



New Student Welcome Information

Pre-Arrival Guide

JSU Email

Initiate your university email account

Now that you have been admitted to Jacksonville State University (JSU), you need to go to www.jsu.edu/geminfo to initiate your email account. Please also refer to your admission letter for more information about your username and default password.

Your university email address is the official form of conversation at JSU. Official announcements from the university, your academic department, professors, and the International House and Programs are sent to this email address. As a result, it is crucial for you to check it daily. You are responsible for knowing any information sent to you through your university email, including billing and other critical information.

Visa Types

Determine the type of visa you need to enter the U.S.

F-1 visa:

Most students admitted to JSU should apply for an F-1 student visa. If you receive an I-20 document from JSU, then you will apply for an F-1 visa.

J-1 visa:

J-1 students are usually in formal exchange programs or receiving most or all of their funding from their home government, a U.S. government agency, or JSU. If you receive a DS-2019 document from the university or another U.S. agency, then you will apply for a J-1 student visa.

If you think you have received the wrong type of visa document, please contact the office of the International House and Programs.

Do NOT enter the United States as a visitor (B1/B2 or visa waiver). Individuals with these immigration statuses are not eligible to register for an academic course of study.

Immigration terminology

Visa:

A visa is an entry document. It is an endorsement in a passport that indicates that the holder is allowed to enter, leave, or stay for a specified period of time in a country.

I-20:

The Form I-20 is the Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status. This document is for academic and language students. The Form I-20 (or simply I-20) is an important document that you should keep safe. There will be a number of instances where you will need it such as applying for a visa, entering the U.S., among other things.

DS-2019:

The Form DS-2019 is the Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status. The Form DS-2019 (or simply DS-2019) is an important document that you should keep safe. There will be a number of instances where you will need it such as applying for a visa, entering the U.S., among other things.

Immigration Process

Here are the steps we suggest you take to obtain a visa

1. Pay the SEVIS fee

New students will need to pay the [SEVIS fee](#) before applying for an entry visa or entering the United States. This fee is charged by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and it is not administered by JSU. The fee cannot be paid prior to the issuance of the I-20 or DS-2019. In order to pay the fee, please go to the [I-901 fee website](#). There is a helpful [video tutorial](#) if you need additional help.

2. Locate the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your home country

You can find more information about embassies and consulates at the [USEmbassy.gov](#) website or the [State Department](#) website.

3. Schedule your visa appointment

Your local embassy or consulate will have specific instructions for scheduling and for making appointments. Waiting times for an appointment can be lengthy (up to several weeks or longer) especially during the busy summer months. Schedule your appointment as soon as possible after receiving your visa documents.

4. Prepare for your interview

All visa applicants must provide the following documents to the U.S. embassy or consulate at the time of their application.

- Valid passport
- Valid I-20 or DS-2019
- Admission letter
- Proof of financial support for one year
- Receipt of payment of the SEVIS fee
- Visa application forms
- Any other documents requested by the specific embassy or consulate

5. If you have dependents

Your spouse and children under age 21 are eligible to accompany you to the U.S. with a dependent visa (F-2 or J-2). You must request a dependent I-20 or DS-2019 document for each eligible dependent. Dependents are not required to pay for the SEVIS fee.

F-2 visa holders are not permitted to work in the U.S. Also, they cannot study full-time at a university or other post-secondary institution.

6. If your visa is denied

If your visa is denied, then ask the consular office to provide a written explanation of the denial. Next, contact our office (International House and Programs) for assistance. Email the details of the denial and the denial reason to intlprog@jsu.edu. Please include in the subject line the title "Visa Denial"

Final Transcripts

Submit your final high school or secondary school transcripts.

It is a requirement for enrollment at JSU that students complete secondary school or graduate from high school. In order to verify that you have completed secondary school, you will need to have your school submit your final secondary school transcript and proof of graduation to the International House and Programs office or you can bring your official high school documents in a sealed envelope when attending mandatory international orientation.

