designated school official (DSO)
- 3) You will have to complete the CF-6059 Customs Declaration Forms, which will be given to you on your flight before you land at your initial point of entry in the U.S. The immigration official will stamp it and return it to you. You will then present it to the customs official at the baggage checkpoint.
- 4) It is important that you tell the Customs and Border Protection Officer that you will be a student. Be prepared to include the name and address of the university where you will enroll. Once the inspection is complete, the officer will stamp your passport with your entry date and duration of status ("D/S") for F-1 visa holders.
- 5) Foreign visitors to the U.S. arriving via air or sea no longer need to complete paper Customs and Border Protection Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record. Those who need to prove their legal-visitor status—to schools/universities or government agencies—can access their CBP arrival/departure record information online (click [here](#)).
- 6) Secondary Inspection Requirements –If your information cannot be automatically verified by the inspector or you do not have all of the required documentation, you may be directed to an interview area known as "secondary inspection".
 - a. We strongly suggest that you have the name and phone number of the foreign student advisor at your school. If you arrive during non-business hours (evening, weekends or holidays), you should have a phone number where this individual can be reached during non-business hours.
 - b. *Failure to provide proper documentation and comply with the entry/exit procedures is cause to refuse student admission into the U.S.*
 - c. There are times when a student may not be in full compliance and the student may be issued a Form I-515A "Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor", which authorizes temporary admission into the U.S. and requires the student to take immediate action to submit proper documentation.
 - d. *Non-compliance with the directions contained on these forms can result in denied entry. *
- 7) US-Visit –is a comprehensive entry-exit registration system that was implemented at all international airports throughout the U.S. Non-immigrant visitors holding visas will be participating in the program, which involves obtaining a scan of two index fingerprints and a digital photograph of the arriving visitor.
- 8) National Security Entry-Exit Registration Systems (NSEERS) -Some visitors will require additional scrutiny and will have to provide additional information under NSEERS. Anyone could be subject to additional scrutiny and should follow the directions of the Customs and Border Protection Officer if additional information regarding itinerary, length of stay, or other security questions is required.
- 9) Admission to the U.S. – Students have 30 days to enter the U.S. before their official program start date, which is registered in SEVIS by an official at your school. Students must report to their school by the program start date indicated on their I-20



and admission documents, and must attend the mandatory student orientation. Students should contact their school and Cultural Office immediately upon arriving in the U.S. so that there is no question of their arrival.

- 10) Continuing Students who are traveling outside of the U.S. must see their foreign student advisor at the school and obtain an endorsement from the designated school official. The endorsement will be on page 3 of the Form I-20. When returning to the U.S., a continuing student must present a valid Form I-20 with the DSO signature, proving that the student is active and in good standing with the school.
- 11) If you are authorized for Optional Practical Training (OPT) by your school, make sure that the school has updated your records in SEVIS and issued your new I-20 Form showing OPT authorization on page 3 of the form.
- 12) For further information, please visit the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement website regarding International Students at <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/students>

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