



2020-2021

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
GUIDEBOOK**

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The information herein is subject to change.

ACRONYMS

SEVIS – The Student Exchange and Visitor Information System is a government internet-based system that maintains and manages data on foreign students and exchange visitors during their stay in the U.S. Each F-1 student will have a SEVIS record and the I-20 will be generated through SEVIS.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) – There are three bureaus of the Department of Homeland Security:

ICE: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement – responsible for immigration investigations, detention, removal, intelligence, and SEVIS

CIS: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services – responsible for most application and petition Adjudications

CBP: U.S. Customs and Border Protection – responsible for immigration inspections at the U.S. Ports of entry, for the Border Patrol and for the Customs Service

Visa – A Visa is a document that gives someone permission to travel into a specific country and stay there for a set period of time. Visas are not school specific.

F-1 Visa – For non-resident alien students in academic or language programs. Students who enter the U.S. on the F-1 visa are commonly referred to as “F-1s” or “F-1 students.”

F-2 Visa – For spouse and children of F-1 visa holder.

I-20 Certificate of Eligibility – The I-20 is issued by an authorized educational institution to enable eligible individuals to obtain an F-1 student **visa** or to obtain F-1 student **status** (for Canadian Citizens). The I-20 is not a visa.

I-94 – Arrival-Departure document issued to all non-immigrants entering the U.S. It indicates the purpose of the student’s admission and the length of time for which his or her stay is authorized. A new document is issued whenever an individual re-enters the United States. This is a very important document. When departing, the U.S. immigration will often want to confirm that you have maintained status and will reference the I-94 document. A stamp will be placed in your passport. You will be able to [print](#) a copy of your I-94 if needed.

P/DSO – Primary/Designated School Officials are regular employees of the University, appointed by the school and approved by the Citizenship and Immigration Services to represent the University in all F-1 student matters. A P/DSO is responsible for complying with various federal regulations.

VISA – If you intend to pursue full-time studies at Western University of Health Sciences, you will need an F-1 Student visa to enter the United States. If you are currently in the United States in another nonimmigrant status you will be required to apply for a change of status (see section titled “Change of Visa Status”).

In most countries, first-time students are required to appear for an interview. Each embassy and consulate set its own interview policies and procedures. Please visit the following websites for information on applying for an F-1 Visa:

Visas: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>

Consulates: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>

Student Visa Applications: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study.html>

SEVIS – SEVIS, which stands for Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, is an internet-based system that allows schools and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to exchange data on the visa status of international students. Accurate and current information is transmitted electronically throughout an F-1 student's authorized stay in the U.S. U.S. embassies, consulates and ports of entry also have access to SEVIS.

TUITION PAYMENT – Payment of your tuition is due approximately 10 days prior to the first day of your enrollment regardless of your loan application process or securing personal funds. It is your responsibility to make sure you are aware of when your tuition is due (please see [tuition schedule](#)). If tuition and fees are not paid on time, your seat in the program may be withdrawn. If you have any questions regarding the tuition schedule, please be sure to contact Daniell Mendoza @ dmendoza@westernu.edu or Marie Anderson at manderson@westernu.edu.

In addition, if you are being sponsored by your government, you will be responsible for making sure you provide them with the proper documentation necessary to receive your funding in a timely manner.

ENTERING THE UNITED STATES – Immigration laws **do not allow international students to arrive in the U.S. more than 30 days prior to the start date indicated on their I-20.**

Always hand-carry your documents, do not check your documents in your baggage.

Upon arrival at the U.S. port of entry, you will present the following documents to the immigration officer:

- Your passport, valid for at least six months beyond the date of your expected stay
- SEVIS Form I-20
- Completed Form I-94
- Evidence of financial resources
- Evidence of student status, such as your Admissions Acceptance Letter
- Paper receipt for the SEVIS fee, Form I-797
- Name and contact information for your Designated School Official

You may be asked some questions, however, do not be alarmed as this is routine. The entire process can sometimes take several hours so plan your time accordingly. For more information about Port of Entry and the immigration status, visit <http://www.state.gov/travel/>.

ARRIVING AT WESTERNU – You must complete the mandatory admissions process no later than 15 days after the report date indicated on your I-20. A DSO from WesternU's Office of the Registrar will contact you by WesternU email to request copies of your documents or schedule an appointment for you to complete this process.

Please be sure to bring your passport, visa, I-94, I-20 and any other documents that verify your immigration status.

HOW TO REQUEST AN I-20

A Form I-20 is only issued after an offer of admission has been extended to you by WesternU and proof of financial support is received. An I-20 cannot be processed any earlier than 120 days prior to the start of your program.