Housing

On-campus accommodations

On-campus accommodations are handled by the Housing office. All first-time (undergraduate or ELI) university students are required to live on campus. Students must submit a housing application and a \$200 deposit before arrival to reserve a room. Certain residence halls require students to purchase an on-campus meal plan. Students should ask for confirmation of their room assignment before arriving at Jacksonville State University. For information about housing, application deadlines and meal plan options, please email jsuhousing@jsu.edu

Explore on-campus housing options at www.jsu.edu/housing

Off-campus accommodations

Students who do not plan to live on-campus may elect to rent an off-campus apartment. Arrangements for off-campus housing is solely the responsibility of the student. International House and Programs can provide phone numbers and addresses of nearby apartments for rent. Off-campus housing arrangements can only be made upon arrival; therefore, the student should be prepared to stay in a hotel while searching for off-campus apartments. It is important that you understand the legal responsibilities of renting in the U.S. You should always see an apartment before signing a lease, and most apartment managers will require a 12-month lease.

Expenses

Immediate expenses

When planning your arrival, make sure to bring sufficient funds to pay your immediate expenses, such as security deposit for rent, orientation fee, phone charges and other initial expenses. We recommend that you open a bank account in the United States soon after your arrival.

Tuition and fees

Tuition and all fees associated with classes can be paid after the student is registered in the appropriate courses for the term. New students will get to register once they have reported to JSU, attended new student orientations, and completed all necessary requirements.

Placement Tests

JSU wants to save you time and money by offering the no cost, individualized JSU EdReady Math and English Placement. All first-year students and transfer students who have not completed their first required math and/or English course are required to take EdReady. The test can be taken online.

Math placement

As stated in your admission package, new students are required to take a [math placement test](#) prior to being advised. The test can be taken online by clicking on the hyperlink above.

English placement

If you have not taken an SAT or ACT test, then you will be required to take an [English placement test](#) in order to determine your English proficiency level. This test will be administered after you arrive on campus. If you have taken an SAT or ACT test, then English placement test is not required.

Arriving in the U.S.

CBP (U.S. Customs and Border Protection)

Students cannot arrive more than 30 days before the program start date as listed on the I-20 or DS-2019.

CBP stands for Customs and Border Protection. Upon arrival in the U.S., all travelers are subject to inspection by CBP officers. **Having a valid visa and travel documents does not guarantee admission into the United States.** Admission into the U.S. depends on CBP. As a result, it is important to be prepared and to know what to expect at the port of entry. CBP has broad discretion during the inspection and admission process at ports of entry, where an individual's rights are limited. CBP has virtually unfettered

authority to inspect **ALL arriving travelers, including their PERSONS and BELONGINGS, including ELECTRONIC DEVICES.**

Note: Electronic devices, if part of a person's belongings at arrival, may be searched. Agents are required by law to keep any confidential information they encounter confidential. CBP may retain the device for forensic search and will notify the person when it can be picked up or will mail it to the owner. **Refusing to have a device searched or unlocked could result in not be admitted into the country.**

Port of Entry

Primary inspection

- Brief interview and review of entry documents such as I-20 or DS-2019, visa, other supporting documents.
- Conduct OBIM (Office of Biometric Identity Management) biometric data collection (photograph and digital fingerprints). Biodata is used to verify identity and check against watch list.
- If all documents collected are verified, admission into the country may be granted without further inspection.
- If for some reason information is missing, inaccurate or flagged and the visitor cannot be cleared at the primary inspection, they are then referred to secondary inspection.

Please be aware that the SEVIS record cannot be checked at the primary inspection. So, if there is an issue, it will usually result in referral to secondary inspection.

List of suggested additional documents to present at port of entry:

- Admission letter
- Transcripts
- Class schedule
- Enrollment letter
- Financial documents (bank statement, scholarship letters, etc.)
- Other documents that may have been used during visa interview

Secondary inspection

During secondary inspection, the traveler is placed into a separate office where their records will be looked at closely. CBP officers will question the traveler. It is important to always provide truthful information.

