



Welcome to St. Thomas University

To better prepare your arrival at St. Thomas University (STU), you should do a few things before departure from your home country or your current country of residence.

Please read the following information carefully before you travel to the United States.

1. **Before you arrive in the U.S.**
2. **Arrival in the U.S.**
3. **Arrival at St. Thomas University**
4. **Immigration Regulations**

1. **Before you arrive in the U.S.**

Pay the SEVIS I-901 Fee and obtain a receipt.

F-1 students are required to pay a SEVIS fee directly to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) by completing the Form I-901 online www.fmjfee.com or by mail. To get your student visa, you must present proof of your I-901 SEVIS fee payment at your visa interview.

A prospective F student with a country of citizenship or country of birth of Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria or Gambia or a student from any country who is unable to pay with a credit card, must pay by money order, Western Union Quick Pay or certified check drawn from a U.S. bank <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/paying-the-i-901-sevis-fee>

The SEVIS fee should be processed by DHS at least 3 business days before your consular interview. You will not be able to pay the SEVIS fee at the consulate.

Students who do not require a visa to enter the U.S (e.g. Canadian), are still required to pay the SEVIS fee. The SEVIS fee should be processed at least 3 business days before applying for admission at a U.S. port-of-entry.

Note: DHS will not refund the SEVIS fee if you are not granted a visa or choose not to come to the U.S. after your visa is granted.

Obtain a Student Visa

The following steps are a guideline for obtaining an F-1 visa.

- Schedule a visa appointment at a U.S. embassy or consulate to apply for an F-1 visa. Student visas can be issued up to 120 days in advance of your course of study start date. However, you will not be allowed to enter the United States earlier than 30 days before

STU International Student & Scholar Services: Pre Arrival Information

your start date. Visit the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs to locate the U.S. or Consulate in your country <https://www.usembassy.gov/>

- Gather the required documentation:
 - Passport (must be valid at least 6 months into the future)
 - Form I-20
 - Printed SEVIS fee payment receipt from the Internet or wait to receive the form I-797 receipt from DHS via mail, and submit the receipt with your visa application.
 - Letter of Admission to STU
 - Verification of financial support for at least one academic year. This could be in the form of a bank statement(s), scholarship, assistantship, etc.
 - Nonimmigrant visa application, DS-160
 - One or more passport photographs less than six months old

Note: U.S. consulates in some countries require more documents than the above mentioned. Please visit the U.S. consulate official webpage of your country to find out more information about obtaining an F-1 visa.

DO NOT ENTER THE U.S. IN B-1/B-2 STATUS: B-1/B-2 (tourist) visa holders and those who have entered in a visa waiver are prohibited from enrolling in academic courses.

Canadian Citizens: Canadian citizens are eligible to enter the U.S. without obtaining an entry visa in their passport. However, Canadian citizens must obtain and I-20 and pay the SEVIS fee before entering the U.S. Upon entry, you must present to the US Customs and Border Protection officer your passport, I-20, proof of financial support for at least one year, your admission letter and receipt of SEVIS fee payment.

Dependents: Your spouse and children under age 21 are eligible to accompany you to the United States with a dependent visa (F-2). You must request a dependent I-20 when submitting your application form to the Office of Admissions. Dependents are not required to pay the SEVIS fee.

Consular Interview: In order to obtain an F-1 visa you need to have a face-to-face interview with a U.S. consular officer at the U.S Consulate in your country. During the interview, **you must establish that you do not intend to immigrate** to the U.S. and that you have a residence in a country outside the U.S. to which you will return.

Reserve Housing

Thank you for your interest in Residence Life & Housing. To reserve Housing, please go ahead and pay a \$250 housing deposit online immediately at the following link: <https://go.stu.edu/pay>. Once you complete the online deposit fee, an email will be sent to you with additional information about how to complete the Housing application.

Plan your expenses and payment of tuition

Expenses: As a student at St. Thomas University, you are responsible for supplying the amount of money indicated on your financial certification form and your I-20 form. Currently, state and federal aid resources are not available for international students.

A current estimate of expenses for at least one school year should be listed on the financial certification form and on your I-20 sent by the Office of Admissions.

Make sure that you bring funds to cover immediate costs of purchasing health insurance (see the medical requirements section), housing deposit or first month's room and board costs if you plan to live off campus, and your first semester's tuition costs. We suggest that you prepare the amount of money indicated for initial costs (between \$1150 and \$2100 depending on if you are living on or off campus) in a readily accessible form (cash, credit card, traveler's checks, etc.) Also, be prepared to bring some extra money to buy personal care items such as bed linens and towels.

Keep your money with you at all times. We do not recommend that you carry cash your luggage. For more information, please visit the Office of Admissions www.stu.edu/admissions or visit the St. Thomas University website www.stu.edu and follow the links to other academic divisions. For financial information, please visit www.stu.edu/financialaid.

Paying Tuition and Fees: For information regarding the payment of tuition and fees, and additional financial information, please visit www.stu.edu go to *Students* click on *Business Office/Financial Affairs* then scroll all the way down and click on *Make a Payment*.

