



Graduate Student Visas

Depending on your destination country, the length of your stay, what you intend to do while there, etc., it is quite likely that you will be required to obtain a visa before departure. It is important that you know what visa requirements will apply to you so that you can prepare for this well in advance. Many consulates, for instance, require that students appear in person to apply for their visa. Others may require a background check, which can take some time to obtain, and so on.

Here are several things to keep in mind:

- Check your passport's validity. Many countries require that your passport be valid for *at least* 6 months after your return to the U.S. If your passport does not satisfy this requirement, renew it now, as it can take anywhere from 4-12 weeks to receive a new passport.
- For initial information on entry requirements for a specific country, you can visit the Entry/Exit Requirements section in the Country Specific Information pages on the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://travel.state.gov>, where you can also find links to the country's embassy website.
- In many cases, you will apply through the consulate that has specific jurisdiction over your state of residence. Requirements frequently vary by consulate, so make sure you are referencing your consulate's instructions.
- Entry requirements can change at any time, so pay close attention to consular updates. Some consulates may not regularly update their websites, so we recommend contacting the consulate directly to request the visa instructions (in writing, preferably). However, you may find that some consulates respond better to phone calls than email, or vice versa, so you may have to try several avenues. Either way, keep in mind that embassies and consulates are frequently understaffed, so be patient and keep trying.

Visa types

- If you are enrolling at an institution abroad, you will very likely to be classified under a student visa. Many student visas do not allow their holders to work, or if they do, they may limit when and how many hours per week you may work. "Work" could also include non-paid activities such as volunteering or internships. As such, a general "student" visa may not apply to you depending on your intended activities, so make sure you understand the parameters of each visa.
- Research will typically fall as a sub-status under a student visa, but it depends. Some countries might classify it as a work visa.
- The organization offering you the study/research/work position should know which general visa type you fall into because they will need to fill out paperwork to submit to the government. Clarify with your hosting organization about your visa type early on so that you can at least begin your research. If the organization doesn't know this, it might be a red flag.
- Along these lines, certain activities (such as working in a lab or clinic, travelling to a certain region, etc.) could require a special permit or visa, even in countries where you may not need a visa at all normally.

Bringing dependents



Education Abroad

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- If you plan on bringing dependents abroad for an extended period of time, extra financial support typically must be shown during the application process. You may be able to “add on” dependents to your own visa, or they may have to go through their own visa process.
- Dependents are not always allowed to work. If they are, there are often restrictions on this. Dependents are often able to work remotely for a position that is based in the U.S. and paid into a U.S.-based bank account. But even this could be specifically prohibited under certain visas.
- Federal Financial Aid does not take dependents into account when awarding funding, and does not have any type of appeals process for this. Financial aid is based on covering your costs and your costs only. Other funding sources may or may not consider dependents.