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Arrival Information for New International Students Fall Semester 2008

- **Orientation date is 9:00 am
Friday, August 22, 2008**
- **Bring immigration documents**

WELCOME!

The Office of International Advising (OIA) is pleased that you have decided to attend Suffolk University! This packet will assist you as you apply for your student visa and prepare to arrive in Boston. If you need further assistance, please contact us using the information listed above. We look forward to meeting you on **August 22, 2008** at International Student Orientation.

F-1 VISA INFORMATION

How do I obtain a student visa?

To obtain **F-1 student immigration status** use the Form I-20 issued to you by Suffolk University to apply for an F-1 visa sticker at the U.S. embassy or consulate closest to your home city. The consular officer will want to see the following items:

- The original I-20
- Proof of payment of the \$100 SEVIS fee
- Your valid passport
- A copy of the financial documents that you provided to obtain the I-20
- A completed visa application
- One 2 inch x 2 inch photograph
- \$100 visa application fee

The U.S. Department of State maintains an excellent web site about the visa application process at <http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/studying.html>. Visit this site to confirm the application process and to locate the embassy or consulate that serves your home city.

To pay the SEVIS fee, use the web site at <https://www.fmjfee.com/index.jhtml>. This site contains a description of the fee and how to pay it online or via post. If you have questions, contact us using the phone and email information listed above. Please note that the SEVIS fee is not the same as the visa application fee. Follow the instructions of the U.S. embassy where you will apply for your visa regarding the payment of the visa application fee.

Carefully read "Instructions to Students" on page 2 of your I-20 and sign your I-20 on page 1 to acknowledge that it is your responsibility to know and comply with all U.S. immigration regulations.

Transfer student note: If you already have a valid F-1 visa, you do not need to go to a U.S. Embassy to get a new visa. Even if the name of a different school is on the visa, you can still use the unexpired visa with the Suffolk I-20 when you enter the U.S. Do not pay the SEVIS fee again.

What will the consular officer ask me?

The officer will examine your visa application to confirm the following items:

- your admission to the university
- the availability of funds for tuition and living expenses

- proof of strong ties to your country of residence

Because the F-1 student visa is a *non-immigrant visa*, you must show that you have a permanent residence and strong ties to that country such as property, immediate family members in the country, membership in professional or social organizations, a job when you finish your studies, and other long-range future plans. Be prepared to answer the officer's questions about your plans to return home.

When should I apply for the visa?

You should apply for a visa **as soon as possible** so that you can arrive for orientation on **August 22, 2008**. We cannot change the report date of August 22. Apply for your visa as soon as you receive the I-20 to allow time for security checks and to avoid the August rush at the embassy. Also, remember that U.S. embassies observe both local and U.S. holidays.

Canadian Students: Citizens of Canada are visa exempt; Canadian citizens should pay the SEVIS fee at least 3 days before entering the U.S. Present your Canadian passport, I-20, SEVIS fee receipt and proof of funding at U.S. immigration at the airport or border crossing to obtain admission to the U.S. in F-1 student status. Landed Immigrants of Canada should follow the visa application procedures for their country of citizenship.

When should I arrive in the U.S.?

You may enter the U.S. as early as July 23, 2008 using your student visa documents. **Please do not plan to arrive after August 22, 2008.** If you have concerns about the arrival date, please contact the OIA at ويا@suffolk.edu.

Can I bring my family to the U.S. with me?

Spouses and children under the age of twenty-one are eligible for F-2 dependent visas. Please contact the OIA at ويا@suffolk.edu if you plan to bring your family to the U.S. Additional financial documentation is necessary for dependent family members. Please note that F-2 visa holders cannot study or work in the U.S.

What can I do if my visa application is denied?

Sometimes an F-1 visa application may be denied if the applicant does not provide proof of strong ties to the home country. If your visa application is denied, please contact the OIA at ويا@suffolk.edu. The university will attempt to assist you, but the consular officer at the embassy has the ultimate authority to reverse a visa denial.

Can I use the Visa Waiver Program or Tourist/Visitor Visa (B-1 or B-2) ?

Do not use the B-1, B-2, visa waiver or WT program to come to the U.S for study. If you have a valid B visa in your passport, the embassy can issue the F-1 visa without cancelling the B visa. Since study is not permitted for tourists, students who attempt to use a tourist status must return home immediately to apply for the F-1 student visa. Even if you are running late, take the time to obtain the correct visa before you leave home. If you are concerned about a late arrival, contact the OIA at ويا@suffolk.edu.

