



## **International Students and Continuing Education at the School of the Art Institute (SAIC)**

SAIC welcomes international students from abroad and those already in the United States holding a student visa to enroll in our Continuing Studies Programs. Please review the information below to determine the required immigration documents needed to enter the U.S. International Affairs advises that students wait to finalize their travel plans until after their visa has been approved and issued unless otherwise advised by the U.S. Embassy or Consulate.\*

\*International Students should plan to check into the residence hall after 5pm on the Saturday before their orientation (orientation takes place the Sunday before classes start).

### **Do I need a visa?**

The F-1 student visa is appropriate for individuals who are coming to the U.S. to study full-time at an academic institution. SAIC is certified by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) to issue I-20 forms to students who are accepted to undergraduate degree, post-baccalaureate certificate, graduate degree or the Early Colleg Program Summer Institute (ECPSI). SAIC is not certified to issue immigration documents for international students participating in the non-degree Continuing Studies program/courses. Eligible students must have proof of sufficient funding for tuition, books, supplies and living expenses.

### **You may not need to obtain a visa eligibility document (I-20 form) from the SAIC if you:**

- Are a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- Are currently attending a university within the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 status and plan to return to that institution in the fall. In this case, the full time registration requirement does not apply.
- Are in the U.S. in a non-immigrant status other than as F-1 or J-1 student and that status allows you to be a full-time or part-time student.
- Canadian citizens coming to the U.S. to study full-time should obtain an I-20 form, but are not required to get a visa in their passport.

### **Incidental Study for Visitors to the U.S.**

Generally, citizens of other countries may visit the U.S. provided they have a valid B1/B2 visa or are eligible for the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). When entering the country,

immigration officials will ask the visitor to explain the purpose of their visit and where they intend to stay. The primary purpose of the trip must qualify as business, pleasure, or medical treatment. Once admitted in valid B-1, B-2, or VWP status, visitors have restricted permissions for what they can do while they are in the U.S. Visitors are granted status until a specific expiration date and do not have permission to work or enroll in an academic course of study during that time.

According to federal regulations, a non-immigrant visitor “violates the conditions of his or her B-1 or B-2 status if the alien enrolls in a course of study” [8 CFR 214.2(b)(7)]. These conditions also hold for visitors in the Visa Waiver Program. However, several government agencies have clarified these regulations to allow for recreational study, as long as the study is incidental to the primary purpose of the visit (business or tourism). The study may NOT be used to satisfy any degree or certification requirements, provide substantial training toward a vocational skill, or qualify as a full-time program. Instead, permissible study is viewed as casual and short-term, toward a personal hobby or interest, and is not the main reason for visiting the U.S.

International Affairs recommends that students who plan to attend ECPSI contact the nearest U.S. Embassy/Consulate for advisement on the immigration documents needed to enter the U.S. for what they intend to do while here. You can locate your nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate on the Department of State's website.

### **How To Apply for an I-20 Form for ECPSI**

After you have enrolled, if you plan to apply for your I-20 form; the necessary documents can be found on our [website](#). When submitting them via email, always indicate that you are an ECPSI student.

International students are strongly encouraged to enroll in ECPSI as early as possible to avoid delays in processing their I-20 documents and obtaining their F-1 student visas. Because visa process times vary by country, international students who require visas must submit registration documents and deposit no later than March 25, 2016.

### **Proof of English Language Proficiency**

Proof of English Language Proficiency is required for any student requesting an I-20 from SAIC and who is from a country with an official native language other than English.

The following documents are acceptable to satisfy this requirement:

1. TOEFL scores
2. SAT/ACT scores
3. High school transcript if the student attends a US-accredited high school (such as an IB or International school)

If a student can not submit any of these documents, please contact the continuing studies enrollment office directly ([cs@saic.edu](mailto:cs@saic.edu)) to discuss alternative options.

## **Helpful Notes**

Students should not make flight arrangements until they have their visa in hand from the U.S. Consulate or Embassy.

If the primary purpose of your visit to the U.S. is study, you are advised not to enter the country on a tourist (B-2) visa. Please refer to the U.S. government guidelines for Pleasure/Tourism—Visitor Visas (B-2).

SAIC does not issue I-20 forms required for the student visa (F-1) to non-degree applicants other than students enrolling in the Early College Program Summer Institute (ECPSI).

If you are a U.S. Permanent Resident (with an Alien Registration number), you are not considered an international applicant or student.

## **Student at Large**

SAIC welcomes international students to enroll for college credits in the [student-at-large \(SAL\) category](#). Please note that SAIC is not approved by the Department of Homeland Security to issue I-20s for students in a non-degree program, including students enrolled as a student-at-large.

## **Status Responsibility**

Immigration status has no impact on an individual's admissibility to an educational institution. Educational institutions are not required to verify their permission to study, and it is the individual's responsibility to ensure that they are maintaining status and have appropriate permission for their planned activities. We hope the guidelines above will help you to determine the appropriate visa category for your intended visit, including any periods of study. If you are not sure whether to request status as a visitor or a student, please contact your local U.S. consulate for guidance. Consular officials will be able to evaluate the primary purpose of your visit and whether the proposed study is permitted as incidental to status.