



# HANDBOOK FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



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## Welcome to Rhode Island College

Rhode Island College welcomes students from international backgrounds. Currently enrolled is a talented group of students representing fourteen different countries such as Nigeria, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Nepal, Kazakhstan, Cambodia, South Korea, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Italy, Netherlands, and Brazil. The International Student Office at RIC was established to serve students, faculty members, and guests from other countries during their stay on our campus, whether their status is visa student, exchange visitor, immigrant, resident, or refugee. In this booklet we hope to provide you with general information about U.S. laws and regulations, academic life of the institution, services for second-language students, as well as social, cultural, and educational opportunities available to you at Rhode Island College and in the city of Providence.

Rhode Island College is located in a suburban area three miles from the center of Providence. We are proud of our scenic campus, low crime rate, and for our academic year 2017/2018 we had 8,174 total students (7,080 undergraduates and 1,094 graduates). Most of Rhode Island has a humid continental climate, allowing for maximum use of Rhode Island's salt water beaches in the summer and nearby ski resorts in the winter, as well as the enjoyment of our four beautiful seasons.

Our College is fully accredited by several national and regional accrediting agencies. We have a College-wide honors program as well as departmental honors programs. Class size is small, fifteen to thirty students, and almost our entire faculty have a Ph.D., or an equivalent terminal degree. We have a racially diverse student body and almost half of our students identify as first generation in their families to attend a four-year college. RIC prides itself on being ranked the most affordable four-year college in the Northeast.

## The International Student Office

The International Student Office will help you find answers to your specific questions about U.S. government forms, the process of entering and leaving the country, employment requests, practical training, financial needs, taxes, health, housing, academic, and personal problems. The office also hosts social activities, such as coffee hours, parties, and films as well as cultural activities. When you arrive on campus, stop by the office, meet the advisor **Dr. Karina Mascorro**, and be sure that your name is on the International Student Mailing List.

### **International Student Office**

C/o Unity Center

Donovan Dining Center, Lower Level

600 Mt. Pleasant Ave., Providence RI 02908-1991

Telephone: (401) 456-8549

E-mail: [kmascorro@ric.edu](mailto:kmascorro@ric.edu)

Website: [www.ric.edu/iso](http://www.ric.edu/iso)

Follow us on Instagram at [international\\_student\\_office](https://www.instagram.com/international_student_office)

## Admission Requirements and Procedures

### Undergraduate Admission

International Students who wish to enroll at Rhode Island College as undergraduates must:

- 1) Complete a Common Application and RIC supplement at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) and pay a \$50 application fee.
- 2) Obtain an official grade credential file from schools previously attended. Certified English translation and evaluation of all educational records are required.
- 3) Take a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) if your native language is not English. Applicants are expected to have a minimum score of 550 on the paper and pencil TOEFL, 213 on the computer-based version of the TOEFL, 79 on the internet based version or 6.5 on the IELTS.
- 4) Mail the credential file, financial statement, and the TOEFL, or IELTS test score to:

#### **Office of Undergraduate Admissions**

The Forman Center  
Rhode Island College  
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue  
Providence, RI 02908-1991

- 5) A student must send the admissions materials early so that he/she may be admitted before June 1 for the fall semester and November 15 (both freshman and transfer) for the spring semester.
- 6) After admission, obtain a financial statement that shows the student, his/her family, or sponsor has sufficient money in a bank for one year's tuition and academic expenses at Rhode Island College.
- 7) When a student is admitted to Rhode Island College the Admissions office will send him/her an I-20 Form. The student will take this form along with a second financial statement to the U.S. Embassy or consulate nearest to his/her home.



- 8) The U.S. Consul will examine the student's forms and authorize a visa stamp on a passport.
- 9) The student should notify the International Student Office at the college of the date of his/her arrival and get answers to any unusual questions.
- 10) On arrival at the campus, the student must contact the International Student Office and turn in a copy of the I-20 Form.