1. Proof of Financial Support

The I-20 is titled "Certificate of Eligibility." The I-20 is issued to a non-immigrant student who has been admitted to a full-time study program at a government approved, U.S. educational institution and has provided proof of ability to pay tuition, fees and living expenses for entire period of studies in the U.S. The I-20 allows a student to apply for an F-1 student visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. Proof of funding for **one academic year is required before an I-20 can be issued** (see [Student Budgets](#)). Student budgets are subject to annual increases. However, please be sure that adequate funding will continue to be available from the same or equally dependable sources for the remainder of your program. Any combination of funds is acceptable as long as you can show proof that you can cover the cost of one academic year.

Your Designated School Official (DSO) will create your I-20 in the SEVIS database. The I-20 will indicate an arrival date and a program completion date. Once all required information is entered in the SEVIS database, a 'PDF' file is created and ready for the DSO to print. The DSO will print and sign the I-20 and forward to the student to make an appointment with the U.S. embassy or consulate in their home country to apply for an F-1 student visa.

Please provide one of the following documents:

- An official bank statement or letter from your bank; or
- A letter of affidavit of support from a company or international sponsor.

Note: Proof of funding cannot be more than 6 months old prior to the start of your program.

Electronic copies of documents are acceptable. Proof of funding can be submitted from a combination of sources and must be in U.S. dollars. **If you will be bringing your spouse and/or dependents with you, please be sure you have the appropriate funding.** Only a spouse or children under the age of 21 can be F-2 dependents. You must add additional funding for each dependent: 1 dependent - \$12,860, 2 dependents - \$17,420, 3 dependents - \$21,960, 4 dependents - \$26,500.

Upload financial documents to your I-20 request form or email them to:

Daniell Mendoza – dmendoza@westernu.edu or

Marie Anderson – manderson@westernu.edu

If you prefer to send your documents via postal mail, send to:

WesternU, Attn: Admissions/International Students

309 E. Second Street

Pomona, CA 91766

2. Complete the [I-20 Request Form](#) (first time I-20) or [F-1 Transfer Form](#) (transferring record from another school).
3. After receipt of proof of funding and I-20 Request Form an I-20 will be created. This process can take up to 2 weeks so please plan accordingly.

4. Make an appointment with the U.S. embassy or consulate in your home country to apply for the F-1 visa if attending school in the U.S. for the first time. In most countries, first-time students are required to appear for an interview. Each embassy and consulate sets its own interview policies and procedures. Please visit the following websites for information on applying for an F-1 Visa:

Visas: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en.html>

Consulates: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>

Student Visa Applications: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student.html>

5. If you are attending WesternU on an initial (first time attending school in the U.S.) attendance I-20, you will be subject to the required SEVIS fee of \$350. The SEVIS fee **must be paid at least three (3) days prior** to the consular interview unless you have a printed receipt from the Internet payment. For instructions on how to pay the SEVIS fee, please visit the SEVIS I-901 website at <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901>. WesternU's school code is LOS214F01238000.

CANADIAN CITIZENS

Canadian citizens do not require a visa to enter the United States but do require an I-20 and a passport. The F-1 status will be given at the U.S. point of entry into the U.S. It is important that students entering the U.S. enter in the proper student status. Students attending WesternU on an initial I-20 (first time attending school in the U.S.) will be required to pay the SEVIS fee of \$350.

Be sure to look at your I-94 card before leaving the inspection area to make sure that it reads F-1, D/S. This ensures that you are entering the U.S. on a student visa and not a visitor.

An I-94 stamp will be placed in your passport. Please be sure to review the information entered by Immigration at the port of entry to ensure you have been admitted to the U.S. in the proper status. You will be able to [print](#) a copy of your I-94 if needed.

It is recommended that students carry the following documents to the Canadian/U.S. border:

- Valid Passport
- I-20
- Financial Documentation
- Proof of SEVIS Payment

TRANSFERRING YOUR I-20 TO WESTERNU

If you have been attending school in the U.S. on an F-1 Student Visa, F-1 regulations permit a student to transfer from one Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) approved school to another. There can be no more than a 5-month gap between schools from the last date you attended, or the last day of your Optional Practical Training (OPT), whichever is later. The deadline to request a transfer is 60 days after the program complete date or OPT end date, whichever is later.

To request a transfer of your I-20/SEVIS record, you must notify your current school's DSO of your intent to transfer and indicate the school to which you intend to transfer (WesternU). Complete the [WesternU F-1 Student Transfer In Form](#) and return it by mail, fax or email to the addresses listed below. Transfer students do not have to pay the SEVIS fee provided you paid the SEVIS fee upon your initial F-1 entry into the United States.

