INTERNATIONAL
STUDENT
HANDBOOK

Art Center College of Design

center for the
student experience
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NEW STUDENTS

Congratulations on your acceptance to Art Center! The next step is to secure the proper documents in order to enter the Unites States and begin your studies.

New Students from abroad

To legally enter the U.S., you will need the following documents when you arrive at the port of entry:

- A passport that is valid for at least six (6) months upon entry
- A student visa stamped on your passport
- A SEVIS I-20

Student Visa

Most international students admitted to Art Center obtain F-1 visas. Unless you will be entering the U.S. as a dependent of your parents (such as E-2 or H-4 to study) you should obtain an F-1 student visa (travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html). **Do not enter the U.S. with a B-1/B-2 tourist visa, as you will not be permitted to begin school with this visa.**

To apply for a student visa, you must take the SEVIS I-20 (see below), a passport valid for at least six months into the future, and certification of finances to a U.S. embassy (or consulate) that is located outside the U.S. Be advised that visa applicants are required to appear for an in-person interview. Each embassy (or consulate) sets its own interview policies and procedures regarding visas. Consult the local U.S. embassy or consulate website (travel.state.gov/visa/embassy/embassy_4825.html) for specific application instructions, as well as required application documentation.

Plan ahead so that you can avoid making repeat visits to the embassy. Allow enough time to overcome any unforeseen problems that might arise. Students are encouraged to apply for their visas several weeks before they plan to travel.

SEVIS I-20

To receive the SEVIS I-20 Certificate of Eligibility, you must return the completed **Certification of Finances** form and tuition deposit to:

Art Center College of Design
1700 Lida Street
Pasadena, CA 91103
ATTN: Admissions Office

The Admissions Office will send you the SEVIS I-20 only when it has received the certification of finances and tuition deposit. As soon as you receive your SEVIS I-20 from Art Center, sign on line 11 and read page two, which
describes your benefits and responsibilities. It is important to be aware of your responsibilities as an international student.

**International Transfer Students**

An international transfer student is someone who is currently studying at another U.S. institution on a valid non-immigrant visa and wishes to transfer to Art Center. In order to transfer, you must meet certain requirements to maintain legal status. The international transfer process varies depending on whether you leave the U.S. before you come to Art Center.

If you are currently studying at another school in the U.S. but will be leaving the U.S. prior to coming to Art Center, simply present the Art Center SEVIS I-20 upon re-entry to the U.S. If your visa expires while you are outside the U.S., you will need to apply for a new visa.

If you will not be leaving the U.S., the Transfer Eligibility form must be completed and returned to the Admissions Office. This form would have been included in your acceptance packet. Notify your current school that you will be transferring to Art Center. Have the international student Advisor at your current school complete the Transfer Eligibility form and return the completed form to the Art Center Admissions Office before orientation. This form and tuition deposit must be received before the Admissions Office can issue your new SEVIS I-20. Students who will not be leaving the U.S. must begin their studies at Art Center within five months of transferring out of their current school. Failure to do so will cause you to fall out of status.

You will not be allowed to register for classes until we have verified your status and issued your SEVIS I-20. We cannot guarantee that the process will be completed by registration day unless we are given adequate processing time.

If you are transferring from a U.S. school at which you have not pursued a full-time course of study, you may be out of status. This will require you to apply for reinstatement through USCIS. Notify Art Center immediately if you need to apply for reinstatement.

Students with visa status other than F-1, such as E-2 or H-4, may attend Art Center, but we strongly recommend you change to F-1 visa status. We will assist you with the change of status upon your arrival at Art Center. You must still complete the Transfer Eligibility form and submit it to the Admissions Office. Additionally, you will not be allowed to register for classes until we have verified your status.
DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL

Congratulations on getting your visa! You are now ready to enter the United States to begin your studies.

Date of Arrival
The first step is to determine your date of arrival in the U.S. We recommend you arrive three weeks before the beginning of the term to find housing, get a driver’s license, and get accustomed to Pasadena. New U.S. regulations state that students entering on an F-1 student visa will be permitted to enter the U.S. no earlier than 30 days prior to the program start date indicated on your SEVIS I-20.

Preparation for Departure
Make sure you have all your proper immigration documentation before leaving. You will need to have a valid visa stamp in your passport, a passport valid for at least six months into the future, and Art Center’s SEVIS I-20.

Traveling with Currency
We recommend that you arrive with traveler’s checks. In addition, have some U.S. currency – around $200 – in small denominations ($5, $10, $20) to carry you through the first few days before you can cash your traveler’s checks and/or set up your bank account.

Arrival in the U.S.
When you arrive in the U.S., you will pass through the Immigration stations first. Give the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer your passport, SEVIS I-20, and form I-94 (if you have a paper copy). If you first entered the U.S. after May 2013, you will likely not have a paper copy of form I-94. Instead, a digital record will be created and stored in the CBP data base. The electronic arrival/departure record can be obtained at cbp.gov/I94. The CBP officer will also stamp your passport and indicate a date of admission, class of admission and “admitted until” date. The digital I-94 is the official record of admission into and permission to remain in the U.S. If you are entering with an F-1 student visa, the CBP official will stamp your passport with “F-1,
If you do not receive a “D/S” (duration of status) stamp, contact the Center for Student Experience (626-396-2370) immediately.

Next, you will retrieve your baggage and pass through Customs. Present the CBP Officer with your passport and customs declaration form, which would have been handed to you by the airline or sailing vessel crew.

**Transportation from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)**

If you do not have anyone to pick you up, we suggest you rent a car or take a shuttle bus to a Pasadena hotel. There are a number of shuttle services, taxis, and rental car companies available at LAX. If you are renting a car, you might ask your travel agent to book a car in advance for you. Enterprise Rent-A-Car is one of the only agencies that will rent to drivers under 25 years of age. See the Access Guide ([artcenter.edu/accd/files/Access_Guide.pdf](mailto:artcenter.edu/accd/files/Access_Guide.pdf)) for a listing of transportation services.

