

SIUE

Pre-Arrival Information for International Students



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Congratulations on Illinois University meeting you and to make your stay here a booklet provides visa and general information about SIUE and the city of Edwardsville. Helpful suggestions on preparing for your trip to the United States are also included.

your admission to Southern Edwardsville! We look forward to providing any assistance you may need pleasant and productive one. This information to assist you in obtaining your visa and general information about SIUE and the city of Edwardsville. Helpful suggestions on preparing for your trip to the United States are also included.

What is the ISS?

The International Services Office, or ISS, is responsible for issuing visa documents and advising students on all immigration matters. It serves as an information resource to assist internationals in adjusting to the United States, the University and the St. Louis metro community.

The ISS interacts with departments throughout SIUE to advocate for and address the various needs of internationals. ISS is the University's official liaison with the Department of State, foreign and American consulates and embassies, and the Department of Homeland Security for student issues. This Office administers the F-1 Student and J-1 Exchange Visitor Programs, under specific government regulations through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

While the ISS has official responsibilities delegated from and authorized by the federal government, it is not part of the Department of Homeland Security or any other government agency. Our staff is dedicated to the University's mission of assisting our

international students and exchange visitors to successfully achieve their academic goals in the U.S.; however, we must also follow federal regulations in order to continue to bring future international students and scholars to Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. We hope you will assist us in this goal by reading, understanding, and abiding by the rules and regulations that will govern your stay in the U.S. as an F or J visa holder.

How can I contact ISS?

Please email questions to iss@siue.edu or call (618) 650-3785 to make an appointment or speak with an advisor. Appointments are preferred, but you are always welcome to stop in during office hours as well.

Where is the ISS?

We are located in the Student Success Center, Room 0300 and open Monday through Friday 8:00 am – 4:30 pm. Our mailing address is:

International Student Services
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
P.O. Box 1616
Edwardsville, IL 62026-1616
Phone: (618) 650-3785
Fax: (618) 650-5099
Email: iss@siue.edu
<http://www.siue.edu/iss>

Cancellations

If you decide NOT to attend Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, please notify ISS and return the I-20 or DS-2019 indicating your cancellation details to the mailing address listed above.

Certificate of Eligibility Document Information:

The document included with this packet is the Certificate of Eligibility needed to apply for a U.S. student visa (I-20 for the F-1 Visa or DS-2019 for the J-1 Visa).

Dependents

Previously requested documentation for any dependents should also be included with your packet. Each dependent will need his or her own I-20 or DS-2019 and will have to apply for the corresponding visa category (F-1 students will have F-2 dependents; J-1 students will have J-2 dependents).

What is SEVIS?

Every international student admitted to colleges and universities in the U.S. must be enrolled in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), the mechanism employed by the U.S. government to track the arrival, enrollment and departures of international students and their dependents. SEVIS is an internet-based system that requires schools and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to exchange data on the immigration and academic status of international students and their dependents. Information pertaining to an F-1 or J-1 student or dependent's stay in the United States is available to U.S. embassies and consulates as well as to the inspectors at the ports of entry to the U.S. and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

SEVIS Documentation

By the time students receive the I-20 or DS-2019; their information will be in SEVIS. Please review the items listed on this document to ensure that your personal information was entered accurately. The information listed on the I-20 or DS-2019 is shown exactly as they are reported to SEVIS. If you discover an error, please notify the ISS immediately! Any errors should be reported and addressed before you visit your local U.S. consulate. Please note that the name on the I-20 or DS-2019 must match the passport, visa, and I-94 card exactly, and cannot be changed to reflect a preferred alternative name or spelling.

After arriving in Edwardsville, there will be additional SEVIS reporting requirements, which both the student and the University will be responsible for monitoring. Thus, it is essential that all international students report to the ISS for Orientation which is held the week before classes begin. For more information, please visit our website: http://www.siu.edu/iss/admitted/Orientation_Schedule.shtml

What is the SEVIS Fee?

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security requires a \$200 for F-1 and \$180 for J-1 SEVIS Fee payment and completed Form I-901 for each new F-1 or J-1 student prior to a visa interview or travel to the U.S. Generally, this fee is for all new applicants, who must show proof of payment with their visa application. Full details and exceptions to this requirement are listed in the Form I-901 instruction sheet at the back of this booklet. We have summarized some of the specifications below.