The DSO at the "transfer-out" school will provide the date your SEVIS record will be released to the "transferring-in" school (WesternU) and update your student record in SEVIS. **You will also need to provide the following documents before your transfer can be completed:**

- Proof of financial support (see section titled "Proof of Financial Support")
- Copy of your current I-20
- Copy of current visa
- Copy of your I-94

Please mail or email the above documents to the WesternU DSO you are working with:

WesternU
Attention Daniell Mendoza, Admissions
309 E. Second Street
Pomona, CA 91766.
Phone: (909) 469-5541
Email: manderson@@westernu.edu

WesternU
Attention Marie Anderson, Admissions
309 E. Second Street
Pomona, CA 91766.
Phone: (909) 469-5485
Email: manderson@@westernu.edu

Once WesternU has received these documents and has access to your SEVIS record, the DSO can complete your I-20 transfer. After enrollment at WesternU, the DSO completes the SEVIS registration and will contact you by WesternU email to complete the admissions process. **WesternU's school code is LOS214F01238000**

CHANGE OF VISA STATUS

Students accepted to WesternU who are in B1/B2, F-2, H-2 or E2 status **must have an approved change of status to F-1 before matriculation** at WesternU. Please contact your WesternU DSO immediately after your acceptance to discuss your plans for change in status.

If you currently hold another visa type, there are two ways to obtain F-1 student status:

1. Travel Abroad – Return to your home country and apply for an F-1 visa.
2. Application to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) without departing the US. This process can take up to 8 months to process the application. **You must apply for your change of status before you matriculate.**

If you are currently in the U.S. in the status of F-2, H-2 or E-2, you must change status before matriculation to WesternU. The approval process could take up to 4 months, so it is imperative that the change of status is filed immediately after notification of an offer of acceptance by WesternU.

PROCEDURES:

1. A letter from you requesting the change of status and explaining your circumstances, including information about why you are applying for an F-1. It is also advisable that you demonstrate strong ties to your home country and/or that you do not have intentions to immigrate to the US.
2. Copy of Acceptance Letter to School.
3. Completed Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Non-immigrant Status. Complete both sides of the form, complete question Part 4, item 3, on a separate page if necessary. List any dependent family members changing their dependent status (to F-2) in Supplement 1 on Form I-539. You can locate this form on USCIS web site: <http://www.uscis.gov/forms> and select Immigration Forms from the top menu.
4. Your new, original SEVIS I-20 (for F-1) prepared by WesternU. To request an I-20, please complete the [I-20 Request Form](#).
5. Proof of SEVIS fee payment for \$350.00 (if applicable). This fee can be paid online by completing [Form I-901](#) after the I-20 is issued to you. If you pay online you can print a receipt immediately.
6. \$370 check or money order payable to Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This one fee covers you and any F-2 dependents that you have listed on Supplement 1 of the I-539 form.
7. Photocopies of both sides of your current immigration documents which may include I-20 forms, passport information page, visa stamp page and I-94 card.
8. If your current status is F-2 or H-4, provide proof of primary F-1 or H-1B status. Photocopy F-1 or H-1B visa in passport and photocopy F-1 or H-1B I-94 front and back of card.
9. Copies of financial documents used to obtain your I-20.
10. Photocopy of your passport identification page and visa stamp (Canadian and Bermudan citizens do not have a visa stamp) – do not send your passport.
11. Be sure to keep a photocopy of all your documents.

For the correct mailing Lockbox, please check the website at <http://www.uscis.gov/I-539-addresses>.

NOTE: You should not leave the U.S. while the application is pending. Leaving the U.S. may cancel your application.

In addition to the above information, if you are changing your status from any of the following, you should include the following information.

Changing from H-1 or L-1:

- Copies of all previously issued I-797 forms showing H status.
- Give your dates of employment under H-1.
- Request the date on which you want the F-1 status to be effective.
- Include evidence that you are in valid H status as of the date you submit your change of status application to USCIS. This would include a letter from your H-1 employer confirming current employment and 3 recent copies of your pay stubs.

Your F-1 effective date must be within 30 days of the program start date in number 5 of your I-20. If you leave your employment more than 30 days prior to your program start date, you must leave the U.S. and apply for an F-1 visa at a U.S. Consulate.

H-4

H-4 dependents may attend school without restriction; however, an educational program that requires employment requires the dependent to change their status to F-1. A change of status would also be necessary for a dependent that wants to accept an assistantship or on-campus employment.

If in H-4 status, copies of all spouse's/parent's I-797 approval notices for H-1B status, copies of both sides of their I-94 card, and copies of any I-797 approval notices for H-4 status are required. You will also need a letter from the employer of the H-1B verifying that the H-1B is still employed under all terms and conditions of the original H-1B petition.

Changing from F-2

Copies of your spouse's F-1 immigration documents which would include I-20 forms, passport information page, visa stamp page and I-94 card.

Your F-1 status must be approved before you may begin full-time study.

