Welcome to your new home

A guide for students preparing to join us at Baylor University International Study Center
Welcome to your new home

On behalf of President Linda A. Livingstone, it is my pleasure to offer you admission to Baylor University. My colleagues and I commend you on the academic accomplishments that have earned you a spot in the new class.

When you become a Baylor student you will join an academic community grounded in Christian faith and rich with a heritage that reaches back to our founding in 1845. Additionally, you’ll become part of the Baylor family, a worldwide network of Bears who share your college experience.

Your goBAYLOR account will continue to be a vital source of information and next steps until the day you set foot on campus. Please access your goBAYLOR account often at baylor.edu/gobaylor for more information on what is required of you.

If you have questions as you complete these next steps, please don’t hesitate to contact us. Congratulations!

Sincerely,

Jessica King Gereghty
Assistant Vice President of Undergraduate Admissions

Contact details
Cornell Menking PhD
Center Director,
Baylor University International Study Center,
One Bear Place #97012,
Waco, TX 76798-7056

Telephone number:
+1.254.710.7761

Emergency telephone number:
Center for Global Engagement
+1.254.710.1461

Useful websites:
baylor.edu/globalengagement/index.php?id=961443
facebook.com/BaylorISC
baylor.edu/gobaylor

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Obtaining Your U.S. Student Visa

Once you have been accepted in a program, provided the required financial documents and paid your deposit, Baylor will issue a Form I-20 from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). You can then apply for a visa to study in the U.S.

What are the steps to come to the U.S.?

1. Receive your I-20 from Baylor. Review it carefully.
2. Pay the SEVIS fee online at fmjfee.com.
3. Complete the form DS-160 to begin your visa process.
4. Schedule and prepare for your visa interview. You will need to gather several supporting documents.
5. Attend your visa interview at the U.S. Consulate or Embassy.
6. Wait for your F-1 entry visa. Contact the nearest U.S. Consulate or Embassy in your country for more information about the procedure for applying for a student visa.

What is a Visa?

A U.S. visa is a passport-sized sticker in your passport. It is used for entry into the U.S. and can only be obtained from a U.S. Embassy or Consulate outside the U.S. The visa indicates what status you have upon entry to the U.S., as well as the date of issuance and expiration (date by which you can use this visa for entry). After you enter the U.S., the visa is unimportant unless you leave and wish to re-enter. If you plan to travel outside the U.S., and your visa has expired, you should contact the ISS Office to obtain a new I-20 for use to apply for a new visa. Never write on or tamper with your visa sticker.

What Type of Visa Do I Need to Become an Academic Student in the U.S.?

Most non-US citizens who wish to study in the United States will seek an F-1 (non-immigrant) student visa, but there are other visa types that are sometimes authorized for those who study in the U.S. The F-1, or Student Visa, is the most common for those who wish to engage in academic studies in the United States. It is for people who want to study at an accredited USA university or to study English at a university or intensive English language institute.

What Do I Need to Know About Immigration Status?

All Baylor students who are neither citizens nor permanent residents of the United States are categorized as international students, regardless of their visa classification by the United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS), United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and Department of State.

It is the responsibility of each international student to become familiar with the regulations which apply to his/her visa status. Students should consult the International Student Services Office if questions or problems regarding immigration matters arise. U.S. immigration regulations bring great restrictions and consequences for non-immigrants who do not enter the U.S. in lawful status (illegal persons), and who do not maintain their lawful status. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that you enter the U.S. with the proper F-1 visa and documentation and remain in legal status for the duration of your time at Baylor. The various aspects of maintaining status are defined in the following sections.

Definition of Status: The conditions for receiving an F-1 visa once you enter the U.S. for F-1 students. D/S “duration of status” is marked on your passport. Status is maintained by following the rules for F-1 students.

U.S. Laws and Regulations: The U.S. Department of Homeland Security regulates the activities of non-immigrants in the U.S., including international students. One of the duties of the ISS Office is to advise international students on how to remain in compliance with immigration rules and regulations, that is, how to remain “in status”.