Secondary inspection can take on average between 20 minutes to 4 hours. If after further investigation all information checks out, the traveler will most likely be granted admission into the United States.

If information provided is missing or inaccurate, or the traveler has been flagged, it will be the responsibility of the traveler to prove the legitimacy of their stay in the United States.

It is during secondary inspections, that CBP can search electronic devices as well as social media accounts.

CBP is not required to call school officials to verify the student status of the traveler. The traveler may request CBP to call the school.

Jacksonville State University
Contact Information:

Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:30pm

International Programs at **256-782-5303**

Holidays and outside of hours listed above, contact University Police at **256-782-5050**

If at the end of the secondary inspection travelers are unable to justify their genuine intent to enter the U.S., they may be denied admission into the country.

Depending on the reasons for denial, students may have to face the following outcomes:

- “Withdraw application” for entry and depart the U.S.
- Expedited removal. Traveler is ordered to be deported and visa is revoked without further legal process.
- Deportation. Visa is revoked and asked to see immigration judge. The traveler is usually detained until court date.

I-515 A

I-515A is an admission but for a temporary period of 30 days that must be resolved by SEVP/DHS. If for some reason, the traveler was missing a document, I-515A could be issued at the discretion of CBP officers to allow the traveler to enter the U.S. and provide them with the necessary document within the next 30 days.

If you are issued an I-515A upon entry in the U.S., it is crucial to report it to your Immigration Adviser immediately as timely action is required.

Deferred inspection

Deferred inspection is not technically an “admission” in the requested visa status. Individuals are paroled in with an appointment to appear later and present the necessary documentation for admission. Deferred inspection usually applies to travelers with a criminal background.

Note: If the traveler is charged with a crime or arrested due to outstanding warrant, then the removal proceedings are delayed until the criminal outcome is determined. Usually, the traveler is detained.

Some examples of what could trigger secondary inspection or/and inadmissibility:

- Unauthorized employment
- Failure to maintain full-time status
- Criminal-related offenses
- Controlled substance and CIMT violations (CIMT: Crime Involving Moral Turpitude)

- Public charges such as DUI or DWI offenses (Driving Under the Influence or Driving While Intoxicated)
- Security-related offenses
- Applicants who have previously been removed or who are unlawfully present

Tip: Keep in mind that the burden of proof relies on the traveler entering the U.S.

I-94 arrival and departure

Upon arrival a CBP officer stamps the travel document with

1. an admission date
2. class of admission and
3. end date of admission

Only travelers entering by land will receive a paper Form I-94. Otherwise, it is issued electronically. When exiting the U.S., travelers with a paper I-94 should surrender the I-94 to the commercial carrier or to CBP.

Travelers can access and print their I-94 information online via <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>. Travelers are responsible to check their I-94 for accuracy. Any misspelling or errors could lead to further complications later.

If there is an error or mistake on the paper or electronic form I-94, the traveler can contact the Deferred Inspection office closest to their location. A list of Deferred Inspection Sites and POEs can be found on CBP's website, <http://www.cbp.gov>, under the "Locate the Port Information".

Useful Resources:

- Homeland Security [Getting to the United States](#)
- CDC [International Travel](#)
- ACLU [Know your Rights](#) at Port of Entry
- CBP [Inspections of Devices](#)
- CBP [Privacy Impact Assessment](#) of Electronic Searches at Border

Traveling to JSU

From Atlanta, Georgia

University sponsored shuttle

Complete [the form](#).

Pay attention to the shuttle pick up dates available, before booking your flight ticket.

Uber

Take an Uber taxi from the airport directly to the University in Jacksonville, Alabama. www.uber.com

Bus

Buy a bus ticket online at www.greyhound.com from “ATLANTA ARPT, GA” to “ANNISTON OXFORD, AL.”

Call

If you arrive in Oxford before 4:00 pm Monday through Thursday, call your destination program (ELI, International House and Programs) to arrange to be picked up and brought to the University.