*(For more information on international admissions of any kind go to the RIC website or contact the ISO)*

### Graduate Admission

Rhode Island College encourages applications from prospective international students whose command of English is sufficient for graduate study. Applicants follow the application procedures specific to each program. Application and program information is available online at <http://www.ric.edu/graduatestudies>. International applicants must submit certified literal English translations of their transcripts and have these and other academic records reviewed. International students are required to pass the TOEFL exam with a minimum score of 81 for the internet based test, 213 for the computer based test, 550 for the paper and pencil test and, if required by the department, provide scores on the Graduate Record Examination or Miller Analogies Test. Applicants must provide to the Graduate Dean proof of financial ability to pay all academic fees (tuition, books, and associated fees) for one full year of study. This should be a certified statement from a bank and/or a letter from a sponsor guaranteeing financial support (with appropriate bank verification). All college health requirements must be met.

### Graduate Awards Available to Internationals

Rhode Island College annually offers graduate assistantships to accepted graduate degree candidates who are in the F-1 or J-1 visa categories. Graduate assistant awards are for \$3,000 (\$3,500 for teaching assistantships) plus a tuition waiver. Half-time GA's receive \$1,750. The application deadline is March 1, and awards are announced by June. For more information, contact the graduate program director at [graduatestudies@ric.edu](mailto:graduatestudies@ric.edu).

## Performance-Based Admission Program

Individuals who are at least twenty years old, who have been away from formal schooling for some time, who have little or no college credit, and who lack some of the usual college entrance requirements may be considered for freshman admission through the Performance-Based Admission (PBA) Program. Applicants must submit the following materials:

- 1) The regular application form accompanied by a fifty-dollar nonrefundable application fee. Applications must be received by June 1 for fall semester enrollment and November 15 for spring semester enrollment.
- 2) Official copies of high school transcripts.
- 3) Scores on the High School General Educational Development (GED) tests (if the candidate has not earned a traditional high school diploma).
- 4) An interview.

Adult students whose primary language is other than English may also be accepted into the college through this program and may be required to complete one or more English-as-a-second-language (ESL) courses before undertaking the regular six courses in the PBA Program. These students are expected to demonstrate a facility with the English language that is comparable to a score of 213 on the computer-based version of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), 550 on the paper-based version, 79 on the Web-based version, or 960 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), before undertaking the six-course PBA Program.

Students who do not make satisfactory progress will be dismissed from the college. Appeals of dismissal decisions can be made to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

## College Services and Programs

### Health Services and Programs

#### General Requirements

All international students are required to carry the school health insurance. Enrollment forms are available in the Bursar's Office, Building #4, East Campus. You may also sign up online at: <http://www.ric.edu/healthservices/Pages/School-Health-Insurance.aspx>.

Proof of physical examination during the last year is required for all international students.

#### Immunization Requirements

Rhode Island state law requires that all international students provide documentation of:

- a) 1 Tetanus/diphtheria vaccination within the past 10 years 2 Measles vaccinations
- b) 1 Mumps vaccination
- c) 1 Rubella (German Measles) vaccination
- d) 3 Hepatitis B vaccinations
- e) 2 Varicella vaccinations (1 if given prior to age 13) or proof of Chicken Pox disease

In addition to state-mandated immunizations, all international students must provide proof of a PPD (TB skin testing) done within the past year.

Proof of immunizations may be obtained from your physician, high school, previous college or university, and/or military record.

A **meningitis vaccine is strongly recommended** for all incoming students living on campus.

***Important: you will be unable to register for second semester classes if College Health Services does not receive your immunization record.***

All forms are available from College Health Services or may be downloaded from the health services' web site: <http://www.ric.edu/healthservices/>.

## Available Services

Rhode Island College Health Services provides confidential, primary care services to all students attending the College. Students are treated with a holistic approach emphasizing prevention, risk reduction and education to assist in making life-long healthy choices.

Visits are available on an appointment basis. Acute care of illness visits are generally scheduled for the same day. There is no charge for services provided by Health Services staff although you or your insurance company may be billed for outside lab, X-ray or specialty services.