Who has to pay the Fee?

- All initial F-1 and J-1 students (see line 3 of the I-20 for 'Initial Attendance' or 'Begin New Program' on the DS-2019).
- Individuals exempt from visas, such as Canadians, are required to pay prior to crossing the border.
- Individuals applying for a Change of Status to F-1 or J-1 student in the U.S. must also pay prior to submitting their application.
- You must pay if you have a valid F-1 visa in your passport, are no longer enrolled in school, and you have been outside the U.S. for more than five months.
- You do not need to pay if item 3 on your SIUE I-20 states, "transfer pending from <name of school>", even if you will be applying for a new F-1 visa.
- The SEVIS Fee is not required for F or J dependents.

Can someone else pay the Fee for me?

Yes. You may have a relative or friend pay the fee on your behalf. If someone else fills out the Form I-901 for you, be sure they have a copy of your Form I-20/DS-2019. Whoever fills out the I-901 Form will need your personal information exactly as it appears on your I-20 or DS-2019.

How can the Fee be paid?

1. Electronically by completing Form I-901 through the Internet and using a credit card.

Recommended method

2. By mail using Form I-901 together with a check or money order drawn on a U.S. bank and payable in U.S. dollars.

3. Through Western Union Terminals.

The requirement that a check or money order be drawn on a U.S. bank does not necessarily mean that an applicant living abroad must approach a United States bank to make a payment. Many foreign banks are able to issue checks or money orders drawn on a U.S. bank. Accordingly, payment may be made with checks from banks chartered or operated in the U.S., from foreign subsidiaries of U.S. banks, or from foreign banks that have an arrangement with a U.S. bank to issue a check, money order, or foreign draft that is drawn on a U.S. bank.

What are the steps to paying the Fee?

1. Obtain I-20 or DS-2019 from SIUE.

2. Access Form I-901 online at <http://www.FMJfee.com>.

3. Complete Form I-901, answering all questions. Be sure to enter your personal information EXACTLY as it appears on your I-20 or DS-2019. The SEVIS ID number will begin with 'N' and the School Code for Southern Illinois University is CHI214F10600000.

4. Pay fee online or by mail. Pay the fee online at least three days prior to travel. However, if you are paying by mail, send the I-901 as indicated on the form as soon as possible.

The SEVIS Fee must be paid and fully processed before you arrive at the consulate for your visa interview. A receipt will be sent by mail to the address that you indicate with your payment. Further, for those that pay the SEVIS Fee on-line, a payment confirmation can be printed out immediately after the payment is made, and used as a receipt until the mailed receipt I-797, is received. Applicants are required to bring a SEVIS Fee payment receipt with them to the visa interview. Having a receipt for the SEVIS Fee payment will facilitate the visa application process. However, if you are unable to print a receipt from an on-line payment and/or do not receive your mailed receipt (I-797) in time for your visa interview, you can still go to your interview as long as your Fee has been processed.

Canadian Citizens: Nonimmigrants who are exempt from a visa must pay the Fee and have it processed before applying for entry at a U.S. port of entry. Be sure to pay it and print the receipt at least three days prior to travel.

For more detailed information see the I-901 section of the U.S. Customs and Immigration website, <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/>.

Obtaining Your U.S. Visa



Having received your I-20 or DS-2019 from SIUE, you will need to make an appointment with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate in your home country to complete a visa application as soon as possible. A valid visa serves as an admission ticket and will allow you to enter the United States at an appropriate port of entry. For a list of U.S. embassies and consulate offices worldwide, along with

links to directions, application forms, hours, fees, etc., please see the U.S. Dept of State Consulate listing at <http://usembassy.state.gov/>.