Changing from J-1 or J-2

Copies of all previously issued DS-2019 forms showing J status.

For J-2s –Copies of your spouse's J-1 immigration documents: DS-2019, passport information page, visa stamp page and front and back of I-94.

J-1 or J-2 cannot change to F-1 in the U.S. if subject to the "two-year home residency requirement" (Section 212(e) unless you have received a waiver of the requirement from the US Department of State.

TRANSPORTATION – If you are flying into Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), the drive from LAX to Pomona is approximately one hour. You may make your own arrangements with a friend, family or student. If you prefer, you may choose a commercial shuttle company.

Visit the websites listed to check prices and make reservations.

Shuttle Services

SuperShuttle

<http://www.supershuttle.com/>

Prime Time Shuttle

<http://www.primetimeshuttle.com/>

Xpress Airport Shuttle

<http://www.xpressshuttle.com/>

Taxicabs

Yellow Cab (909) 396-1313

Bell Cab (909) 884-1111

If you choose to take a taxi, be sure to get an estimated cost from the driver as taxis can be very expensive.

Metrolink Stations

For information on local stations and destinations

visit <http://www.metrolinktrains.com> or call (800) 371-5465

Bus Lines

MTA – Metropolitan Transportation Authority: (213) 626-4455

Airports

Ontario International Airport (ONT)

12 miles from campus

Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) – one of the “Points of Entry” into the U.S.

47 miles from campus

John Wayne Airport (SNA)

34 miles from campus

Bob Hope Airport (BUR)

43 miles from campus

[Campus Map](#)

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS – Social Security numbers are only assigned to F-1 students who are [authorized to work in the U.S.](#) You should not need a social security number to secure housing or open a bank account.

CALIFORNIA DRIVER'S LICENSE - If you are planning on applying for a California's Driver's License, you must [wait at least 12 working days after your arrival to the U.S.](#) This will allow time for your arrival information to be updated into the government database system; otherwise, your application will be denied. For more information on obtaining a California Driver's License, please visit the [California Department of Motor Vehicles \(DMV\) website.](#)

HOUSING OPTIONS – You should allow plenty of time to locate housing to avoid searching after school starts. WesternU does not operate dormitories for its students. However, there are housing developments conveniently located adjacent to the University.

WesternU offers a secure online listing of available rentals both local to the campus as well as nationwide for our students on rotation! Please visit our [housing website](#) for housing information.

WesternU provides a housing referral service as a courtesy to its students. However, the University assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of information provided by property owners or other third parties, and each student should independently verify the condition of any property, its amenities, security arrangements, etc. Under no circumstances shall the University have any responsibility, or be liable for, damages, losses, injuries, or liabilities of any nature relating to any housing provided by third parties.

HOTEL INFORMATION – You can view a listing of [local hotels](#) to assist you in identifying conveniently located accommodations if necessary.

BANKING IN THE UNITED STATES – You may want to open a bank account with a local bank. Be sure to research your banking options and choose a bank that best suits your needs. When making your decision keep in mind branch locations, monthly banking fees, international money transfer fees and account options.

The following are just some of the banks available in the area.

- Bank of America
- Chase Bank
- U.S. Bank
- California Bank & Trust
- Wells Fargo Bank
- East West Bank
- Cathay Bank

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACTS	
ADMISSIONS	<p><i>Daniell Mendoza</i> Primary Designated School Official (PDSO) (909) 469-5541 dmendoza@westernu.edu</p> <p><i>Marie Anderson</i> Designated School Official (DSO) (909) 469-5485 manderson@westernu.edu</p>
FINANCIAL AID	<p>(909) 469-5353 finaid@westernu.edu</p>
HEALTH INSURANCE	<p>Alana Garcia, Student Affairs Executive Assistant adgarcia@westernu.edu (909) 469-5343</p>
HOUSING	<p>Jared Greene, University Student Affairs Assistant (909) 469-5340 jgreen@westernu.edu</p>
FITNESS MEMBERSHIPS	<p>Jessica Kersey, Assistant Director of University Student Affairs (909) 706-3517 jkersey@westernu.edu</p>
NOTEBOOK TECHNICAL SUPPORT	<p>techsupport@westernu.edu</p>
PROGRAM/CURRICULUM	<p>For questions relating to your program/curriculum, please refer to the website at www.westernu.edu to contact your specific college's student services representative.</p>
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WEBSITE	<p>http://www.westernu.edu/international/international-welcome/</p>
STUDENT BUDGET WEBSITE	<p>https://www.westernu.edu/financial/financial-budgets/</p>

Western University of Health Sciences
Office of Admissions
309 E. Second Street, Pomona, CA 91709
(909) 469-5335
www.westernu.edu/international/international-welcome/