What do I do if I am transferring to Suffolk from another U.S. University?

Suffolk obtained your SEVIS record from your old school and used it to generate a new Suffolk University I-20 with the same SEVIS ID number. You can use this I-20 to travel outside the U.S. and re-enter, or you can remain in the U.S. over the summer. We will complete your transfer in

SEVIS once you enroll in classes. If you travel, use the visa sticker from your old school with the Suffolk I-20 if the visa is still valid; if the visa sticker has expired, visit the U.S. embassy to obtain a new visa. Do not pay the SEVIS fee again. If you have questions about your transfer, contact the OIA at ويا@suffolk.edu

What if I am out-of-status ?

If your previous institution determined that you are out-of-status, you must return to valid F-1 status to enroll in Suffolk University. Receiving the Form I-20 from Suffolk does not restore valid status or guarantee that you will be able to return to valid status. To return to valid status, you can file a petition with USCIS or travel outside of the U.S. The university supports reinstatement petitions at its discretion. Please be advised that students who have been out-of-status for more than 5 months are not eligible to pursue reinstatement within the U.S and will be required to travel. Contact the OIA at ويا@suffolk.edu for counseling about reinstatement to valid F-1 student status.

If I hold a different immigration status, can I change to F-1 student status?

In some circumstances, it is possible to change status to F-1 student without leaving the U.S. Receiving an I-20 from the university does not confer F-1 status; the change-of-status must be requested through a petition with fee submitted to the Vermont Service Center of the USCIS. If you plan to file for a change of status within the U.S, please contact the OIA at ويا@suffolk.edu to schedule an appointment with an immigration advisor as soon as possible. USCIS can require up to four months to process a change of status; in cases where less than four months remain before the Fall arrival date of August 22, applicants may need to travel outside of the U.S. to obtain the visa.

Arrival in the United States

Making Flight Arrangements

The majority of students travel to Boston via **Logan International Airport**. Some international flights arrive at Logan directly from outside of the U.S. while others, such as flights from Asia, stop at a city on the west coast of the U.S. before continuing on to Boston.

Return ticket note: Consult the calendar at <http://www.suffolk.edu/academics/index.html> for holidays and term dates. The Fall 2008 term ends on December 13.

Inspection by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Packing Note: Remember to keep your **passport, I-20 and financial documents** in your hand luggage. You will need to show these to the immigration officer at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) as soon as you get off the airplane.

On the airplane, shortly before you land in the U.S., the flight attendant will distribute 2 government forms for you to complete - a customs declaration form and the Form I-94 Arrival/ Departure Record. Fill out these forms as you prepare to land and make certain that you have your passport, I-20 and financial documents ready to present to USCIS. During the immigration inspection, the officer will

- Examine your passport, I-20, customs declaration form and Form I-94
- Ask you some basic questions such as your purpose for entering the U.S.
- Ask you about the contents of your baggage
- Stamp your documents with the date of arrival and the notation F-1 D/S

- Staple the I-94 card in your passport
- Return the I-20 to you

Be certain that you receive your passport, I-94 card and I-20 from the immigration officer. Put your documents in a safe place as you leave the inspection area of the airport. It can be difficult to manage your luggage and your documents, so take care that you do not lose the documents at the airport or in a taxi. Remember to bring the immigration documents to international student orientation. If you are traveling with family members, do not let your relatives take the documents back home. You will need to show them often during your time in Boston.

Several ground transportation options are available from Logan. Visit the web site <http://www.massport.com/logan/> for information about taxis and the subway. For information about airport pick-up by Suffolk University, please write to Mr. R. Scott Reedy, Director of International Student Programming at rreedy@suffolk.edu.

Arrival at Suffolk University

International Student Orientation

All new international students at Suffolk, including transfer students, must attend international student orientation at 9:00 am on **August 22, 2008** in Sargent Hall (the Law School building) at 120 Tremont Street. This is a REQUIRED session. Please expect to remain in this session for the entire day (until 4 pm). It is not possible to leave the session early or to leave and return during the course of the program. Please do not plan any housing meetings or tourist activities during the orientation time. Your family members are welcome to attend the session, but it is not necessary for them to remain with you.

International student orientation begins the process for SEVIS immigration reporting, registering for classes, paying university fees, enrolling in understanding health insurance, reporting immunizations, getting to know Boston and U.S. culture and finding off-campus housing.