All applicants must provide the following information when applying for a visa:

- A Form I-20 or DS-2019, obtained from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Be sure to sign the document in blue ink, directly below the school officer's signature.
- Application Forms DS-156 and DS-158, plus a passport-sized photograph. Some applicants will also be required to complete Form DS-157.
- A passport valid for at least six months after the start date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019.
- Proof of financial support, as listed on the I-20 or DS-2019. These documents should match the funds listed in both amounts and sources.
- Original letter of admission to Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.
- Proof of ties to your home country. See section on visa application tips for more information.
- Transcripts and diplomas from any previous institutions attended.
- Scores from standardized tests required by the university (i.e. TOEFL, SAT, GRE, GMAT, etc.).
- Visa processing fee (currently \$200 for F-1 and \$100 for J-1).
- SEVIS Fee payment confirmation and/or I-797 receipt.

Applicants with dependents must also provide:

- Dependent I-20 or DS-2019 and appropriate application forms.
- Proof of the student's relationship to dependent (e.g., marriage or birth certificate).
- Proof of funding to support your dependent in the U.S.

- Check with your local consular office for other visa application requirements.

Interview Requirements

F-1 and J-1 visa applicants are also required to complete a personal interview with a consular officer (applications may no longer be submitted through the mail). Please be aware that such interviews are now required for almost all non-immigrant visa applications. As a result, many consulates are experiencing a high demand for such interviews and scheduling is often difficult. We recommend that you contact the embassy or consulate early to request an appointment, with plenty of time to process the application and receive the visa before you plan to travel. Please see tips offered later in this booklet for further advice on this process.

Prepare for the Personal Interview

- Dress professionally.
- Bring translated copies of your academic records and be prepared to talk about your academic plans in detail.
- Be prepared to speak about your future career goals and how a U.S. degree is important in meeting those career and personal goals. Keep in mind that these should be consistent with ties to your home country and with your intent to return home.
- Be knowledgeable about Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, about your academic department, and about your chosen field of study.
- Have all documents organized. You have a very short time to make the best possible impression on the consular officer.
- Before you leave the interview, make sure the consular officer returns all of your original academic and funding documents.

English

Anticipate that the visa interview will be conducted in English, not in your native language. It may be helpful to practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview, but do not prepare a speech. It is also important that you speak on your own behalf; the consular officer wants to interview you, not a family member.

Academics

Be familiar with the academic program to which you have been admitted and how it fits into your career plans. You should be able to explain how studying in the U.S. relates to your future professional career, focusing on how you will use those skills when you return home.

Be brief: Consular officers are under considerable pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview, since there are so many applicants to be seen. In general, they can allow for only 2 to 3 minutes per interview and must make a decision during that time. As a result, the initial impression you create is very important, so be sure to keep your answers short and specific.

Supporting Documentation

It should be clear, at a glance, to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated, especially during such a short interview. Remember to bring original versions of all supporting documents, if available, with you to the appointment.

Not All Countries are the same

Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the U.S. as immigrants often have more difficulty getting visas. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities at home after their study in the U.S.

Employment

Your main purpose for coming to the U.S. is to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While many students may work part-time during their studies, such employment is incidental to the main purpose of completing their U.S. education. You must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your program. If your spouse is also applying for an accompanying F-2 visa, be aware that F-2 dependents cannot, under any circumstances, be employed in the U.S. If asked, be prepared to address what your spouse intends to do with his or her time while in the U.S. Volunteer work and taking a class for recreational study are permitted activities. F-2 spouses are NOT allowed to begin a program of study or take classes that count towards a program of study.

Dependents remaining at home

If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your country, be prepared to address how they will be supported in your absence. If the consular officer gains the impression that your family members will need you to remit money from the U.S. in order to support them, your student visa will almost certainly be denied. If your family does decide to join you at a later time, it is helpful to have them apply at the same post where you applied for your visa. Please note: Indicating that your spouse will remain at home while you study in the U.S. is not likely to convince the consulate that you do not intend to immigrate. Other evidence will be needed.

Maintain a positive attitude

Do not engage the consular official in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal, and obtain in writing an explanation of the reason you were denied.

International Students Already in the U.S.

Some students may already be in the U.S. either as a student or under a different visa program. In order to begin studies, you must determine if your current immigration status will need to be transferred or changed to allow you to be a fulltime student at Southern

Illinois University Edwardsville. Please see descriptions of the two categories below and contact the ISS with any questions.