Available services include physical exams (including sports, annual and pre-employment exams), management of acute illnesses and injuries, women's healthcare including GYN exams and pap smears, birth control and pregnancy testing, lab services including on-site blood tests, throat cultures, urine tests and STD (sexually transmitted disease) screening for both males and females, mental health referral and collaboration with RIC Counseling Center, TB testing, immunizations, and referral and coordination with specialty medical resources and smoking cessation services.

All visits and conversations with the staff of Health Services are considered strictly confidential unless you have specifically given your consent in writing for staff to share information. Parents, faculty and other College staff do not have access to your medical information. There are a few limited exceptions: certain communicable diseases must be reported to the Rhode Island Department of Health; if, in our judgment, you are at risk of harming yourself or others; if current child or elder abuse is involved; if a court of law orders that information be released.

During the academic year, hours of operation are 8:30 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. During summer session and break periods, hours are 7:30 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday. A provider (NP or MD) is generally available weekdays between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm. Contact them by phone at (401) 456-8055

## Students with Disabilities

Considerable attention has been given to making the Rhode Island College campus accessible to students with physical disabilities. All buildings, offices, gymnasiums, and recreational areas are wheelchair accessible. Support services, including advisement, referrals, and special equipment are provided through the Disability Services Office.

In order to request reasonable accommodations at Rhode Island College, a student must self-identify to the Disability Services Office (Fogarty Life Science, room 137) and provide current verification of their disability. Clarification of policies and procedures for disability-related services are available in the “Policies and Procedures Manual for Students with Disabilities”. Copies of the manual can be obtained from the Disabilities Services Office. Further information can be found on the Disability Services website at [www.ric.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.ric.edu/disabilityservices/) or call Keri Rossi-D’entremont at (401) 456-2776 or TTY (via RI Relay) 711.

## Cooperative Preschool

The Co-op is a student organization under the auspices of the Student Community Government providing affordable and high quality childcare to the Rhode Island College community through cooperative participation of parents. Parents are involved with their children’s education and therefore have greater control of the kind and quality of care their children receive. The Co-op is open Monday through Friday from 7:45 am to 5 pm. Use of the Co-op’s facilities is limited to those hours during which the parent is in class or attending a class related obligation. The Co-op follows the same [academic calendar](#) as the College. For more information, contact the Head Teach Carolyn Shields at (401) 456-8154.

## Housing

The College has limited residence halls spaces for students. International students requesting on-campus housing must meet all required deadlines for eligibility. Students can access our webpage for more information at <http://www.ric.edu/residential-life> or by contacting our office at 401-456-8240 or [housing@ric.edu](mailto:housing@ric.edu). For off-campus rentals, our office maintains a small listing of available

apartments but most students make contact with rental agencies in the area individually. There are many apartment buildings nearby, or in many locations throughout the city.

## Food Services

The College cafeteria, located in the Donovan Dining Center, operates from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Service times are as follows:

### Monday-Friday

- Breakfast 6:30 – 10:30 am
- Continental Breakfast 9:30 – 10:30 am
- Lunch 10:31 am – 3:30 pm
- Dinner 3:31 – 7:30 pm

### Saturday/Sunday

- Continental Breakfast 9:00 – 10:00 am
- Brunch 10:01 am – 3:30 pm
- Dinner 3:31 – 6:00 pm

The Café, located on the first level of the Campus Center, operates from 7:30 a.m. to midnight Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Friday, 3:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. on Saturday and 5:00 p.m. to midnight on Sunday. The Galley, a small cafe located on the East Campus in the lower level of Building 3, is open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

## Emergency Loan Funds

The International Student Office has a small loan fund available for students in temporary emergency situations. Apply directly to the International Student Advisor.

Some short-term loans may be arranged by applying to the Office of Student Financial Aid.

## Banking

There is an automatic teller machine located on the first floor of the Student Union. There are also other banking facilities that handle foreign currency and international transactions nearby, but off campus.