**Temporary Housing**

*The Fuller Guest and Conference Center*

700 E. Locust Street
Pasadena, CA 91101
[fuller.edu/guestcenter/](http://fuller.edu/guestcenter/)

Located about 10 minutes by car from Art Center, this is a pleasant, low-cost housing at a local college, Fuller Theological Seminary. The Guest Center offers single rooms and one- and two-bedroom apartments. These can be rented by the day, week, or month.

Call 800-235-2222 x5545 or 626-204-1100 for more information or to make a reservation. To receive our reduced rate, say that you are from Art Center when you call.

**Hotels and Motels**

Many of the hotels and motels in the Pasadena area provide special discounts to our students. See the Access Guide for names and phone numbers. If you call hotels listed in the Access Guide, tell them you are with Art Center to receive special rates.
GETTING SETTLED

Welcome to Pasadena! Now that you have arrived, the next step is to get settled.

Housing

There is no on-campus housing at Art Center. To find a place to live, you can start at the Center for Student Experience (CSE) in Room 200B (626-396-2323).

The CSE has a physical bulletin board outside the office, where people post availability of an entire house or apartment, a room, or someone needing a roommate. The CSE also provides access to a web site (http://offcampushousing.artcenter.edu) with local housing and roommate options from residents around Art Center. Ask the CSE coordinator for the Housing Information flyer. It provides tips for tenants, updated pricing, and local resources.

In addition, Universal Student Housing Services offers affordable housing, specifically to international students, in the homes of approved local families and individuals. Visit usaish.com for more information.

Additional sites that can be useful to your housing search are also available.

- losangeles.craigslist.org
- bevenandbrock.com
  (a property management company in the San Gabriel Valley)
- pasadenastarnews.com
- latimes.com
- westsiderentals.com

Remember, Art Center does not investigate the quality or safety of the housing options provided on any of the above web sites, so exercise caution. Ask around for safe areas and try to bring a friend when checking out housing.
Utilities
After finding a place to live, you will need to contact the utility companies to begin service in your name. The local companies that serve the Pasadena area are:

- Pasadena Water & Power
ci.pasadena.ca.us/waterandpower...........................626-744-4409

- Southern California Gas Company
socalgas.com............................................................800-427-2200

- AT&T – phone service (land line)
att.com.................................................................800-310-2355

If you live with others, someone in the home may already have utility services. You simply share the cost, depending on your arrangements with the owners or roommates.

Transportation
Travel to Art Center from within the greater Los Angeles area is possible without a car. Here are some resources:

- MTA Metro Bus and Rail System
metro.net...............................................................323-GO-METRO (323-466.3876)

- Foothill Transit Authority
foothilltransit.org.................................800-RIDE-INFO (800-743-3463)

- Pasadena Area Rapid Transit Service (ARTS)
ci.pasadena.ca.us/Transportation/Public_Transit_Options

Since services, housing, and Art Center are spread out over a wide area, you might consider buying a car. Art Center’s hillside campus is not located near most residential or commercial areas; and walking or bicycling is not always practical.

Most people buy new or used (pre-owned) cars from car dealerships. Others purchase cars directly from the car owner. Craigslist.org is one popular site to find such cars, but again, you need to exercise caution. In either situation, it might be useful to take a friend or relative with you. Purchasing a car requires research and negotiation skills. You are required by law to purchase auto insurance and register the car with the State. The Access Guide (artcenter.edu/accd/files/Access_Guide.pdf) provides a list of insurance companies.
Before buying a car, apply for a driver’s license. You cannot purchase auto insurance or drive a car without it. Sooner or later, you will need to visit the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Before you visit the DMV, first read about Social Security Numbers below.

**Social Security Number**

The social security number (SSN) was created in 1936 for the sole purpose of tracking the earnings histories of U.S. workers. Since then, use of the SSN has expanded substantially. It is routinely requested by the Department of Motor Vehicles, banks, cell phone companies, and landlords. However, the SSN is assigned ONLY to individuals who have been offered employment in the U.S., and international students typically do not have a SSN.

If you have questions, visit the web site at `socialsecurity.gov` or call 800-772-1213. The nearest Social Security Administration (SSA) office is located at:

Social Security Administration – Pasadena  
104 N. Mentor Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91106  
Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00AM to 4:30PM

**Applying for a SSN**

If you are offered employment, whether on-campus (any job) or off-campus (while on OPT/CPT only), it is necessary to apply for a SSN. You can download the application form (SS-5) and instructions from the `socialsecurity.gov` web site.

Take the following to the nearest SSA office:

- Completed application
- Valid passport, I-94 (visit cbp.gov/I94 to print your electronic I-94), and I-20
- Verification Letters from Int’l Student Advisor & Art Center hiring department (for on campus job) OR Offer Letter from the hiring company (for CPT/OPT)

**State I.D., Driver’s license, and Car Registration**

All of the above documents can be obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). DMV offices can be confusing and/or have long waits. Be prepared for the wait. For faster service, make an appointment ahead of time through the web site (dmv.ca.gov) or call 800-777-0133. The Pasadena DMV office is on 49 S. Rosemeade Boulevard, one block south of Colorado.
Applying for a California State Identification Card
If you do not want a driver's license but want the convenience of having an I.D. card that is lighter than a passport, you might consider applying for a State I.D. card. It looks just like a driver's license and is a government-issued I.D.