F-1 Student Status: The most common student immigration status, the F-1, is obtained based on a Form I-20 issued by the college or university upon admission. An F-1 student is admitted to the U.S. for attending a SPECIFIC school, and must take a full course load every semester (Fall and Spring); at least 12 credits per semester.

Immigrant or Permanent Resident: some students hold an immigrant status, technically referred to as a permanent resident. This status, indicated by the ownership of a “green card,” allows the person to remain in the country permanently and is the first step toward acquiring citizenship.

Are There Study Program Requirements for an F-1 Visa?

F-1 students must register for a minimum of 12 semester hours and they must be enrolled every semester that they are in the U.S. (Fall and Spring). F-1 students who have completed both a fall and spring semester consecutively at Baylor are eligible for a vacation, typically taken during the summer.

When Should I Apply for a Visa?

It is best to apply early for the visa to make sure that there is sufficient time for visa processing. We recommend that all students apply for their visa as soon as they have all the required documentation. Notify us directly once your visa status is known. Please tell your Student Enrollment Advisor when you have made an appointment, and notify them of the outcome of that appointment.

What is an I-94?

When you enter the U.S., an immigration inspector (CBP Officer) determines how long you may stay in the U.S. A paperless electronic Form I-94 is created by the CBP Officer when you are admitted by air or sea travel. You will be able to print out a paper copy later, if you need it, at https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/ request.html. If you enter the U.S. by land from Canada or Mexico, you will be issued a paper I-94, DO NOT LOSE IT.

What Should I Do When I Arrive at Baylor?

During the first two weeks after your arrival at Baylor, come to the ISS Office and bring with you your current passport, your passport with your F-1 visa (if different from your current passport), and your I-20. We will copy your documents and issue you a new I-20 that shows that you are an active student at Baylor. Afterwards, put your passport, I-20, and any other important documents in a safe place. Do not carry them with you unless you travel.

You must check-in with the DSO in person within the first 30 days of every semester you are enrolled.

Please visit: baylor.edu/globalengagement/index.php?id=962353 for more information
You can read the full visa guidance at: baylor.edu/globalengagement/index.php?id=962582
The standard U.S. current is 110 volts, 60 cycles alternating current (A.C.) Appliances running on 220 – 240 volts will not work in the U.S. If you plan to bring any electrical items, bring a voltage adaptor that converts into the U.S. voltage of 110 V and uses a U.S. electrical plug (www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets/).

These items may vary in cost, depending on what is needing for an adapter. We recommend, certain household items, such as a hair dryer, electric toothbrush and other items that need to be plugged in, be bought after you arrive. These items vary in price, starting around $25. For cell phones, tablets/iPads, and other handheld electronics, you are able to purchase a USB wall charger with multiple ports for as little as $15.

Note also that the U.S. uses 2 or 3-prong electrical plugs that might be different from your country.
Arriving in your country or city

Passport control, more top tips.

Getting to Waco Before Arrival Date
Baylor can come get you at the Waco Regional Airport (ACT) or bus station. But we have to know when you will arrive, so please go to the Arrival Information webpage about registering for transportation from the Waco Regional Airport or bus station. There is no pick-up from other airports, located in Texas, only Waco Regional Airport. If you arrive prior to the set date for move-in to dorms, you must plan to stay in a local hotel at your own expense.

Baylor offers pick-up service on the day of move-in from the following hotels:

- La Quinta Inn & Suites
  www.wyndhamhotels.com
  +1.254.796.2929; 911 South 10th Street
- Hotel Indigo
  www.ihg.com
  +1.254.754.7000; 211 Clay Avenue
- Courtyard by Marriott
  www.marriott.com
  +1.254.752.3388; 101 Washington Avenue

Please register to be picked up from your hotel at the link below:

baylor.edu/globalengagement/index.php?id=962255

On the morning of move-in day we will also provide transportation to campus from the designated hotels on the list. We will pick students up in the morning from one of the above hotels. You must be ready to leave by 8:00 am if you want Baylor to bring you to campus.

Sign-ups for transportation to Hotels from the Waco Regional Airport or Bus Station and then to Baylor campus on the report date will be sent to you from our International Study Center.