Change of Status

Since F-2 dependents and B-2 visitors are not permitted to enroll as a full-time student or take any coursework towards a degree, they should not plan on beginning their studies at SIUE until they have successfully changed to F-1 or J-1 status. Students in visa categories other than F-1 or J-1 are advised to contact the ISS to determine whether they are eligible to begin their studies.

Immigration Transfers

Students currently attending another U.S. institution in valid F-1 or J-1 immigration status who wish to study at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville are considered immigration transfer students, regardless of whether they will also transfer academic credits into their SIUE program. These individuals are responsible for maintaining their immigration status during the transition period between schools.

All transfer students are required to present all immigration documents at orientation the week before classes are scheduled to start. At this time, your transfer will be completed through SEVIS and an updated I-20 or DS-2019 will be issued. Failure to fulfill this requirement in a timely fashion may cause problems when traveling or registering for your

first semester. You must arrive in Edwardsville and complete your transfer within 5 months from the end of your previous program. The end of your previous program is determined by either the completion date of your degree or the SEVIS release date from the old school, whichever is earlier.

Once a student's SEVIS record is transferred and the appropriate Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019) has been issued, the student must then report any information changes (such as a change of address) to the ISS office at SIUE.

Please note that if you will be outside of the U.S. for more than five months or there is a

five month time period between the end of your program at the previous school and the start of your program at SIUE, you will not be regarded as an Immigration Transfer Student. You will need to follow procedures as a new international student, including obtaining a new visa.



Canadian students do not need a visa to enter the U.S., but you will be asked to present appropriate documents at the U.S./Canadian border. Students should present a valid passport or other proof of Canadian citizenship, proof of admission to Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, the SIUE I-20 or DS-2019, proof of financial support and SEVIS Fee receipt (I-797) or payment confirmation. It is essential that you enter the U.S. in the appropriate status, so be sure to have complete documentation with you. Upon entry, you will be issued an I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record) indicating F-1 or J-1 status. NOTE: Landed Immigrants in Canada from former British Commonwealth Countries are required to obtain a U.S. visa. Please check with a U.S. consulate in Canada to determine if you are subject to this requirement.

Visa Application Decisions

Approvals

After successfully meeting the requirements outlined, your application for a student visa should be approved by the interviewing consular official. The appropriate visa stamp (F-1 or J-1) will be placed on a page in your passport. It may take the consulate a few days to

process the approval and return the updated passport to you. Due to current government regulations, if your application is approved before your academic program is scheduled to begin, you will not receive the visa stamp more than 120 days before the start date listed on your Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019).

Delays

Students from certain countries or those majoring in “sensitive areas of study” as determined by the U.S. government may be required to undergo a security clearance

before the visa can be issued. Such clearances can add weeks, or even months, to the amount of time needed for visa approval – please plan accordingly. If you become subject to this requirement and your visa application is delayed due to further security review, please notify the ISS as soon as possible.

If your record does not appear in the SEVIS system at the U.S. consulate or embassy even though you have presented your SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019, please contact the ISS immediately, by email to: iss@siue.edu. Please include the date and location of your initial visa interview. We will notify SEVIS to resubmit this information directly to your local consulate.

Denials

If the interviewing officer does not feel that you have shown sufficient evidence to warrant a student visa to the U.S., a denial will be issued. Before leaving the interview, request a written explanation for the denial from the consular officer. Please notify the ISS right away and, if possible, fax a copy of the denial notice to the ISS at (618)650-5099. You will need to decide whether you will attempt to apply again.

The most common reason for a visa denial is a failure to prove “non-immigrant” intent to the consular officer. During the interview you must present evidence that you do not intend to abandon your home country, and that you have significant economic, professional, and personal ties that will bring you home once your program is completed. Please read through the Tips to Remember section of this booklet for more guidance.

If you choose to reapply, you will need to provide new information or documents when you submit the application. The consulate will not reconsider your case if additional materials are not available for review. Depending on the timing of a second interview, you may need an updated I-20 or DS-2019 as well. Be sure to check with the ISS.

If your student visa is denied and you will not be using your SIUE I-20 or DS-2019, please return it to the ISS office with an explanation letter.