- Before you go: make an appointment if you wish
- Take with you: valid passport, I-94 (visit cbp.gov/I94 to print your electronic I-94), SEVIS I-20, and $26 (cash, check, Money Order, ATM/Debit card accepted)
- When you get there:
  - Complete application form DL 44. Submit an original DL 44 form; copies obtained by photocopy, fax, or other methods will not be accepted.
  - Provide a thumb print
  - Have your picture taken
  - Have the SSA “denial letter” just in case (see information above)
  - Verify your birth date by showing your passport and I-20
  - Pay the application fee of $26 (as of April 2012)

Applying for a California Driver’s License (DL)
- Before you go: Study the California Driver Handbook (search DMV website), make an appointment if you wish
- Take with you: valid passport, I-94 (visit cbp.gov/I94 to print your electronic I-94), SEVIS I-20, home country or another U.S. state license (if available), and $31 (cash, check, Money Order, ATM/Debit card accepted)
- When you get there:
  - Complete application form DL 44. Submit an original DL 44 form; copies obtained by photocopy, fax, or other methods will NOT be accepted.
  - Provide Social Security Number; if you are ineligible for a SSN, let officer know you are an international student and show your passport and I-20.
  - Verify your birth date and legal presence (passport, I-94, I-20)
  - Provide your true full name; if your name does not match the one on your passport, you must provide additional acceptable document such as a marriage certificate, adoption, or name change document.
  - Pass a traffic laws and traffic signs test (sample questions on DMV site)
  - Pass a vision exam and provide a thumb print
  - Have your picture taken
  - Pay the application fee of $31 (as of April 2012)
• If you have a license from another state, the DMV may waive the driving test and immediately issue you an interim license (valid 90 days) until you receive your official photo license in the mail.

• If you have a license from another country or have an international driving license, you will be required to take a driving test. You will have to make a driving test appointment for another day via phone or web site. You will need to provide proof of insurance and financial responsibility at that time.

• If you have not been licensed before, you will be issued a learner’s permit and sent home. You are to practice driving until you feel ready to take the driving test. When you practice driving, you must be accompanied by an adult who is age 25 or older and holds a valid California license. This person must sit close enough to you to take control of the vehicle if necessary. It is illegal for you to drive alone. When ready, set up an appointment to take the driving test.

You have three chances to pass the driving test. If you fail, you may practice for a while, and then make another appointment. There is no waiting period, but you must make an appointment. You must pay a $6 fee for each additional driving test that is administered under one application for an original or renewal driver’s license.

After you pass your driving test you will be issued an interim license valid for 90 days until you receive your new photo license in the mail. Double-check your name and address before you leave the DMV and tell the DMV representative if you have moved or if anything is incorrect. If you have not received your license after 60 days, call 800-777-0133. Have your interim license with you to provide information when requested.

Driving While Under the Influence (of alcohol or drugs, aka DUI)
A DUI is a serious offense. If you have been drinking, do not drive. It’s really as simple as that. A DUI conviction can have serious implications for student visa renewals abroad or an application for a visa in a new category (such as H-1B).
Registering Your Car

Information needed to register your car is available at this web site: dmv.ca.gov/vr/vr.htm

Because the circumstances of ownership are different for each person, it is not practical to provide detailed information here. Instead, download forms that apply to you from the web site (dmv.ca.gov/forms/reg/reg343.pdf).

However, here is important information you should know when you register a car:

• For faster service, make an appointment via the DMV web site in advance.
• You must have proof of financial responsibility, such as a document from your auto insurance company or a cash deposit of $35,000 with the DMV.
• You need a SSN or SSA denial letter (see above) to apply for auto insurance.
• You must enter a dollar amount for the value of the car on the registration application form. Typically, this amount is what you paid for the car.

Banking

As a student, you are responsible for paying for expenses such as rent, utilities, and tuition. In general, it is unwise to keep large amounts of cash on your person or in your home. It is relatively safer to open a bank account and pay for expenses by personal check or debit card. Besides, your check can be used as a receipt/proof of payment. When you open an account, you will need to deposit money into it. You can deposit cash or traveler's checks or arrange for a wire transfer from your home country's bank. Consult the Access Guide for a list of banks in the Pasadena area.

If you want to wire funds from your home country to pay your tuition, you may use the following information on Art Center’s bank:

Wells Fargo Bank
1000 Lakes Drive, Suite 250
West Covina, CA 91790
Account # 400-0022293
ABA # 121-000-248

Make sure that your name (not your parents’ names) is on the transfer information. If you have questions or encounter any problems, contact Art Center’s Accounting Office (Cashier) at 626-396-2332.

Cell Phone

You may need to purchase a new cell phone for use in the U.S. You can purchase a cell phone and usage plan at large retailers such as Target, Best Buy, or Staples. You can also visit cell phone retailers such as Apple, T-
Mobile, or AT&T. Many consumers incorrectly believe that signing up for a contract plan is the only option. Pay-as-you-go cell phone service has come a long way since it first became available. T-Mobile, Verizon and AT&T (and others) now provide limited or unlimited monthly service without a two-year contract, and at affordable prices. This option, which does not require a social security number, may be something to consider.

Otherwise, cell phone companies will request a SSN in order to enter into a contract. If customers cannot provide a SSN, they are typically asked to provide a $500 security deposit. This is necessary to ensure payment of any outstanding bills in the event someone chooses to leave the country without paying.
ORIENTATION, REGISTRATION, and ACADEMIC POLICIES

Once you are settled into your new environment, the next step is to begin your studies.

Writing Placement Test
The purpose of this test is to place you in the correct level of Art Center’s required writing class. All undergraduate students must take the placement test with the following exceptions:

1. You have completed a college level English Composition class from a regionally-accredited U.S. college or university with a grade of “B” or better; OR
2. You have taken an Advanced Placement (AP) test in English Composition or English Literature with a score of 4 or 5

Those who have already fulfilled the class requirement as described above will receive transfer credit for the class, and is, therefore, exempt from the writing placement test.

Students are responsible for providing an official college transcript or official AP score report in order to receive transfer credit. Classes taken at non-U.S. colleges, where the language of instruction is English, will be evaluated on an individual basis. Exchange students are exempt from all testing requirements. Any other exception to the testing policy will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Chair of Humanities and Design Sciences or her/his designee.

