

Immigration Handbook



Global Education Office

Keene State College

Dear International Student,

Welcome to Keene State College!

Being an international student, you will have many wonderful possibilities for educational, cultural and social experiences. But, as an international student, you will also have a number of responsibilities that United States citizens do not have.

This is all part of the process for an international student to be able to study in the United States. The following guide will assist you in navigating the sometimes-challenging process of attending Keene State on an F or J visa.

Undoubtedly, you will have additional questions.

For questions regarding Keene State Admissions, contact:

KSC Admissions Office
Telephone: (603) 358-2276
Web: <http://admissions.keene.edu>

For questions concerning immigration issues, contact the Global Education Office:

Telephone: (603) 358-2348
E-mail: geo@keene.edu
Web: <http://www.keene.edu/geo/>

All of us at Keene State College look forward to getting to know you.

Global Education Office
Keene State College
229 Main St.
Keene, NH 03431-2612
USA



Immigration Basics

What is a Visa?

A visa is a grant of permission to enter the country.

VISA: Visas are applied for at U.S. Consulates or Consular Sections of U.S. Embassies. Passports or travel documents are required at the time of application. Depending on visa category (**see “visa categories” section below**), additional documentation may be required and/or financial resources scrutinized.

For up to date information on US State Department visa information:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>

Student visa requirements please see:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html>

VISA CATEGORIES: As indicated above, there are distinct categories of visas. The following is a brief description of some of the more common categories.

B-1 - Business visa

B-2 - Tourist visa

F-1 – Student Visa (dependents are issued the F-2 visa)

J-1 - Exchange Visitor visa (dependents are issued the J-2 visa)



Documents required to attain a Student Visa after you have been officially accepted to KSC

*Specifics on which visa to apply for, and how to obtain a visa, can be found on page 6.

1. Passport

Your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond the end of your intended stay in the U.S.

Before leaving for the U.S., make at least one copy of the page containing your photograph and passport number. If your passport is lost or stolen, this will make it easier to replace the passport. Keep the photocopy in a safe place, but do not carry it with your passport.

If your passport is lost or stolen, notify your embassy and the police immediately.

2. Form I-20

Prior to applying for your F-1 visa, you will receive Form I-20 from the Global Education Office of KSC. This form, also known as a Certificate of Eligibility, is a document that you will present when applying for your F-1 (exchange visitor). It is prepared by an academic institution (Keene State College), signed by an authorized signatory (Designated School Official), and certifies that you have been accepted for study at the specific institution (Keene State College). This document also outlines the field and length of study, the level of English language skill required, the amount of money needed for study, and the amount and source of money (as verified by the

institution) available to you. It may also indicate the name of a spouse and/or dependent children.

Assuming that the student has been able to obtain the F-1 visa, he/she presents the Form 1-20 upon entry to the United States, which is then returned to the student to serve as a travel document. The student, assuming s/he will be traveling in and out of the United States, has the responsibility of obtaining a signature from the Designated School Official at GEO (at least once a year) to verify that student status is continuing. Re-entry to the U.S. can be severely compromised without this signature. *STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND THE INSTITUTION INDICATED ON THE I-20.*

3. Form DS-2019

Prior to applying for your J-1 visa, you will receive Form DS-2019. This form, also known as a Certificate of Eligibility, is a document that you will present when applying for your J-1 (exchange visitor) visa. It is prepared by an academic institution (Keene State College), signed by an authorized signatory (Responsible Officer) and certifies that you have been accepted for study at the specific institution (Keene State College). This document also outlines the field and length of study, the level of English language skill required, the amount of money needed for study, and the amount and source of money (as verified by the institution) available to you. It may also indicate the name of a spouse and/or dependent children.

Assuming that the student has been able to obtain the J-1 visa from the US Embassy/Consulate in your home country, s/he presents the Form DS-2019 upon entry to the United States, which is then returned to the student to serve as a travel document. If the student will be traveling in and out of the United States, s/he has the responsibility of obtaining a signature from the Responsible Officer at the Global Education Office (GEO) of Keene State College to verify that student status is continuing. Re-entry to the U.S. can be severely compromised without this signature.