Traveling outside the U.S. before attending SIUE:

Immigration transfer students may decide to travel outside the U.S. between academic programs. If you will be out of the U.S. for five months or more, you will have to apply for a new visa with a new I-20 or DS-2019. If you will be out of the U.S. for less than five months, and you have the opportunity to complete your transfer with ISS before leaving, please do so. You will then be able to travel with your updated I-20 or DS-2019. Following proper exit procedures when leaving the country will make your return much easier.

If your current visa stamp has expired or will expire before you return, you will need to apply for a visa renewal, usually in your home country, before you are permitted to re-enter the U.S. It is recommended that you schedule your visa appointment as early as possible, to reduce the impact of processing delays. You must still present all relevant documents and fulfill the interview requirement before a renewal can be granted. If you are subject to security clearance, the consulate may also require that you be cleared again before the visa is issued, especially if your academic program has changed dramatically.

If you have been out of the U.S. for less than five months your current visa stamp, listing a previous school, will still be valid when you travel to SIUE. You may reenter the U.S. on a valid visa listing your old school by simply presenting your new SIUE I-20 or DS-2019 to the immigration inspector at the port of entry. Do not attempt to enter the U.S. using the I-20 from a previous program. You must still be prepared to show additional documentation, such as proof of financial support, if asked.



Travel Arrangements

Once your visa has been approved, you will need to coordinate your trip to the U.S. You are expected to arrive in Edwardsville no later than the start date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019. For students wishing to travel earlier, you will only be permitted to enter the country up to 30 days before that date. Please keep this in mind when booking your flight and making other arrangements.

You should make reservations and buy your airline tickets as early as possible. It is recommended that you plan to fly to Lambert-St. Louis International Airport.

We recommend that you plan to arrive in Edwardsville the weekend before orientation to give you time to adjust to your new home and take care of housing, insurance, and registration. Keep in mind that university offices are generally open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm and are closed on weekends (Saturday and Sunday). If you are arriving for the spring semester (starting in January), please note that the university usually closes for a winter break each year between December 25 and the beginning of January. University offices, such as the International Programs, Health Services, and Housing are closed during this period.

Documentation

It is essential that you have the appropriate documents with you when you enter the country. As a safety precaution, please carry these items with you when you travel, not in your checked baggage. It is best to bring original versions of these documents, whenever possible.

Required Immigration Documents:

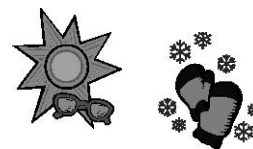
(You must be prepared to show these documents at the U.S. border):

- Original SIUE I-20 or DS-2019;
- Valid passport with appropriate visa stamp;
- Letter of Admission from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville;
- Proof of financial support which matches or exceeds the figures listed on your I-20 or DS-2019;
- SEVIS Fee receipt confirmation either printed from online or the mailed I-797 Form;
- Appropriate documents for all dependents: passport, visa stamp, I-20 or DS-2019, proof of relationship (proof of marriage for a spouse; birth certificates for all children);
- Note: your I-94 Admission Card will be completed and issued upon your arrival to the U.S.

Other Useful Documents to Bring:

- This Brochure!
- English translations of personal medical records, for yourself and any dependents;
- International driver's license or certified English translation of your valid license (if you plan to drive in the U.S.);
- Evidence of adequate health insurance coverage, if you are currently covered.

Packing for Edwardsville Weather



Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is located in the heartland of the Midwest, approximately 20 miles from St. Louis, Missouri. The land rolls gently due to the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers softening into the flatlands of Illinois plains. The University's close proximity to St. Louis gives the student access to all the amenities of a large city (2.2 million people) with the peace of a country campus (2,600 acres of campus land). The climate in this area varies widely. There are four distinct seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter. Winter temperatures average approximately 32 degrees Fahrenheit (0 degrees Celsius), and summer temperatures average 80 degrees Fahrenheit (26.6 degrees Celsius). The coldest months are December through February. The warmest periods are July through August. During the coldest months, you will need a warm, heavy coat (preferably resistant to wind and water), waterproof shoes and gloves. You can purchase these items here if you prefer not to transport them from overseas. Additionally, it is worth noting that most American students generally wear informal and comfortable clothing in the classroom (such as: jeans, t-shirts, sneakers, etc.)