Optional Digital Design Waiver Tests
The Digital Design Waiver Test is not required. However, it is intended for students who feel they already have significant experience in a particular digital design class.

Undergraduate students in majors listed below can take a waiver test to be exempted from the designated digital design class.

2. Digital Design II test: for students in Graphic Design
3. Imaging I test: for students in Photography & Imaging

Orientation Week
All new students are required to attend four days of orientation before the first day of classes each term. At these meetings you will receive important information regarding Art Center policies, procedures, and resources. You will
also meet members of the Art Center community who are here to assist you during your studies.

International Student Orientation
As part of Orientation Week, a special orientation session is held for international students. This usually occurs on Wednesday, but pay attention to the e-mail(s) from the International Student Advisor.

International students will be required to present a valid passport (stamped with a valid U.S. visa), I-94 (visit cbp.gov/I94 to print your electronic I-94), and SEVIS I-20. It is critical that all new international students attend this special orientation. At this session, you will meet fellow international students, learn about maintaining your visa status, and gather some tips on adjusting to American life and Art Center. You will also meet representatives from the Center for the Student Experience (CSE) who will be available to assist you with nonacademic concerns, including visa status and immigration.

Registration
Registration for new students takes place on the Friday morning of Orientation Week. Prior to registration, the CSE will need to validate your immigration documents and verify that you are in status and eligible to enroll in school as a full-time student. It is for this reason that your immigration documents are collected at International Student Orientation. Be sure to bring them with you. If it is determined that you are not in status, you will not be permitted to register for the term. If you have any concerns regarding your immigration status, contact the International Student Advisor at 626-396-2370 well in advance of registration to resolve any issues. Failure to do so in a timely manner may result in registration delays or denial of attendance.

Academic Policies
Student Handbook
The Art Center Student Handbook is presented to all students at orientation in a USB format. It serves as your guide to Art Center’s policies, services, and facilities. While the International Student Handbook focuses more on the concerns you will have as an international student, it is not a substitute for the Art Center Student Handbook. You are responsible for the material in both publications. Take time to read both handbooks and keep them handy as a reference. If something seems confusing or contents in the two handbooks are not consistent, ask for clarification. If you are not sure how something will affect you as an international student, please ask the CSE.

Full-Time Studies
As an international student, you must be enrolled “full-time” at least two terms of each year, making normal progress toward degree requirements. Full time status, for both graduate and undergraduate students, means being enrolled in a minimum of 12 units each term. This minimum is enforced,
regardless of whether you are taking only studio or only liberal arts courses. You may drop below the 12-unit minimum only during your final term at Art Center or if you are experiencing medical issues. However, you must discuss this with the International Student Advisor before enrolling in fewer than 12 units. Failure to do so will cause you to fall out of status.

**Academic Year, Term Off, and Lite Term**

At Art Center, two consecutive terms of study constitute one full academic year. Art Center Lite (ACL) is a term during which students may enroll in less than 12 units. Each student is eligible for a maximum of two (2) ACL terms while pursuing a degree program. The policy and procedure is slightly different for international students.

International students are permitted to take one term off or ACL, only after having completed one full academic year. You must notify the International Student Advisor that you intend to take a term off or ACL. In addition, you must obtain approval from the International Student Advisor prior to submitting a Leave of Absence (LOA) form to Enrollment Services. If there is no LOA form on file and you fail to register for the term, you will be considered out of status.

After taking a term off, you must enroll as a full-time student during the following term. You must complete two consecutive terms before being eligible to take another term off. International students may not take two consecutive terms off. Doing so will cause you to fall out of status.

International students may not withdraw from school during the term without prior authorization from the International Student Advisor. Withdrawing without prior permission will cause you to fall out of status, and you must leave the U.S. immediately.

Students who withdraw with prior authorization are given a 15-day grace period to prepare for departure from the U.S.

**Scholarships**

International students are eligible to apply for Art Center scholarships. Scholarship eligibility is determined by grades, portfolio, and financial need. You should attend the scholarship information meeting held at the beginning of each term to learn about the application process. Check the academic calendar in the Student Handbook for the exact meeting date. Scholarship applications are always submitted for the next term (i.e., you apply for a scholarship during your first term to receive a scholarship at the beginning of your second term). For new international students interested in scholarships, contact the Admissions Office when you apply for admission to Art Center.
Internships
Students in their fifth term or above, with a minimum GPA of 2.5, may be eligible to apply for internships. International students should attend the internship eligibility meeting held at the beginning of each term to learn about the process. Important information regarding employment authorization through curricular practical training (CPT) is presented at the meeting. You may not begin your internship until you have applied and been approved for CPT.

Your Responsibility to stay Informed
It is especially important for all international students to meet with the International Student Advisor upon arrival to review immigration matters. The International Student Advisor will provide regular updates concerning maintaining your status. It is imperative that all international students stay up to date with the latest immigration regulations. Failure to do so can cause you to fall out of status. The CSE provides workshops throughout the year regarding visa status and immigration to facilitate these updates. The following section of this handbook outlines your basic immigration responsibilities.

Be sure to check your Art Center e-mail regularly. Look for fliers, read the weekly CSE newsletter and international student listserv e-mail announcements, and Art Center bulletins. The International Student Advisor is available to help you with your concerns and invites you to stop by the office regularly. However, staying informed is your responsibility. The CSE and Art Center will not assume responsibility for any changes to your student or visa status that may result from the student’s failure to stay apprised of important information.