## The Library

The James P. Adams Library provides access to over 100,000 eBooks, 49,000 periodicals in electronic format and 104 online databases, which may be used on or off campus. The Library also houses over 650,000 volumes, holds major collections on microfilm and microfiche, and subscribes to over 200 print periodicals. Located within the Library is the college's Curriculum Resources Center, which includes instructional material and curriculum development resources for teacher education programs. These resources are available to students, college faculty, and Rhode Island teachers for review, evaluation, and classroom use. In addition, Special Collections, located on the fourth floor, houses the College Archives and other special materials including the Rhode Island and Cape Verdean collections.

There are 38 public computers available throughout the building, including two Apples. All are configured for easy connection to our database (no log-in necessary) and with Microsoft Office applications. The Reserve desk offers 40 laptops, 12 of which can be checked out for two week loans and the remainder available for in-library use periods of 4 hours. Thirty iPads and 32 Nexus tablets can be checked out for a one or two-week loan period. There are two public printers and five black and white photo copiers. Four of our photocopiers have the capability to scan directly to USB flash drives.

The Library is a founding member of the Higher Education Library Information Network (HELIN) which allows borrowing from all the eleven academic library members including Brown University, Bryant University, the Community College of Rhode Island, the Dominican House of Studies, Johnson & Wales University, Providence College, Roger Williams University, Salve Regina University, the University of Rhode Island, Wheaton College, and twelve special libraries in Rhode Island. Together the HELIN libraries contain approximately nine million volumes and recourses. For materials not available in the HELIN consortium, the library can access other libraries in the United States and throughout the world through its Document Delivery Service.

In order to have access to the full range of library services, students are required to have a library-validated Rhode Island College ID card. Validation can be done in person at the circulation desk or through our online form at: [www.ric.edu/librarycardactivation](http://www.ric.edu/librarycardactivation) .

Information about the library's collections, access to information databases on/off campus and library hours may be obtained through the Adams Library website at [www.ric.edu/adamslibrary](http://www.ric.edu/adamslibrary).

### Library Hours

Hours for the Fall and Spring Sessions:

Monday – Thursday	8:00 am – 10:00 pm
Friday	8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Saturday	11:00 am – 5:00 pm
Sunday	1:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Summer Hours

Monday – Wednesday	8:00 am – 8:00 pm
Thursday – Friday	8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed

See the Library's website (<http://www.ric.edu/adamslibrary/>) for exceptions and changes to this schedule of hours



## Academic Services

### OASIS (Office of Academic Support and Information Services)

The Office of Academic Support and Information Services located at the lower level of Adams Library, telephone (401) 456-8083, and email: [oasis@ric.edu](mailto:oasis@ric.edu), offers a variety of academic services to students. These services include:

- *The Academic Advisement Information Center* Official academic advisors are provided to students with undeclared majors and those not formally admitted to a program in the Feinstein School of Education. The Center also assists students with questions regarding change of major, academic difficulty, and RIC's academic policies.
- *The Academic Development Center* Provides assistance with ESL courses and conversational skills. It also offers help with study skills, test preparation, and reading comprehension. Tutoring is available for many general education courses including Western History and Psychology.
- *The Mathematics Learning Center* Offers skill building and tutorial assistance for mathematics courses.
- *New Student Programs* is responsible for the new student orientation programs at the college
- *Tutorial Services* Offers tutorial assistance with specific areas of study. Online tutoring is also available in Math, Science, Writing and Spanish, 24/7 through a program called Smarthinking
  - you can access this online on the OASIS web page at: [www.ric.edu/oasis](http://www.ric.edu/oasis).

### Other Academic Services (Writing)

The Writing Center, located at lower level of Adams Library, telephone (401) 456-8141 provides help for students with problems related to any phase of writing composition.

## Other Academic Services (Speaking)

Tutors in spoken English are available in the Department of Communications in Whipple Hall 200. The course Communications 219: Vocal Improvement, offered by the Department of Communications, assists students in improving their articulation and pronunciation of American English.