Wiring Money to St. Thomas University: You may also pay by wire transfer through any full service bank in your area. Direct your wire transfer to; SunTrust/Miami, N.A. Corporate Cash Management, 777 Brickell Avenue, Miami FL 33131. ABA Number: 061000104 Account Number: 0189001210477 St. Thomas University 16401 NW 37 Avenue, Miami Gardens FL 33054, Phone: 305-628-6704. Please be sure to include your name, and/or ID number to assure credit to your student account. Please note: It is important that you include your name and your St. Thomas University identification number on the wire to ensure that your payment is processed.

Important Notice: If a wire is received for more than the amount owed, the excess payment will be credited to your next term tuition and fees and not refunded to you.

Take care of Medical Requirements

Health Insurance: Medical insurance is mandatory for all students at St. Thomas University. All international students are required to purchase the St. Thomas University Student Health Insurance Plan. For complete details of the plan benefits and enrollment, please visit: <http://aisstudentinsurance.com/stu-student-health-insurance-home/>

Immunizations: The University has instituted immunization policies following with National Health guidelines, in order to promote the well-being of our community. Be prepared to demonstrate your immunization history prior to the start of classes. All students who reside on campus must submit a completed medical form and updated immunization record before moving into the residence hall. Please check the Student Health Center webpage at <https://www.stu.edu/Students/Student-Affairs/Student-Health-Center/Insurance-and-Forms.html>. For more information, download the Guideline Summary for Immunizations available at: <https://www.stu.edu/Portals/students/Student%20Affairs/docs/immune-guide.pdf>



Prepare for Travel

Choose an Airport. There are two international airports close to St. Thomas University:

- Miami International Airport (<http://www.miami-airport.com>)
- Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (<http://www.fll.net>)

Choose your arrival date: You may not enter the United States more than 30 days before the start date on your I-20. In addition, if you intend to arrive after the start date on your I-20, you **must** notify the Office of International Office via email as soon as possible intlserv@stu.edu.

Carry important documents with you. When you arrive at the U.S. port of entry, you will be required to present the following documents to the Immigration Officer:

- Passport
- Student Visa (F1 Visa)
- STU I-20 Form

We recommend that you carry with you:

- Evidence of financial resources
- Copy of SEVIS I-901 Fee
- Letter of Admission to STU

Note: Make sure you carry these documents with you, not in your checked baggage.

2. Arrival in the U.S.



Inspection at a U.S. Port of Entry

You must present to the US Customs and Border Protection officer the following documents:

- Passport
- Student Visa (F1 Visa)
- STU I-20 Form

STU International Student & Scholar Services: Pre Arrival Information

You may be asked to show additional documents such as proof of financial support and a letter of admission to STU.

Arrange Transportation from the Airport to St. Thomas University

St. Thomas University is located 16 miles from Miami International Airport and 17 miles from Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport.

If you are in need of transportation from either the Miami International (MIA) or the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL) to St. Thomas University, please fill out the **Arrival Notification & Airport Pick-up Form**. Requests must be received 72 hours prior to arrival date.

<https://forms.stu.edu/Students/International-Students/Airport-Pick-Up>

The following transportation service is provided independently from St. Thomas University and must be arranged directly by the student:

Super Shuttle service is available from both airports to St. Thomas University. You may reserve and pay in advance online www.supershuttle.com

For airport-specific transportation please visit:

- Miami International Airport (MIA) http://www.miami-airport.com/hotel_shuttles.asp
- Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International (FLL)
<http://www.broward.org/airport/transportation/Pages/Default.aspx>

For maps and directions to STU go to: <http://www.stu.edu/About-STU/Map-Direction>

3. Arrival at St. Thomas University

Check in to your housing

For information on what to bring to STU and the official check-in schedule for the fall and spring semesters please go to: <https://www.stu.edu/Students/Housing/How-To-Apply.html>

Report with the International Admissions Officer

After you check in to your housing visit the Office of Admissions in Mimi Dooner Hall room #103. An Admissions Officer will welcome you and guide you to the process to meet with an Academic Advisor, complete your course registration and other administrative issues.

Check In with the International Student & Scholar Services Office (ISSS)

You must report at the International Student office after you have registered for classes. Office Hours: 9:00 am - 5:00pm Monday through Friday (closed weekends and holidays).

Located in the Student Center.

You must bring with you:

- Valid passport
- F-1 visa stamped into passport or proof of change of status within the U.S., i.e. a USCIS I-797 approval notice.
- STU I-20
- Form I-94 (accessible for print out at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/recent-search>)
- Proof of classes registration



Attend all required Student Orientations

New Student Orientation: for first-time international students and transfer students. To access the orientation program and information go to

<http://web.stu.edu/StudentLife/NewStudentOrientationInformation/tabid/1130/Default.aspx>

International Student Orientation: is required for new and transfer international students. This orientation covers immigration regulations and many topics that will help you familiarized with the campus and life in the United States. The date, time and location for this orientation can be found in the letter you have received from our office included in your admissions packet.

4. Immigration Regulations: Full-Time Requirement

All international students **MUST** register full-time or will fall out of immigration status and become ineligible for immigration benefits.

Register full-time for each academic semester as defined by USCIS. If summer is your first semester you will be required to register full-time.

- Undergraduate Students: 12 credits per semester
- Graduate/Doctorate Students: 6 credits per semester/term
- Law Students: 12 credits per semester

International Student & Scholar Services
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