Check your Art Center e-mail every week!
IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS

Like all nations, the United States has laws governing people residing temporarily within its borders. The following information highlights some of the rules and regulations set forth by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). If you understand and follow these rules and regulations, you will be able to maintain your legal F-1 student status in the U.S. However, please be aware that the federal immigration regulations can and do change. Therefore, if you are uncertain how an event will affect your immigration status or have any additional questions about these regulations, stop by the CSE for clarification. A major role of the International Student Advisor is to provide advice about the regulations about F-1 non-immigrant status and to assist students in obtaining the benefits that are legally permitted.

This section provides a general summary of the basic terminology and regulations that all F-1 students should know while studying in the U.S. This material should not be used as a legal reference. Because immigration law is subject to change often, and because each student has a unique set of circumstances, you should always consult the International Student Advisor for the latest information. For additional information on these and other immigration-related topics, please stop by the CSE.

Immigration Documents

Passport
This document is issued by the government of your country. Your passport must be valid at all times during your stay in the U.S. Any time you need to interact with USCIS or re-enter the U.S., your passport must be valid for at least six months into the future. If your passport is nearing its expiration date, you may be able to renew it from within the US. Contact your nearest consulate or your embassy in Washington, D.C., for renewal procedures and applications.

U.S. Visa Stamp
The visa stamp in your passport issued by a U.S. consulate or embassy allows you to enter the U.S. and must be valid any time you wish to enter the country. Some visas are issued for “multiple entry” and others for “single entry” to the U.S. If you have a “multiple entry” visa, you can use it to re-enter the US any number of times during the period of validity. Once you have entered the U.S, your visa can expire. If you plan on traveling outside of the U.S. and your visa has expired, you need to apply for a new visa stamp at one of the U.S. consulates abroad.
**Immigration/Visa Status**
This refers to the type of visa you hold, such as F-1, J-1, E-2, H-4, etc.

**I-94 Form & Duration of Status (D/S)**
Each person who entered the U.S. **before** May 2013 received a Form I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record). Those who enter **after** May 2013 will have a digital Arrival/Departure record in the Customs & Border Protection (CBP) data base. To get a paper copy of this digital record, visit cbp.gov/I94 **after** entering the U.S.

In addition, the CBP officer will stamp your passport with the following information: date and place of entry, visa status, and date until which you are permitted to stay. Instead of an actual date to which you are permitted to stay, most students should have the notation “D/S” on their I-94. This notation signifies that you may stay in the U.S. for “Duration of Status.” Therefore, as long as you maintain your student status (see the information below about maintaining F-1 status), you can stay in the US until the completion of your studies or the end of your post-completion optional practical training (OPT).

**SEVIS I-20**
The SEVIS I-20 is also known as the *Certificate of Eligibility for Non-Immigrant (F-1) Student Status*. Issued to you by Art Center, it is the primary record of your F-1 student status in the U.S. You must ensure that this document is valid at all times. Therefore, if you change your degree program or major, you must contact the International Student Advisor for a new SEVIS I-20. Page three of the SEVIS I-20 documents various student transactions, such as school transfer, curricular and optional practical training authorizations, and travel validation required for re-entry to the U.S.
Maintaining F-1 Status

Passport
Keep your passport valid at all times.

Duration of Status
F-1 students are allowed to stay in the US for the duration of status (D/S), which includes
• The time during which the student is pursuing a full course of study and making normal progress toward completing that course; plus
• The time the student may be working in authorized optional practical training (OPT) after completion of studies; plus
• A 60-day period after completion of an academic program or post-completion optional practical training.

USCIS grants duration of status to F-1 students by entering the notation “D/S” on both the passport and I-94 digital record.

Limitations on Duration of Status
The “complete studies by” date in item #5 on your SEVIS I-20 is the date by which USCIS expects you to complete the requirements for your academic program. If you will be graduating before the date listed on your SEVIS I-20, the International Student Advisor will change the date to reflect the earlier expected date of graduation.

Full Course of Study
You must register and attend school as a full-time student two terms of each year, making progress in degree requirements. If you are eligible to take a term off for your annual vacation or for an internship, you must notify Art Center of your intent to do so before the beginning of the term you plan to take off. Not showing up for registration without prior notification is a failure to maintain a full course of study. Withdrawing from school during the term is also a failure to maintain a full course of study.

You must be enrolled for a minimum of 12 units in every term, regardless of whether you are taking only studio or only liberal arts courses. The only exceptions to the 12-unit minimum requirement are medical issues or your final term at Art Center. However, you must discuss this with the International Student Advisor before enrolling in fewer than 12 units. Failure to do so will cause you to fall out of status.
**Working**
Do not work without employment authorization from the International Student Advisor or USCIS, as required by law. Working without authorization is a serious violation of F-1 student regulations. Consult the section on employment authorization for approved work opportunities.

**Change of Address**
Report a change of address to update your SEVIS information within ten days of moving. Stop by the CSE and fill out a change of address form right away.

**Out of Status/Reinstatement**
You may be “out of status” if:

- the date for completion of studies on your SEVIS I-20 has expired
- you have not maintained your F-1 status as defined above
- you have taken two consecutive terms off
- you have worked without proper employment authorization

In this situation, you should contact the International Student Advisor immediately to seek advice about the possibility of reinstating your status with USCIS.

**Travel Abroad and Re-entry**
If you are planning to take a trip outside the U.S., you must have page three of your SEVIS I-20 endorsed (signed) by the International Student Advisor. In endorsing the SEVIS I-20, the International Student Advisor verifies that you are maintaining F-1 status and are eligible to continue as a student at Art Center upon your return to the U.S. This signature is required even for short trips (e.g. Mexico or Canada) outside the U.S.

Any time you plan to leave the country, it is always a good idea to stop by the CSE to let the International Student Advisor know. Then we can provide you with the latest travel update and ensure that your immigration paperwork is current and valid for re-entry to the U.S. Plan ahead and get the travel endorsement at least one week in advance of your departure.
Employment

Employment, as defined by USCIS, is any type of work performed or services provided on either a part-time or full-time basis in exchange for money or other compensation (including but not limited to tuition, fees, books, supplies, lodging, food, or any other benefit). All employment requires authorization from the International Student Advisor (PDSO/DSO) or directly from USCIS. Working without proper authorization is a serious violation of student status regulations. Students should therefore consult with the International Student Advisor before taking up any employment.