## Records Office

The Records Office is located on the East Campus, Building #4. The Records Office is responsible for generating a visa student's initial I-20 and verifying full-time enrollment within the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) database. In addition, the Records Office will sign I-20s for travel outside of the United States. Telephone: (401) 456-8213, email: [records@ric.edu](mailto:records@ric.edu). Director: Tamecka Hardmon: [thardmon@ric.edu](mailto:thardmon@ric.edu)

## English Language Improvement Courses

### Non-College Courses

In order to improve their English proficiency, visa students, immigrants, resident aliens, or new students may need to find a tutor or enroll in a non-College English as a Second Language course. Several Providence agencies and adult education programs offer ESL services and courses. The International Institute sponsors one such self-improvement course.

### College English Language Improvement Courses

The opportunity to study English as a Second Language is available through the Educational Studies Department located in the Henry Barnard School, Room 217. Laura Faria-Tancinco is the coordinator of the program. Each semester, several college-level courses are offered to the public. These courses range from basic to intermediate and advanced levels. All students must take a placement test before registering for a course. For more information, call (401) 456-8170.

## Clubs of Interest to Internationals at Rhode Island College

### Visiting International Student Association (VISA)

VISA is an organization which offers foreign and native students the opportunity to interact, learn about each other's cultures, exchange ideas, and educate each other about current immigration regulations and foreign policies.

### Anthropos

Anthropos promotes anthropological understanding throughout the campus and organizes events to encourage students to take part in Non-Western traditions.

### Asian Student Association (ASA)

This organization serves as a voice for the cultural and social interests of Southeast Asian students at Rhode Island College. The Asian Student Association's goal is to educate and bring awareness to students on and off campus by providing interaction opportunities for R.I.C. and greater Rhode Island communities.

### Harambee

Harambee's sole purpose is to promote unity and solidarity to the Rhode Island College Community; to provide cultural experiences that will be beneficial in our search for African-American heritage; to coordinate our educational experiences so that others may learn from us, and to engage in social activities that allow us to show our responsibility to society.

### Latin American Student Organization (LASO)

LASO is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in developing our member's individual potential. We acknowledge that the richness of our culture's identity should aid us in achieving our academic and social goals. LASO is a supportive organization, which encourages its members to learn about diversity of the Latino culture, while promoting leadership development within us all. Our

membership is made up of diverse students from Latin America, Caribbean Islands, Central America, and South America, as well from various ethnic groups. All students are welcome!!

## OTAKU

This group provides an outlet for members of the RIC community to enjoy and experience Anime as well as Japanese and East Asian cultures.

## Organizations and Opportunities for Internationals in Providence

### International House

International House is a non-profit, community based multicultural center supported by membership fees, individual contributions, class fees, and fundraising projects. The House provides a “link” between the community and international students, scholars, and visitors through the International Friendship Program, the World Discovery Classroom Project, and varied cultural and social functions. The goal is to foster international understanding and friendship. Membership is open to anyone interested in other countries and cultures and generous discounts are provided for nationality dinners, language classes, and many other events. You may also enjoy meeting interesting people from all over the world.

International House  
8 Stimson Avenue  
Providence, RI 02906  
Telephone: (401) 421-7181

## Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island, Inc. – (DIIRI)

IIRI's mission is to enable all area residents, especially immigrants and refugees, to become self-reliant, invested participants in our communities, while fostering respect and understanding among all people. Free legal advice is provided as well as advice related to work and community concerns.

Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island

645 Elmwood Avenue

Providence, RI 02907

(401) 461-5940

[www.diiri.org](http://www.diiri.org)

## United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services is a branch of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The USCIS regulates and enforces government rules concerning exchange students, foreign visitors, and immigrants. If you think you have a problem which concerns USCIS rules, please make an appointment to see your International Student Advisor before going to the local office. The International Student Office has sample government forms and can advise you about such things as leaving and entering the country, seeking lawful employment, transferring from one college to another, maintaining student status, and paying American taxes.

If your problem is serious, you might wish to make an online appointment (<http://www.uscis.gov/about-us/find-uscis-office/field-offices/rhode-island-providence-field-office>) with the local USCIS Field Office:

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

1543 Atwood Ave.

Johnston, RI 02919

1-800-375-5283 / 401-277-1200

## Consulates

Rhode Island has Official Consulates for seven foreign countries.