4. SEVIS I-901 Fee

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requires the collection of a one-time SEVIS fee for new F-1 and J-1 Exchange Visitor students and scholars. This fee is being collected to fund operation of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program Office, which has priority over SEVIS - the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. A new F-1 student must remit the fee directly to DHS by completing Form I-901 electronically using the Internet. Transfer students in good standing, already attending a U.S. institution do not have to pay the fee. To access the online SEVIS fee payment system, go to: www.FMJfee.com. Make sure to submit your SEVIS

I-901 fee payment in time to allow DHS to process the payment at least 5 days prior to your visa interview. <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901>

5. Letter of Admission from Keene State College

You will also need to present your letter of admission from Keene State College when you attempt to attain your F-1 or J-1 student visa.

6. Sufficient Financial Resources

To apply for a F-1 visa, you will **need to demonstrate that you have enough money to pay for at least one year's costs to attend KSC.**

For J-1 visa approval the consular officer will review whether the applicant will have sufficient funds to cover expenses while at Keene State College.

The U.S. Consular Officer will examine the information you provide very carefully. If you do not have the resources necessary for study in the U.S., you will not get a visa.

If a U.S. citizen (for example, a relative) will be sponsoring your education, the relative will need to fill out a Form I-134 (Affidavit of Support). This form requires them to pay your expenses if you cannot. A Form I-134 filed by someone who is not a relative does not count as much as a Form I-134 filed by a relative.

7. Proving Non-Immigrant Intent

You may **need to establish to the US Consular Officer that you intend to return to your home country after your exchange program is complete.** You may need to demonstrate economic, personal, social, and cultural ties to your home country. Some of the methods of doing this include:

- ❑ Providing a list of the names, addresses, ages, and occupations of close family members who remain in the home country.
- ❑ Providing documentation of financial ties to the home country, such as ownership of real estate.
- ❑ Providing evidence of job prospects in the home country, such as a letter from a potential employer.
- ❑ Providing an explanation of why equivalent educational training is not available in your home country or is not as suitable.

If a consular officer believes that you intend to immigrate to the U.S., the officer must, as a matter of law, deny the visa.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY FORM I-20 or DS-2019 MISSING?

Call the Global Education Office **immediately** and we will begin the process of reissuing you a new Form I-20 or DS-2019. If you happen to find your document after you reported it lost, please also let us know so that we can update our files. The Global Education Office can be contacted at **(603) 358-2348** or via e-mail at geo@keene.edu.



Student Visas

To be able to study in the USA, you will have to obtain the proper visa. **Below are definitions of the types of visas you might obtain, along with step-by-step procedures for attaining a (Student) Visa:**

Immigrant vs. Non-immigrant Visas

There are essentially two types of visas: immigrant and non-immigrant.

Immigrant visas are given to individuals who have been granted permission to reside permanently in the U.S. These individuals, called Permanent Residents, have been issued an Alien Registration Card

(commonly referred to as a "green card") and are permitted to live and work in the U.S. without restriction. There are other foreign nationals who, although not permanent residents, are also authorized to live and work in the U.S. without restriction. These individuals do not receive green cards, and proof of employment eligibility is shown by a government-issued Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

Non-immigrant visas are given to individuals who intend to be in the U.S. for a temporary period of time: as students, temporary workers, participants in international cultural programs, entertainers or athletes, exchange visitors, diplomats or government representatives, investors, religious workers, tourists, or as visitors for short-term business purposes.

Non-immigrant visas are issued to foreign nationals who intend to remain in the U.S. for a **temporary period of time**. There are more than 40 non-immigrant U.S. visas; each visa type is used to enter the U.S. for a different purpose. Some visas authorize a period of temporary employment in the U.S., others permit foreign students to study, provide opportunities for international, educational exchange and allow foreign diplomats to serve their country's interests. The majority of foreign nationals enter the U.S. as tourists or for short-term business needs, rather than to "immigrate".

At Keene State the most commonly seen non-immigrant visas are the F-1 Student Visa and the J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa.

F-1 Visa Definition

The F-1 visa is for full-time study in an academic program.

The F-1 permits students to be employed on campus. On-campus employment for F-1 students is limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session. During school breaks and vacation periods, F-1 students are permitted to work on-campus for up to 40 hours per week. Other employment options can be discussed with GEO.

F-1 Visa Procedure:

1. Receive your Form I-20 (Certification of Eligibility) from GEO at Keene State College. *Remember to read the restrictions and responsibilities on page two and then sign and date the form.*
2. Contact the nearest U.S. Consulate or Embassy to make an appointment and begin the F-1 visa application process.
3. Submit SEVIS I-901 fee payment in time to allow the Department of Homeland Services to process payment at least 5 days prior to your visa interview.