On-Campus Employment
F-1 students in lawful status are permitted to work on campus provided that such employment does not exceed 20 hours per week during the academic term. During term breaks, students may work more than 20 hours per week. You may obtain authorization from the International Student Advisor prior to working.

Off-Campus Employment Based on Severe Economic Hardship
After being in F-1 status for at least one full academic year, an F-1 student may be eligible to apply for employment based on economic necessity. The requirements for this category of employment are quite stringent, and USCIS requires significant evidence of economic hardship. The student must have documentation verifying that an unforeseen change in financial circumstances has arisen since acquiring F-1 status. The application for employment authorization must be filed directly with USCIS.

Practical Training
Students are not permitted to engage in off-campus employment unless it is for practical training.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
F-1 international students in their fifth, sixth, or seventh term may apply for CPT authorization if 1) they have been enrolled full-time for at least one full academic year, and 2) they have not taken two consecutive terms off prior to applying.

CPT work or internship must be directly related to the major area of study and also be integral to the major. CPT is not meant to be a convenient employment opportunity, but must have a valid purpose in the student’s program of study. Students may apply for CPT authorization with the International Student Advisor. For additional information about internships, attend the meeting held at the beginning of each term by the Office of Career Development.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)
OPT is an opportunity to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to practical work experience off campus. A student may hold a job that is
directly related to the student’s major field of study for up to one year while in F-1 status. OPT may occur before or after the completion of studies. The cumulative number of months available for OPT is 12 months. Any time used for pre-completion OPT is deducted from the cumulative total. For example, if you use three months of pre-completion OPT, then you only have nine months remaining to use for post-completion OPT.

When engaging in pre-completion OPT during the school term, the work schedule is limited to 20 hours per week. During breaks between terms and during a term off, it is permissible to work full-time.

Post-completion OPT authorization is for full-time use only. Students who have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for at least one full academic year (minimum two terms) and have not taken two consecutive terms off may apply for OPT employment authorization directly with USCIS. The work must be directly related to the major field of study. Because authorization can take up to 90 days to obtain, students are encouraged to apply well in advance of the desired employment dates. Stop by the CSE or attend the OPT Information Session held at the beginning of each term for more information.

**Extension of Stay**

If your SEVIS I-20 is about to expire and you need additional time to complete your degree program, you must request an extension of your stay from the International Student Advisor. This extension must be requested 30 days prior to the expiration date found on item #5 of your SEVIS I-20. Art Center grants undergraduate students 48 months and graduate students 36 months to complete their programs of study. Students easily complete their studies within the time given, and therefore extensions of stay are rarely necessary.

**Change of Status**

Students who enroll at Art Center with a visa other than F-1 (e.g., E-2, H-4) are encouraged to change their status to F-1 to enjoy the various F-1 benefits, such as on-campus employment and practical training. All students must change to F-1 status prior to their 21st birthday. If you will be turning 21 soon, stop by the CSE to initiate your change of status. Individuals in B-1/B-2 or F-2 status are not permitted to enroll as full-time students at Art Center. B-1/B-2 individuals must apply for F-1 status with USCIS and be approved prior to starting school. F-2 individuals may start school after an application for change of status (to F-1) has been submitted to USCIS. However, this should be done with caution, as a change in status denial may also result in a violation of F-2 status.

Students who have graduated and are interested in changing to another visa status (e.g., H-1B work visa) are encouraged to consult with an immigration attorney regarding application procedures.
Transfers of School/Program

If you wish to leave Art Center to continue your academic program at another school in the U.S., you must follow the transfer procedures established by USCIS for F-1 students. Please see the International Student Advisor for more information about transferring.

It is the responsibility of the student to comply with immigration regulations and to know and understand how immigration regulations affect a given situation. If the student fails to fulfill these responsibilities, then the student may not be eligible to continue to receive (or to apply for) benefits provided to F-1 students. For example, the student may not be eligible to continue any type of employment (even on-campus employment) or to apply for school transfer, practical training, or other F-1 benefits. In some situations, the student may even be subject to deportation.

This information is always subject to change, so please make sure to read all announcements, letters, and e-mail from the CSE. For additional immigration information, consult the USCIS web site at uscis.gov.
TAXES

Sources of U.S. income include earnings from on-campus employment or practical training, scholarships, and investments. Depending on your income, you may also be required to file a California tax return (ftb.ca.gov).

The US tax code is complicated, and your tax responsibilities may be affected by various tax treaties between the U.S. and other countries. The University of Texas (Austin) publishes information on line: http://world.utexas.edu/isss/tax/ that may help you understand your tax obligations.

The CSE is neither trained nor qualified to assist you with your taxes or to offer any tax advice. In order to ensure that you are submitting the correct and necessary forms, you may choose to consult with a tax professional. You can also visit the IRS web site (irs.gov) or the eduPASS web site (edupass.org/finaid/taxes.phtml) for additional information.

The tax filing deadline is usually April 15 of each year. You should start thinking about filing your tax return as early as January. Do not wait until the last minute. If you plan to use a tax professional, set up a meeting well in advance of April 15. Appointments may be difficult to secure as the deadline approaches.

Each year, everyone, regardless of immigration status, is responsible for submitting a complete and accurate income tax statement to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Even if you did not receive any income from U.S. sources, you must still file Form 8843 with the IRS. If you fail to file a tax return, you could be subject to substantial monetary fines or even, in extreme cases involving fraud, loss of your immigration status.
STAYING HEALTHY

Adjusting to a new country and a new college environment like Art Center means excitement and challenge. Your classes, projects, and studies will keep you busy beyond your expectations, but staying healthy should still be a priority and personal responsibility. Your diet, exercise, and time management practices will enable you to maintain a good level of physical and emotional balance.