### **France:**

Mr. Roger N. Begin (Honorary Consul)

1 Financial Pz., Suite 2200, Providence RI 02903

(401) 228-2535

### **Guatemala:**

Mr. Jorge Alberto Figueroa Salguero (Consul General)

555 Valley Street, Edificio 61-321. Providence, RI 02908

(401) 270-6345 / (401) 270-6374

### **Italy:**

Mrs. Deborah Elsbree Del Sesto, (Honorary Vice Consul)

5586 Post Road, Suite 201. East Greenwich, RI 02818

(401) 454-1492

### **Latvia:**

Mr. John Miervaldis Bolis (Honorary Consul)

48 Overlook Dr., North Kingstown RI 02852

(401) 398-0523

### **Portugal:**

Marcia Sousa (Consul)

56 Pine Street (6th floor) Providence RI

(401) 272-2003

### Senegal:

Mr. Moussa Sidibe (Honorary Consul)

285 Carpenter St., Suite 2, Providence RI 02909

(401) 751-0213

The visitor to Providence should probably contact his/her New York consulate for the most direct service for other nationalities.

### Foreign Periodicals and Books for Sale in Providence

1. Eastside Marketplace, 165 Pitman Street, Providence, Rhode Island, carries a number of international newspapers and periodicals. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
2. Friends Market, 126 Brook Street, Providence, Rhode Island, carries newspapers from Portugal. Hours are Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; and Friday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
3. Brown Bookstore, 224 Thayer Street, Providence, Rhode Island, carries select grammar and travel aides in English, Spanish, German, French, Italian, and Portuguese. Hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

### Transportation

Public buses regularly stop in front of Roberts Hall to discharge and pick up passengers. Bus schedules are available from the Welcome and Information Center in the Student Union and in the International Student Office. Bus routes cover all of Providence and many surrounding cities and towns. For example, buses travel to popular beaches in South County.

If a visa student wishes to buy a car in Rhode Island, he/she must apply to the Registry of Motor Vehicles in Providence for a Rhode Island driver's license.

The following documents are required by Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in Rhode Island for an F1 and F2 Visa:

- I-20
- Passport
- Social Security Card or a denial letter from the Social Security Administration
- Current Letter from RIC on letterhead, showing enrollment
- RIC ID
- Proof of Residency
- Letter from the ISO

The address is 600 New London Ave. and the phone number is (401) 462-4368. You must be enrolled as a full-time student and in good standing with the college to obtain a letter. Students at R.I.C. need no parking permit to park in student lots during the day. R.I.C. parking is free.

## U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Laws and Regulations

The information that follows is a brief summary of some of the most important points of regulations that may affect international students and other visitors from abroad as well as immigrants and permanent residents. It is not intended to be comprehensive, and any problems concerning a student's status should be taken to the International Student Office. In serious cases it may be necessary to obtain professional legal counsel. The Rhode Island Legal Services Office located at 56 Pine Street, Fourth Floor, Providence, RI 02903, telephone (401-274-2652) will suggest the names of lawyers qualified in the area of immigration law who will offer their services to students at a reduced rate. The Lawyer Referral Service which a service from Rhode Island Bar Association 41 Sharpe Dr., Cranston, RI 02920, telephone 401-421-5740 also has a listing of lawyers fluent in foreign languages.

### What is the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS)?

The USCIS is the name of the government agency that replaced the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in November 2003. It serves immigrants and foreign students and tries to promote national security.



## What is the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)?

SEVIS is a national computerized data collection system that allows schools to transmit electronic information about F-1 and J-1 students by means of the Internet to the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State. All international students and their dependents are assigned a SEVIS ID Number and their status is checked several times during the year.

## What is the SEVIS ID Number?

The SEVIS ID is the eleven-digit number above the bar code in the upper right corner of page one of your I-20 or DS-2019 Form.