4. Print SEVIS fee payment receipt from the Internet. Submit the receipt with visa application.
5. You must present the following documents (please check with you US Embassy as this list may change and it is your responsibility to know what is required) when you visit the US Consulate/Embassy for your visa appointment:
 - ❑ Passport
 - ❑ Form I-20
 - ❑ Receipt verifying, I-901 SEVIS fee payment
 - ❑ Letter of Admission/Invitation from Keene State College
 - ❑ Financial Certificates (for example, scholarship awards or a bank letter)
 - ❑ Evidence of your intent to return to your home country
6. Receive F-1 visa in your passport from U.S. Embassy/Consulate. Please inform a GEO staff member when you have received this stamp.

J-1 Visa Definition

J-1 Exchange Visitors may be students, visiting professors or short-term visiting scholars.

J-1 students are permitted to hold on-campus jobs for no more than 20 hours per week while classes are in session and up to 40 hours per week during breaks and vacation periods. All students in J-1 visa status must obtain prior approval from the Global Education Office before accepting on-employment. Students on J-1 visas do not need to apply to the USCIS for work authorization, but must obtain written authorization from the GEO prior to accepting employment.

Visiting professors or researchers in J-1 visa status may be employed at KSC in temporary positions for a maximum of three years. J-1 visa holders are not permitted to be tenured or hold tenure-track positions.

J-1 Visa Procedure

1. Receive your Form DS-2019 (Certification of Eligibility) from Keene State College. *Remember to read the restrictions and responsibilities on page two and then sign and date the form.*
2. Contact the nearest U.S. Consulate or Embassy to make an appointment and begin the J-1 visa application process.
3. Submit SEVIS I-901 fee payment in time to allow the Department of Homeland Security to process payment at least 5 days prior to your visa interview.

4. Print SEVIS fee payment receipt from the Internet or wait to receive a form I-797 receipt from DHS via mail and submit the receipt with visa application.
5. You must present the following documents when you visit the US Consulate/Embassy for your visa appointment (please check with you US Embassy as this list may change and it is your responsibility to know what is required)
 - ❑ Passport
 - ❑ Form DS-2019
 - ❑ Receipt verifying, I-901 SEVIS fee payment
 - ❑ Letter of Admission/Invitation from Keene State College
 - ❑ Financial Certificates (for example, scholarship awards or bank letter)
 - ❑ Evidence of your intent to return to your home country
6. Receive J-1 visa stamp in passport from U.S. Embassy/Consulate. Please inform a GEO staff member when you have received this stamp.



Other Important Entry Considerations

1. **For F-1 Visa Holders:** Enter the U.S. up to 30 days PRIOR to the start date indicated on the I-20 and no later than 60 days AFTER the end date indicated on the I-20.
2. **For J-1 Visa Holders:** Enter the U.S. up to 30 days PRIOR to the start date indicated on the DS-2019 and no later than 30 days AFTER the end date indicated on the DS-2019.

3. **DO NOT** attempt to enter the USA on a tourist/visitor visa (B1/B2) or via the visa waiver program.
4. Canadian students are required to present the same documents as other international students upon entry into the U.S., including financial verification, and other supporting documents (such as letter of acceptance). Please be sure to show these documents upon arrival at the border to avoid entering with tourist/visitor status.
5. In most US Embassies/Consulates, first-time student-visa applicants are required to appear for an in-person interview. However, each embassy or consulate sets its own interview policies and procedures regarding student visas. You should consult the U.S. embassy in your country for more specific visa application instructions www.usembassy.state.gov. Keep in mind that June, July and August are the busiest months in most consular sections, and interview appointments are the most difficult to get during this period. To the extent possible, you should provide the documents suggested below, as well as any other documents that might help establish your ties to the local community.
6. In compliance with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), you are required to have valid addresses recorded in SEVIS during your studies. DHS may terminate your immigration status automatically if you do not maintain your address information with KSC.
7. While you are holding a KSC sponsored F-1 or J-1 visa, you are required to provide the GEO with the address that you are living at.



Before You Leave Checklist

- ✓ Inform the GEO office of your expected date of arrival and mode of transportation.
- ✓ Confirm your housing arrangements with the Office of Residential Life
- ✓ Make arrangements to get from the airport to Keene State College. Call the GEO office for assistance, if necessary.
- ✓ Copy of any prescriptions.