Disability Services
Art Center provides accommodations for students who have a documented physical or learning disability. If you need classroom accommodations, please visit the Disability Coordinator in the CSE before the term begins, or as soon as the disability is diagnosed.

Health Insurance
You will automatically receive medical insurance as an Art Center student. This insurance policy is included in your tuition. FAQ handout and claim forms are available from the CSE and will be provided at orientation. This insurance policy is mandatory and cannot be waived through coverage by other plans. Coverage begins on the first Saturday of each academic term and continues through each official school break. Students on a Leave of Absence may purchase the insurance plan for ONE term per plan year. This is strongly recommended to avoid medical bills and pre-existing condition limitations during your term off.

It is important that Art Center is informed of your most current address because the health insurance card is mailed to the address that is in effect during enrollment/payment of fees. For additional information, visit aetnastudenthealth.com

Health and Wellness Resources
The CSE sponsors health, wellness, and safety workshops throughout the year and carries educational literature on various health-related topics.

Personal Counseling
Staff members in the CSE are available to discuss any problem, big or small, with ensured confidentiality. In addition, confidential brief counseling services by professional therapists are available to our students for 1-5 sessions per term. Also, referrals are made to off-campus resources based on the individual’s needs.

Smoking Policy
Smoking is not allowed in any enclosed portion of the campus or any stairs leading to a building entrance or on the Hillside Campus Bridge. California state law prohibits smoking within 20 feet of any building.
WHERE TO GET HELP AT SCHOOL

Art Center staff and department contact information is available at inside.artcenter.edu, and additional campus resources can be found in Chapter 9 of the Student Handbook.

Center for Student Experience (CSE)
The Center for Student Experience is your first stop when seeking information, advice, and assistance related to your nonacademic needs. Staff members are generally available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to assist you. Most of the time, your questions can be easily answered with an information handout. Other times, short questions can be handled during walk-in hours. For more involved matters, call ahead to schedule an appointment at 626-396-2323.

For international student advising, contact Jeonghan Ryu........626-396-2370
Jeonghan.Ryu@artcenter.edu

For student support services, contact Kendra Stanifer.................626-396-2396
Kendra.Stanifer@artcenter.edu

For student development programs, contact Celeste Guarneri...626-396-2473
Celeste.Guarneri@artcenter.edu
For counseling services, contact Darshana Lele..........................626-396-2357
Darshana.Lele@artcenter.edu

Associate Provost of Student Affairs
The Dean of Student Affairs is available for students who want to discuss a problem or receive general advice. The Dean is your advocate.

Raymond Quirolgico...............................................................626-396-2325
Raymond.Quirolgico@artcenter.edu

Cashier (Accounting Office)
Tuition and fees payment information is sent via your Art Center e-mail. For questions about payment plans, payment by mail or in person, contact.................................................................626-396-2332

Campus Safety
The Campus Safety department provides security and emergency response services for the College at the Hillside and South campuses 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A safety escort program is available to students when walking across campus after dark. Contact a Campus Safety Officer or the receptionist in the Student Gallery any hour of the day or night. Program this number into your cell phone ..................................................626-396-2299

Career and Professional Development
The Career and Professional Development Office provides general career counseling and specific information on available jobs and internships. International students need to stop by the CSE to discuss regulations and eligibility for employment in the U.S. .................................................................626-396-2320

Department Chairs Office (DCO)
The Department Chairs office is your first point of contact for academic advising and any academic questions ........................................626-396-2343

Emergency
If you feel that your personal safety is threatened at any time, do not hesitate to call this number. It works everywhere in the U.S. and should be programmed into your cell phone.................................................................911

Enrollment Services
The Enrollment Services staff will assist you with class selection and class schedule changes..........................................................626-396-2314

Financial Aid
The Financial Aid Office can help you find on-campus employment and answer scholarship questions. International students must first stop by the CSE to obtain on-campus employment authorization......................626-396-2215
Student Store
Books, art/school supplies, computers/accessories, and Art Center logo merchandise are available at the Student Store, across from the cafeteria
..................................................................................................................................626-396-2227

Writing Center
The Writing Center provides individualized assistance for all students, from first term to graduate level. Besides writing assignments, the Writing Center can also help with reading and research.........................................................Room 202A
SOCIAL LIFE AT ART CENTER

A good social life is important to a student’s success. Recreation, diversion, and friends contribute to a balanced life.

Degrees of Friendship

Just as it probably does in your own culture, it takes time for friendships and close relationships to develop among Americans. You may hear Americans refer to acquaintances, such as persons who happen to sit together in class, as “friends.” There are, however, degrees of friendship.

Greeting people is the first step toward building a relationship. Common greetings in the U.S. include, “Hi, how are you?” or “How are you doing?” These are polite phrases—not necessarily questions—and you will find that the person asking may not always wait for a response. This does not mean the person greeting you is being rude; it is merely a reflection of the social customs in the U.S.

As an international student, try to make an effort to meet people so that friendships can develop. Talk to people, even if your English is not strong. Art Center is a very international community. Take this opportunity to get to know people from different cultural backgrounds. Because crossing borders to study is a unique and powerful experience, some students initially find that they have more in common with other international students than they do with Americans. However, do not let this keep you from making American friends. You will develop a better understanding of American culture and values if you also make the effort to seek out Americans.

Cafeteria

The primary student social center on campus is the cafeteria. Students can have most of their meals here, as it is open Mondays – Thursdays 7:30 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.; Fridays 7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.; and Saturdays 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Daily menus and updated hours are available from a link at Inside Art Center.
**Student Organizations**

Participating in student life outside the classroom is a great way to make friends. There are many student organizations at Art Center representing many student interests. You will find cultural and religious organizations, sports clubs, student government, and social groups.