## How Can I Change My Nonimmigrant Status to That of a Student If I am Already in the United States?

First apply to study at RIC. If you are accepted, send USCIS Form I-20 A-b/IID (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant [F-1] Student Status), which the admissions office sends you, plus a USCIS Form I-539 (to extend or change non-immigration status) to the USCIS, and all other required evidence and fees.

If you have been admitted as a B1 or B-2 (temporary visitor) or F-2 (dependent status) you may not begin program studies until your application for change of status has been approved.

## How Do I Apply for Permission to Transfer Schools?

If you are a full-time student in good standing, you may transfer. First, notify the foreign student advisor at your current school that you intend to transfer. Ask the new school to give you a new I-20 Form. Complete your portion of the I-20 and give it to your new designated school official (DSO) within fifteen days of transferring. The DSO should give you the last two pages of the I-20 ID and forward a copy of the first two pages to the USCIS and your prior school.

## How Long Can I Stay in the United States?

As long as you are a full-time student enrolled in a program at an approved college or university and making progress toward a degree you may stay in the United States. You also, if approved,

may stay an additional twelve months after the completion of your degree to pursue practical training in your field. At the end of your studies or practical training you will be granted sixty days to prepare to leave the country.

### How Can I Maintain an F-1 Student Status?

- 1) **Full-time Status.** You must be enrolled at RIC as a full-time student: 12 credits per semester for undergraduates and 9 credits for graduate students. You must obtain permission from the foreign student advisor before dropping a class or falling below the full-time load requirement.
- 2) **Extension of Stay.** If you cannot complete your degree by the date printed on your I-20, item #5, you must request an extension from the International Student Adviser. You will be asked to substantiate your request with academic and/or medical documents and testimony.
- 3) **Employment.** You may not accept off-campus employment unless you have been a student for a full twelve months and have applied for and received permission to work off campus from USCIS. You may work on campus on nongovernmental funds. Therefore, you are not eligible for work-study positions but may apply for non-work-study jobs in places such as the Library, the Audio-Visual Department, the Records Office, the Donovan Dining Center, and academic departments.
- 4) **Valid Passport.** Keep your passport valid at all times. For more information on how to renew your passport, contact your country's embassy at the following web sites:  
<http://www.embassy.org>
- 5) **Travel Signatures for Reentry into the United States.** You must obtain the signature of a DSO on your I-20 before you travel outside the United States if you plan to return as a student. See the International Student Advisor or in summers, the Dean of Students.
- 6) **Changes in School Information.** You must report changes in major, degree, or funding to USCIS. Ask the International Student Adviser to update this information. Address changes must be reported within ten days.
- 7) **Requirements to Leave the Country.** Students who drop out of school with USCIS approval have fifteen days to prepare to leave the country. If you drop out of school without USCIS approval, you must immediately leave the country.

- 8) **Procedure for “Out-of-Status” Students to File for Reinstatement.** If you fall out of status for any reason, you must apply to the USCIS for reinstatement. Your DSO must file the request on the SEVIS database. You may also be reinstated by leaving the United States and returning on a new I-20.
- 9) **Procedures to Follow if You Can’t Maintain Full-Time Enrollment.** If illness prevents full-time enrollment, substantiate this by bringing a physician’s statement to the international student advisor. A reduced load or short leave of absence may be approved. If academic or language difficulties threaten your enrollment, consult your international student advisor.

### What Are the Types of Student Employment Available to International Students?

- 1) **On-Campus Employment.** You are eligible to work on campus. To request an on-campus job you will need to apply for a Social Security Number at the local Providence Social Security Office on Westminster Street. You will need to pick up a form letter from the RIC international student advisor before you go to the Social Security Office. Contact the Career Development Center, Craig-Lee, Room 054, for non-work-study listings.
- 2) **Curricular Practical Training (CPT).** Curricular practical training is a work situation required by your course of study. Nursing or social work, for example, require students to work in a hospital or social service agency as part of their program of studies. You must know your work site before you apply to the USCIS via SEVIS.
- 3) **Optional Practical Training (OPT).** This employment must be related to your major field of study and provide an opportunity to use your skills. It is usually granted after you receive a degree such as a B.A., M.A., or Ph.D. You are usually approved for a full twelve-month period but may take less time if you wish. OPT authorization from USCIS is required and often takes two or more months for approval.
- 4) **Severe Economic Hardship.** If on-campus work does not provide enough money to meet your needs, you may request off-campus work permission based on unforeseen economic hardship. You must have been a full-time student in good status for at least one year before applying and must be able to verify the circumstances causing your economic need. Application processing takes two or more months. You must submit an I-20, an I-765, and