Tips for Airline Travel

- Always hand-carry your passport, other important documents, money and travelers checks.
- You should plan to carry a small flight bag with medications you may need, valuable belongings, a change of clothing, and any essential personal

hygiene items. You should not pack these items in your checked baggage, just in case your baggage is lost or misdirected during your flight.

- Be careful at airports – do not leave your bags unattended or with strangers!
- Carry some U.S. currency with you when you travel. You may need to make a telephone call, purchase a meal, pay for taxi fare, or rent a baggage trolley when you arrive.
- Expect the unexpected. Check in for all flights well in advance of your scheduled departure time.
- When checking baggage internationally, be aware that you must personally reclaim your luggage and carry it through customs upon arrival in the U.S.

Shipping

You may opt to ship items from your home country, rather than bringing them with you when you travel. We suggest that you coordinate delivery with ISS or have someone ship these items after you arrive and have a specific shipping address.

Financial Support

Please keep in mind that you will need immediate access to U.S. funds as you get settled in Edwardsville. The actual amount a student needs will vary greatly. Relevant factors include whether he or she will live in campus housing, have access to a University dining plan, bring dependents, have a need to purchase furniture or transportation, etc.



Arriving in the U.S. *What to Expect*

When you first arrive in the U.S., you will have to perform specific inspection procedures at the port of entry. You will be permitted to enter the U.S. no more than 30 days prior to the program start date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019.

At your port of entry, an Immigration Officer will ask to examine your travel documents (passport, visa, I-20 or DS-2019, financial documents, etc.) and will then determine whether you are permitted to enter the country and for what period of time. This indication will be made on your I-94 card. You will need to obtain clearance from a U.S. Customs Officer, who may or may not perform an inspection of your personal belongings when you arrive. You may also be required to have your photograph taken and/or your fingerprints scanned, in accordance with the recently implemented US-VISIT system. For further information on these regulations, you may visit the website for U.S. Customs and Border Protection at: www.customs.gov.

Do not attempt to enter the U.S. on a visitor/tourist visa (B-2) or under a visa waiver program. A change of status from B-2 to F-1 in the U.S. is rarely approved, requires a “Prospective Student” notation on the B-2, and takes several months, during which time you will be in violation of your visitor status if you begin classes. A change of status under a visa waiver is not a possibility.

Special Registration

In addition to registering with the US-VISIT system at the port of entry, some non-immigrants may be required to undergo further registration through a program called Special Registration, based on a variety of factors including country of citizenship or birth. If you are subject to Special Registration, you will be given instructions on a special departure procedure you must follow, and your I-94 card will be notated with a "FIN Number." Please notify the ISS upon your arrival if you believe you have been registered under this program.

Form I-94: Arrival/Departure Record

Departure Number	(Stamped at Port of Entry)	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1	U.S. IMMIGRATION	
_____	(Port of Entry)	
Immigration and Naturalization Service	ADMITTED	
I-94	(Date of Entry)	
Departure Record	Class	F-1
	Until	D/S
14. Family Name		

15. First (Given) Name		16. Birth Date (Day/Mo/Yr)
_____		_____
17. Country of Citizenship		

SAMPLE		

Form I-94 is a white card, usually distributed on the airplane before landing, or at ports of entry on the ground, and filled out by individual passengers. Immigration officers at the U.S. ports of entry may print an I-94 card for arriving non-immigrants, or have you fill out I-94 cards on the plane prior to entry. If you have shown all the necessary documents, your I-94 should be stamped with a classification of “F-1” or “J-1” (depending on your visa type) and the code “D/S”, for Duration of Status. The I-94 card will also have an immigration stamp and two dates on the bottom: the date the person last entered the U.S. through US-VISIT, and the date after which the person will have to go through US-VISIT again. Be sure to check your I-94 card immediately for accuracy! It is much easier to make the necessary corrections upon arrival at your port of entry.

Arrival at SIUE

Arrival Confirmation and Assistance

The Office of International Student Services may arrange to pick students up at the airport, transport them to campus, and arrange temporary housing (for 1 to 3 days when available), provided we have received 72 hours advance notice.