If you want to enhance your leadership skills, you will find a number of opportunities on campus. You can choose to run for **Art Center Student Government (ACSG)** office or lead an international student club or other campus organization. You can also organize activities with the CSE or volunteer with many community programs. These are all opportunities to meet and work with others on issues that matter to you. Being involved is one of the best ways to develop new connections outside of classes at Art Center.

Current information, schedules of meetings, and special cultural events are announced in the weekly CSE e-mail.

**Outside Art Center**

Pasadena and Los Angeles offer a wide variety of restaurants, theaters, and cultural activities. You can buy maps, guides, and newspapers at local bookstores and newsstands. Visit the official City of Pasadena ([ci.pasadena.ca.us](http://ci.pasadena.ca.us)) and Los Angeles ([ci.la.ca.us](http://ci.la.ca.us)) web sites for more resources. A **Guide to Life in Pasadena** is also included in this handbook.
RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

The following information is provided for your convenience and reference. Art Center and the Center for Student Experience do not endorse any of the following web sites or companies.

Measurement Conversions
convert-me.com/en

World Time
timeanddate.com/worldclock

Currency Exchange
x-rates.com

Government Sites
US Department of State – state.gov
US Citizenship and Immigration Services – uscis.gov
US Internal Revenue Service – irs.gov
US Postal Service – usps.com
State of California – ca.gov
City of Pasadena – ci.pasadena.ca.us
City of Los Angeles – ci.la.ca.us

Entertainment & News
cnn.com
imdb.com
latimes.com
nbcnews.com
moviefone.com
netflix.com
ticketmaster.com

Art & Music
getty.edu
huntington.org
pasadenasymphony.org
lacma.org
moca-la.org
musiccenter.org
nortonsimon.org
pacificasiamuseum.org
nhm.org
caam.ca.gov
**Housing & Moving Resources**
- offcampushousing.artcenter.edu
- apartments.com
- move.com
- losangeles.craigslist.org
- dca.ca.gov/legal/landlordbook/catenant.pdf

**Travel**
- cheaptickets.com
- expedia.com
- priceline.com
- travelocity.com

**Search Engines**
- google.com
- yellowpages.com
DIRECTIONS TO ART CENTER

For automated phone directions to the campus, call 626.396.2246.

▪ **FROM DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES**
  North on 110 Freeway, approximately 3 miles past Dodger Stadium to Orange Grove Boulevard exit (L), go 2 miles to Holly Street signal (L), to Linda Vista (R) (you will be entering a residential area); continue for 2 miles to Lida Street signal (L).*

▪ **FROM LAX AREA**
  North on 405 Freeway, East on 10 Freeway, to North 110 Freeway, then follow directions from “Downtown Los Angeles.”

▪ **FROM SANTA MONICA AREA**
  East on 10 Freeway to North 110 Freeway, then follow directions above “From Downtown Los Angeles.”

▪ **FROM NORTH SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AREA**
  East on 210 Freeway, exit Berkshire (L), at first signal (R); follow “Rose Bowl” signs, curve to the (R), follow Linda Vista (L), to Lida Street signal (R).*

▪ **FROM BURBANK/SOUTH SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AREA**
  East on 134 Freeway (passing Glendale, before 210 Freeway), exit on Linda Vista, follow signs posted (R, L, R) and continue for 2 miles to Lida Street signal (L).*

▪ **FROM ORANGE COUNTY AREA**
  North on 605 Freeway, to West 210 Freeway, to West 134 Freeway (transfer in Pasadena area), exit Orange Grove; go directly to the next signal, Linda Vista (R) (you will be entering a residential area); follow for 2 miles to Lida Street signal (L).*

*Continue on Lida Street to the top of the hill; you will see the Art Center sign on your left. Follow the drive; the student parking lot is located at the top of MacMinn Drive, past the main building.
Art Center and Surrounding Neighborhoods

60 Cities within 15 miles of PASADENA, CA

ALHAMBRA
ALTADENA*
ARCADIA*
AZUSA
BALDWIN PARK
BELL
BELL GARDENS
BEVERLY HILLS
BURBANK
CITY OF INDUSTRY
COVINA
CULVER CITY
DODGERTOWN
DOWNEY
DUARTE
EL MONTE
GLENDALE/Eagle Rock*
GLENDORA
HACIENDA HEIGHTS
HUNTINGTON PARK
INGLEWOOD
LA CANADA LINTRIDGE*
LA CRESCENTA
LA HABRA
LA PUENTE
LOS ANGELES
MAYWOOD
MONROVIA
MONTEBELLO
MONTEREY PARK
MOUNT WILSON
NORTH HILLS
NORTH HOLLYWOOD
PACOIMA
PICO RIVERA
ROSEMEAD
ROWLAND HEIGHTS
SAN GABRIEL
SAN MARINO*
SANTA FE SPRINGS
SIERRA MADRE*
SOUTH EL MONTE
SOUTH GATE
SOUTH PASADENA*
STUDIO CITY
SUN VALLEY
SUNLAND
SYLMAR
TEMPLE CITY
TOLUCA LAKE
TUJUNGA
UNIVERSAL CITY
VALLEY VILLAGE
VALYERMO
VERDUGO CITY
WALNUT
WEST COVINA
WEST HOLLYWOOD
WHITTIER

*Cities that border Pasadena

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The information included in this handbook and the attached *International Student Guide to Life in Pasadena* is intended only for members of the community at Art Center College of Design. Readers must understand that the information contained is subject to change at any time, and may not necessarily apply to people outside the Art Center community.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the materials and information presented in this handbook are accurate. However, the handbook is not intended to be used as a legal reference.

Portions of this handbook were compiled using resources from other institutions, including California Institute of Technology, Occidental College, University of Southern California; NAFSA: Association of International Educators; and 8CFR214.2(f).

07/2014