support materials in order to qualify for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD).  
You will need a special photograph and will need to pay a fee.

#### Foreign Visits

If you plan to travel outside the United States while you are an F-1 student, you will need to have the following documents to reenter the United States:

- An unexpired passport.
- A valid visa with a stamp valid beyond your travel date.
- A valid form I-20. This must be signed on page three by the DOS. (*You should ask for this signature two weeks before you leave the United States.*)

#### Travel to Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean Islands

A visit to Canada or the Caribbean (not Cuba) will require a valid passport, a signed RIC SEVIS I-20, or your DS-2019. A trip to Mexico will require a passport, a signed and stamped SEVIS I-20, and your DS-2019.

#### Visa Issuance in Foreign Countries

Certain U.S. consulates have changed their procedures for the visa process. For example, you may be required to interview in person at the consulate. Be sure to check well in advance of your travel plans.

#### Travel in the United States

Since 9/11, air passengers have been subjected to rigorous security checks. You should carry your passport, your I-20, or your DS-2019 with you while traveling anywhere in the United States.

#### J-1 Visa

A J-1 visa is granted by the Department of State (formerly the U.S. Information Agency) to a foreign citizen who has been selected by a sponsor, such as a college, to participate in an exchange visitor program in the United States. A J-1 student may stay in the United States until his/her academic program is completed. You may work on campus eighteen months after you graduate if

your J-1 sponsor approves. You may bring family members if there is sufficient financial support. However, you should check with a U.S. consular office or the Department of State web site before requesting a J-1 status to see if you must return home immediately after completing your studies as is the requirement if you are funded by your home government, a U.S. government agency, or if your skills are in short supply in your country. The web site is: <http://www.state.gov/>

### J-1 Visa Requirements

- 1) **Full-time Enrollment.** You must take 12 credit hours a semester if you are an undergraduate or 9 if you are a graduate student. You must obtain permission from the International Student Office before dropping below these requirements.
- 2) **Employment.** You may work twenty hours per week on campus while school is in session with the approval of your sponsor. You need written approval of a sponsor to work off campus.
- 3) **Valid Passport.** You must keep your passport valid. To renew your passport, contact your country's embassy at Project Visa (<http://www.projectvisa.com> ) or The Electronic Embassy (<http://www.embassy.org> ).
- 4) **Travel Signature.** If you are traveling, you must carry a DS-2019 signed by the RIC DSO.
- 5) **Length of Stay.** A J-1 exchange visitor may stay for the duration of the J-1 status which is the end date on the DS-2019 form plus an additional thirty-day grace period.

### Legal Advice and Services

All Rhode Island College students who are in need of legal service may consult, for free, a lawyer who is hired by Student Community Government. Call the Office of Student Community Government in the Student Union to ask for an appointment. Telephone: (401) 456-8088.

This lawyer, however, is not a specialist in international law. If you need an international specialist, ask the International Student Advisor for a list of lawyers. Persons who are under exclusion or deportation proceedings may be legally represented by:

Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island  
645 Elmwood Avenue  
Providence, RI 02907  
Telephone: (401) 461-5940

For inexpensive legal services feel free to contact:

Rhode Island Legal Services  
56 Pine Street, 4th Floor  
Providence, RI 02903  
Telephone: 401-274-2652 or 1-800-662-5034

Law Office of Saikon Gbehan, LLC  
7 Waterman Avenue  
North Providence, RI 02911  
Telephone: 401-228-0001  
[www.stgattorney.com](http://www.stgattorney.com)