If you are planning on attending SIUE, please notify us online.

<http://www.siu.edu/iss/arrival.shtml>

If you miss your plane or are delayed, please contact our office at 1-618-650-3785. We check our messages frequently.

Mandatory ISS Check-In

All international students must report to the ISS within one week of their arrival in St. Louis. The ISS is required by federal immigration law to report your arrival at SIUE, and verify your non-immigrant status through the SEVIS program. To complete this mandatory check-in, please bring your passport, I-20 or DS-2019, and all other immigration documents to the ISS in Student Success Center, Room0300. Check-In will also be provided at your International Orientation Program the week before classes start.

Please visit our website for orientation dates:

http://www.siu.edu/iss/admitted/arrival_dates.shtml.

International Student Orientation Program

The orientation programs offered by the ISS are designed to provide essential information on maintaining your valid F-1 or J-1 non-immigrant status and are considered mandatory throughout all University divisions. We will also give details about programs and services offered by the ISS and other University offices. It is our hope to assist you in adjusting to life in the United States and to Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

Orientation topics include: immigration and tax information, SEVIS requirements, employment on and off campus, health care in the U.S., the American classroom, cultural adjustment, safety concerns, banking, transportation on and off campus, obtaining an Illinois driver's license, library and campus tours, and local shopping options. In some instances, representatives from the U.S. Social Security Administration will also be available during orientation.

Food

University Housing provides a well-equipped kitchen in each Cougar Village apartment.

You may desire to bring some favorite spices and dried foods for cooking. In addition, University Food Service provides several meal plans for students who do not wish to cook.

Student Organizations

If you wish to get in touch with current SIUE international students before your arrival, you may obtain contact information at http://www.siue.edu/iss/student_orgs.shtml or send email to iss@siue.edu.

Temporary Housing

The official check-in period for University Housing does not begin until the weekend before classes begin. Therefore, international students may need alternative housing during orientation week. If available, temporary housing will be provided in University Housing at \$14.00 per day for the week of orientation only. When all temporary housing is filled, students may need to stay in a local hotel or with other students.

Securing Permanent Housing

To apply for on-campus housing, students should begin the housing application process as soon as they are accepted to the University. You can apply for on-campus housing before you have been accepted to SIUE. However, you must be admitted and accepted by the University to be assigned a space. Since SIUE is three miles from the city of Edwardsville, off-campus housing is not convenient without an automobile. University housing is usually filled two months prior to each academic term; therefore, it is important to apply as soon as possible. <http://www.siue.edu/housing>

The University Cougar Village Apartments are open the entire year. The University residence halls close for three weeks in December and a week in the Spring term. Students who live in the residence halls must find alternative housing during these periods.

An off-campus housing list is provided at the University Housing website for persons interested in seeking residence off-campus. <http://www.siue.edu/housing>

Payment of Tuition and Fees

All international students are assessed non-resident tuition and fees. This is payable at the time of registration, or a student may choose the installment payment plan. Sponsored students, whose tuition and fees will be paid by a sponsoring agency, must have a statement from the sponsor authorizing the University to bill the sponsor. All international students are charged a one-time only service fee of \$60.00 their first semester at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

Health Care in the U.S.

Health care services offered in the U.S. are of very good quality, but are extremely expensive. The United States does not provide socialized medical care, nor is there a national system of health insurance coverage. Rather, individuals must obtain health care coverage for themselves and their families through non-government providers. Purchasing mandatory health insurance in the U.S. can drastically reduce health care costs if you or your family members need medical care. The specific benefits you are entitled to will depend on your insurance policy, but many plans often include full or partial coverage for diagnostic laboratory tests, hospitalization, emergency services, and prescription medications. Without health insurance, these services can cost thousands of dollars.

SIUE Student Health Plan

Under the Student Health Plan, all full-time students at SIUE are required to pay the mandatory health fee and to have health insurance coverage for the duration of their academic program. Health Services provide health care services for all full-time students. For more information, please visit the Health Services website:

<http://www.siue.edu/healthservice/international.shtml>

Graduate Assistants

Graduate Assistantships include a waiver of tuition costs and a monthly salary. Graduate assistants must pay the fees, amounting to approximately \$400 per semester. Graduate assistants may not receive their first paycheck for four to six weeks after beginning their

job. All subsequent paychecks will be received monthly. Therefore, Graduate Assistants must have enough money (\$3,000) to cover expenses for six weeks. Expenses will include food, housing, health insurance, fees, books, supplies, and general living expenses.