Taxi

If you arrive in Oxford after 4:00 pm Monday through Friday, please call a taxi (Anniston Taxi 256-236-0687) to take you to a hotel for the night. The next morning, call your destination program (ELI, International House and Programs) to arrange to be picked up and brought to the University. If you arrive after 4:00 pm on Friday, be prepared to stay in a hotel until the following Monday before pick-up.

Arrival at Jacksonville

Students should be prepared to stay in a hotel upon arrival at least for one night. Hotel costs will be the responsibility of the student. (Some students may have to stay in the hotel for more than one night if they do not have a confirmed room assignment.)

Late Arrival can result in a student unable to enroll or secure a housing assignment.

On-Campus at JSU

Reporting

Students cannot arrive more than 30 days before the program start date that is listed on the I-20. Students must complete online reporting by January 6, 2022. Students are required to upload all travel documents (passport, I-20, I-94) and proof of insurance on the international student portal when reporting online.

All students are responsible for understanding and knowing ALL immigration regulations.

International Orientation

ALL Students are required to complete Online Orientation prior to the program start date.

International Orientation is an important part of a student’s process in enrolling as an international student at Jacksonville State University. Students will not be able to enroll properly if they do not complete the online orientation. Holds will be placed on students’ accounts preventing them from registering if they have failed to complete the mandatory Online International Orientation.

Gamecock Orientation

ALL Students under the age of 25 are required to attend Gamecock Orientation prior to the program start date.

Gamecock Orientation (which is different from the International Student Orientation) provides all students with the necessary tools to be successful at Jacksonville State University. During this orientation, students will get the opportunity to meet with an academic advisor to discuss their degree plan and the classes they will need to take each term. It is at this time, that the student will be able to register for courses and establish their schedule. Gamecock orientation costs \$80. This will need to be paid online or at the time of orientation. Holds will be placed on students' accounts preventing them from registering if they have failed to attend mandatory Gamecock Orientation.

Health Insurance

ALL Students are required to enroll in Health Insurance provided through JSU.

The cost of the insurance must be paid prior to class registration. Students can choose to have a second policy, but they are still required to purchase insurance through JSU. For coverage and detailed information regarding the insurance, please visit: https://www.isoa.org/Jacksonville_State_University

Holds will be placed on student account preventing the student from registering if they have not enrolled in required health insurance and provided proof of coverage to the Office of International Programs.

Academics

Program Change: Student may not be able to change the program of study immediately upon arrival at JSU. Students may change this after completing 1 semester if the student has the appropriate original or official documents and completes the admission requirements of the new program. A new I-20 will be issued.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees must be paid before the due date. Students may sign up for an installment plan.

Paying your tuition with Flywire

International students can pay tuition online through their student account by using Flywire. This is a service that allows you to bypass international transfer fees and access foreign exchange rates that are more favorable than those offered by banks. <https://www.flywire.com/pay/jsu>

Failure to pay fees and tuition in full may result in dismissal from JSU

Visit <http://www.jsu.edu/international/> for detailed tuition, fee, and other cost information. The costs stated in I-20 form are estimates. For information on JSU's refund policy and dates, please visit: www.jsu.edu/bursar/

Employment/Graduate Assistantships

Employment:

Students eligible to work on campus may work up to 20 hours per week in the fall and spring semesters, and up to 26 hours in the summer break and official university breaks as long as the job does not interfere with their academic standing.

Please note that finding on-campus work is highly competitive. JSU does not guarantee employment to any student. This includes GA positions. Students are responsible for paying tuition, fees, insurance, and living expenses without any employment or financial aid.

Students with disabilities

Disability Resources (DR) is committed to making the University accessible and inviting for students, faculty, staff, and guests with disabilities. If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, you should [register](#) with Disability Resources. [Contact DR](#) as early as possible to discuss reasonable accommodations.

For more information about Jacksonville State University and contact information visit <http://www.jsu.edu/international>