Both university staff and experienced international students conduct the program, so this is an excellent opportunity to start meeting other students from your country and from around the world.

Bring the following items to International Student Orientation:

1. **Passport**
2. **I-20 form**
3. **I-94 card (the small white card stapled in the passport)**
4. **The address of any emergency contacts at home and in the U.S.**
5. **Your new local address in Boston if you have found housing**
6. **Your Suffolk university ID number (located in your admissions materials)**

Program note: International Student Orientation is different from university-wide orientation for all new undergraduate students. Undergraduate students attend BOTH the international program on **August 22** and the university-wide program the following week.

Center for International Education

The Office of International Advising is located in the Center for International Education. See us for assistance with immigration issues, cross-cultural concerns, social activities or any other aspect of adjusting to life in the United States. We have a team of 3 immigration advisors who have lived and traveled around the world as well as other staff members who can assist you. We look forward to working with you throughout your time at Suffolk. Our office is located at 73 Tremont Street. We are open Monday through Friday from 8:45 a.m. until 4:45 p.m. Our telephone number is 617-573-8154. You can contact us by e-mail at ويا@suffolk.edu. **Please email us when you receive your visa from the U.S. Embassy. Your email will let us know that you plan to attend Suffolk as we prepare for orientation.**

Health Matters

IMMUNIZATIONS

To protect your health, Massachusetts state law requires all university students to be vaccinated for certain illnesses that occur in the U.S. Please be certain that you have read the information you received from the university regarding vaccinations and remember to bring your immunization records with you to Boston. If you do not have evidence of the required vaccinations, Health Services at the university can provide the vaccinations for a fee.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Massachusetts state law requires all international students have a health insurance plan to cover the cost of medical care. Students are enrolled in the Suffolk University health insurance plan, and the \$1490 premium is added to your tuition regardless of insurance coverage that you may have from your home country. Insurance coverage begins on August 22, 2008. If you will arrive before August 22, you are strongly encouraged to purchase an additional month of insurance coverage for \$122. If you have questions about insurance, including purchasing the early-arrival coverage, contact the Office of Health Services.

For assistance with **immunizations or insurance**, contact the Office of Health Services at (617) 573-8260 or email Ms Vicky Lothrop, Coordinator, at vlothrop@suffolk.edu

Housing

Permanent Housing

Housing in Suffolk University's residence halls (on-campus housing) is limited. Students who do not receive a space on-campus use the Off-Campus Housing Office (OCHO) to locate appropriate and affordable housing. Register at www.suffolk.edu/ocho to begin your housing search. Representatives from OCHO will also assist students at the International Student Orientation.

Temporary Housing

"Temporary Housing" means finding a place to stay while you are working with OCHO to find permanent housing. Please contact OCHO for temporary housing options.

For assistance with **housing**, contact the Off-Campus Housing Office (617) 573-8647 or begin a search by registering as www.suffolk.edu/ocho.

Financial Matters

STUDENT ACCOUNTS AT THE UNIVERSITY

In order to register for your classes, you will be required to pay your Fall semester tuition. The University has two payment options:

1. payment in full at the time of registration for classes
2. payment of one-half the tuition at registration and the balance due at the midpoint of the Fall Semester (requires payment of a processing fee).

Methods of payment include VISA/MasterCard, AMEX, personal checks that are drawn on a U.S. bank, or wiring funds in advance. We recommend that you wire in advance if possible. Tuition funds can be wired directly to Suffolk University's account. For information about how to arrange a wire transfer or any other aspect of paying your tuition at Suffolk, please visit the web site of the Office of Student Accounts as listed below.

Please note: Contact the Office of Student Accounts BEFORE wiring any funds to Suffolk University. Your university bill for the Fall term will be different from the cost information listed on the I-20; therefore, all students must contact Student Accounts regarding the amount of money that should be wired. Any funds wired to Suffolk in excess of the actual amount owed to the university will be returned to the bank account where the wire originated. It is not possible for the university to issue excess wire funds to any student.

For assistance with **fee payment**, contact the Office of Student Accounts (617) 573-8470 or visit their web site at <http://www.suffolk.edu/admission/28.html>

Final Words . . .

Good luck with your plans. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns. Additional information about all of these topics can be found on the university web site at www.suffolk.edu. We look forward to seeing you on **August 22!** (If you miss international student orientation, be sure to visit the CIE as soon as you arrive on campus.)