Arrival to Waco On the Arrival Date
On the arrival date we will have transportation from the Waco Regional Airport and Bus Station to the Baylor campus. Beginning in December, you will be able to arrange university transportation if you need a ride from the Waco Airport or Bus Station (we only pick-up from the Waco Regional Airport, not Dallas, Austin or Houston).

If you have questions, please contact your Center Staff at Global_Gateway@baylor.edu

For information about international passengers and luggage entering through U.S. Customs and Border Protection, visit www.cbp.gov.

Important Passport Information
Your passport is the basic international document which identifies you as a citizen of your country. The spelling of your name given in your passport should be used for all records while you are in the United States. The name spelling on your visa will be used on your I-20 record. If you need to extend the validity of your passport, contact your nearest consulate or embassy for instruction and procedures. ISS can provide you with a letter of recommendation stating that you are a registered student, if such a document is required by your government. Always keep a copy of your passport in a safe place, and use the copy to provide documentation if you send it in for renewal.

Life in Waco
Baylor is located in Waco, Texas, a mid-size city in Central Texas. Baylor attracts students from all 50 states and more than 89 countries and is centrally located to many of Texas’ largest cities.

Baylor is an hour and a half from Dallas/Fort Worth and Austin and about three hours from San Antonio and Houston. Baylor’s campus sits on 1,000 acres full of trees, green spaces and beautiful buildings. Our campus is also in walking distance of Cameron Park, a 416-acre park that is one of the largest municipal parks in the country. It’s beautiful cliffs and lush wooded areas sit on the Brazos River, the longest river in Texas.

Average Temperatures:
Annual High Temperatures: 77.7 °F / 25.5 °C
Annual Low Temperature: 55.3 °F / 13 °C
Average Temperature: 66.5 °F / 19.25 °C

Top Tip
Make sure to have all of your immunizations, 10 days prior to arrival. If you are unable to get your immunizations, you do risk being sent back to your home country, after arriving on campus.
Orientation and tips for settling in
What you can expect when you get here.

Welcome Weekend
Welcome Weekend is our office’s new International Student Orientation. A detailed schedule will be given to you when you arrive on-campus. Please note that there will be several required events on the schedule including the required Immigration Session.

When you arrive, you will be greeted by Dr. Cornell Menking, Center Director, the Student Success Managers, and the CGE Ambassadors who are current Baylor students, both U.S. and International, whose job is to welcome international students and scholars to campus, accompanying you on cultural trips, and help you during your time at Baylor.

Move-In
For those who will be living in Baylor housing, you may move in to your residence on the Arrival Date, between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm. (If you arrive after 5:00 pm, you will not be able to get your Student ID which is required for move in, so you will need to make hotel arrangements for that evening and move in the next day.)

If you receive an email saying that you have to move in on a later date, you may disregard that email. International students are permitted to move in earlier than other students.

Life at Baylor
Being a part of the Baylor family is far more than going to classes and meeting academic requirements. You can take part in more than 330 student organizations, including academic and professional clubs, traditional Greek sororities and fraternities, honor societies, musical groups, and religious and service organizations. On-campus resources such as campus events, dining halls, libraries, and classrooms are all within reach, making it easy to be involved in your Baylor community.

Baylor is the largest private institution represented in the powerful Big 12 Conference. You can share in the excitement of athletic events ranging from football, basketball, baseball, softball and acrobatics and tumbling to golf, tennis, track and field, soccer, volleyball, cross country and equestrian. If you are an athlete, you can try out for one of Baylor’s 19 intercollegiate teams, representing a range of sports and competing at the NCAA Division I level. Students of faith receive spiritual nourishment at worship services and sacred spaces on-campus.

Top Tip
Until you get an American mobile number, WhatsApp or WeChat are convenient ways to talk and see your friends and family back home.
Get involved!

Why not join our social network

facebook.com/baylorisc

#YouAreWelcomeHere

We can’t wait to welcome you.

Baylor University International Study Centre is run by Study Group in collaboration with Baylor University.
For more information visit: studygroup.com