- ✓ Have necessary documents (copy of driving record or driver's license from home) to apply for a NH driver's license, if desired. To rent a car, you will need an international driver's license.
- ✓ Make sure that your immigration documents are in order, and that you have all documents that you will need with you.



Arrival Information

Entry Procedures: Immigration

1. Once you receive your Form I-20 or DS-2019 from Keene State College, you must apply for a visa at your local U.S. Consulate or Embassy. If you are applying for a visa *outside* your country of origin, you may be required to return to your home country to apply.
2. *At the U.S. port of entry*, you will be asked to show your **passport**, **visa**, and **I-20 or DS-2019**. You may also be asked to show your **financial documents** for inspection. Please be sure to *carry all of this information with you* and not in your baggage.
3. *Once you have been admitted to the United States*, you will be able to access your I-94 documents <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>. The I-94 documents will list your arrival date, port of entry, visa status, and the duration of your stay and your Admission number.

PLEASE MAKE COPIES/SCANS OF THESE IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS:

Picture page of your Passport, I-20 or DS-2019, Visa, health insurance policy

KEEP THEM IN A SAFE PLACE



Entry Procedures: Customs

After you have gone through the immigration inspection at the U.S. port of entry, you must pass through customs. You will be asked to declare what you have bought into the country. In most cases, you will

1. **Fill out a declaration form on the plane.** Make sure to fill out your declaration form before you arrive so you can speed up your customs and immigration clearance.
2. After going through immigration at the airport, you will need to **make a verbal statement to the customs official**, who may or may not inspect your baggage. There may be dogs sniffing baggage for illegal drugs.

If you arrive to the U.S. with prescription medication, please have the prescription readily available for inspection. To prepare for this inspection, do the following:

- ❑ Have all drugs, medicines, and similar products properly identified.
- ❑ Carry only such quantity as would normally be used by an individual having the health problem requiring the drugs or medicines in your possession.
- ❑ Have either a prescription or written statement from your personal physician proclaiming that the medicine is being used under a doctor's direction, and that it is necessary for your physical well being while traveling. (It is best to have this translated in English for easier inspection).

You may bring anything for your personal use without paying duty, including clothing, jewelry, sports equipment, and other necessary items. Quantity limitations are placed certain items. Please see <https://www.cbp.gov/> for up to date information, limits and requirements.

Insurance Requirement

All international and exchange students are required by the US government and KSC to prove that they have health insurance for the duration of your stay at Keene State College. GEO will ask for proof of health insurance (such as a copy of your policy) when you arrive. If you need a list of companies that provide health insurance policies please contact the GEO. Below are the insurance policy minimum requirements as stated by the US government.

All exchange visitors (as well as their accompanying spouses and dependents) must have insurance in effect that covers them for sickness or accidents during the time of their exchange visitor program. The recent rule increases the minimum coverage to meet today's medical insurance needs. **As of May 15, 2015**, minimum coverage must provide medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness; repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000; expenses associated with medical evacuation to the exchange visitor's home country in the amount of \$50,000; and deductibles cannot exceed \$500 per accident or illness (Section 62.14(a)). Inadequate insurance coverage may be catastrophic for an individual exchange visitor. Thus, the Department increased the requirements.

Program participants and their dependents are required to have medical insurance coverage with the following minimum benefits **[22 CFR 62.14]**.

- Medical benefits of **at least** \$100,000 per accident or illness
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000
- Expenses associated with the medical evacuation of the exchange visitor to his or her home country in the amount of \$50,000
- A deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness.

Sponsors are to require that their participants (and any dependents entering the United States as holders of a J-2 visa) have insurance in effect during the period of time they are in the sponsor's program. An insurance policy secured to meet the benefits requirements must be underwritten by an insurance corporation with an A.M. Best rating of "A-" or above, an Insurance Solvency International, Ltd. (ISI) rating of "A-I" or above, a Standard and Poor's Claims Paying Ability rating of "A-" or above, or a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of B+ or above. Alternatively, the sponsor may ascertain that the participant's policy is backed by the full faith and credit of the government of the exchange visitor's home country. For other options, see **[22 CFR 62.14]**.

Health Forms

Before arriving at KSC, you will be required to hand to the Center for Health and Wellness the various medical forms that all Keene States students are required to submit before attending. Information can be found at:
<https://www.keene.edu/office/chw/>

If you have additional question do not hesitate to contact geo@keene.edu or by phone at 603 358-2348