Employment Options

F-1 visa holders: Students may work on campus up to 20 hours per week during the semester and full-time (40 hours) during vacation periods. Applications for off-campus employment may be made after completion of one academic year (9 months) in F-1 status. F-2 spouses are not allowed to accept employment on or off campus.

J-1 visa holders: Students may work on campus up to 20 hours per week during the semester.

Working without authorization is a severe violation of your status and is a deportable offense. The ISS will provide information on what types of work options are available in the U.S. while you are in student status and will assist you in applying for the authorizations you will need to work.

U.S. Social Security Numbers

Recent changes made by the U.S. Social Security Administration require students in F-1 status to have proof of employment to apply for a Social Security Number (SSN). If you are a student who has been awarded a graduate assistantship or award, you should apply for a SSN at Orientation. For all other students, you may only apply for a SSN once you have obtained on-campus employment. The ISS will assist all students, who have an on-campus job or job offer letter, to obtain a SSN by providing application forms and eligibility letters.

PRE-ARRIVAL CHECKLISTS

The checklists below provide a brief list of important steps to take before and after your arrival in the U.S. and Edwardsville, Illinois.

STEP ONE: GETTING YOUR VISA

- Create a folder for your important documents and keep it in a safe location.
- Review the immigration document(s) enclosed with this brochure (I-20 or DS2019) for mistakes or incorrect information.
- Pay the required Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) fee of \$200 for F-1 and \$180 for J-1.
- Pay the visa application fee.
- Schedule a visa appointment with the United States Embassy or Consulate in your home country.
- Make sure your passport is updated and valid for at least 6 months after your entry into the U.S.
- Get photographs taken for visa application. The photo requirements are at http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/info/info_1287.html
- Verify that all information on your new visa is correct and matches your passport information and immigration document (I-20 or DS-2019).
- Make sure the visa indicates the correct classification (i.e., F-1 or J-1). Students who received an I-20 need an F-1 visa and students who receive a DS-2019 need a J-1 visa.

STEP TWO: TRAVELING TO THE U.S.

- Make travel arrangements to St. Louis, Missouri. Plan to arrive the weekend before the orientation begins.
- Arrange for housing before you arrive in Edwardsville, if possible.
- Bring the following items with you:
 Passport with valid U.S. visa;
 All documents related to your visa application
 (e.g., I-20, financial documents, acceptance letters, etc.);
- Medical records, including proof of required immunizations, and information regarding any medications you are carrying;
- Enough money to cover initial expenses (e.g., health insurance, rent and housing deposits, etc.); and
- Marriage certificate for dependent spouse and/or birth certificates for dependent children, with an English translation.

STEP THREE: ARRIVING IN EDWARDSVILLE

- Check in at the International Programs Office, bringing all required documents:
 I-20 or DS-2019
 Your passport with visa inside
 I-94 (Arrival/Departure) card (received at Port of Entry)
 U.S. Address Information (Temporary or Permanent)
 Attend the ISS Mandatory Orientation

Need Additional Help or Information?

Please contact ISS and our staff will try to answer your questions or refer you to the appropriate person to help you. We look forward to meeting you in person.

Contact Information:
 International Student Services
 Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
 Student Success Center, Room 0300
 P.O. Box 1616
 Edwardsville, IL 62026-1616
 Phone: (618) 650-3785
 Fax: (618) 650-5099
 E-mail: iss@siue.edu
 Emergency Assistance Phone Number:
 University Police: (618) 650-3324

** International Student Arrival Dates **			
Semester	Ideal Arrival Date	Orientation Week	Classes Begin
Spring 2010	Dec. 28 – Jan. 3, 2010	January 4-8, 2010	January 11, 2010
Summer 2010	May 17 - 19, 2010	May 20 - 21, 2010	May 24, 2010
Fall 2010	August 9 - 15, 2010	August 16 - 20, 2010	August 23, 2010