



Providence Christian College

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

As a Reformed Christian institution, Providence Christian College is dedicated to preparing students who are firmly committed to biblical truth, thoroughly educated in the liberal arts, and fully engaged in their church, their community, and the world around them. At Providence, rigorous academic instruction and a Christ-centered world view are foundational to our college community. Classes have low student to professor ratios, enabling many personal interactions and mentoring opportunities. Providence students are making history, setting standards, and establishing traditions.

This handbook is written in order to help you with the application process and the transition to studying at Providence. The information provided here is just a small amount of the applicable regulations concerning international students. Before making decisions that might impact your eligibility to study in the United States, please contact the International Student Advisor (**ISA**). Booklet #1 and Booklet #4 in the If You Want to Study in the United States series from EducationUSA are very informative (<http://www.educationusa.state.gov>).

COST OF LIVING

Conveniently located in Southern California, Providence offers the potential for unique opportunities and experiences. This translates to a living cost from \$10,000 to \$12,000 which takes into account: on-campus housing, health insurance, books & supplies, student fees, and personal expenses such as a laptop, basic goods, and clothing. This living cost does not include trips between the United States and your home country. If you plan to live off-campus, you should plan to add commuting expenses. Bringing family members with you will, of course, increase your monthly expenses.

Providence also requires a one-time security deposit of US\$ 2,000 (US\$ 1,000 for Canadian and Mexican citizens). This deposit will be fully refunded upon the completion of your studies or when you leave Providence Christian College. The deposit insures that you have sufficient funds to return to your home country at the end of your studies.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Having all the information required is essential for the Admissions Committee to make its decision regarding your application. Therefore, your application will not be considered until all the required documents have been received. We recommend that you begin the process approximately twelve months prior to the academic year in which you hope to enroll.

1. **Providence Christian College Application for Admission (International Student):**
Complete the application either by typing or by printing legibly in blue or black ink. Be sure to sign the last page of the application.



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2. **Non-refundable US\$ 25 Application Fee:** If the complete application is received by December 31st, this application fee is waived. Otherwise, send the funds by money order.
3. **Completed Essays:** Two essay questions are found on page 6 of the application. Please type your responses (double spaced, 1 inch margins, size 12 font).
4. **Official High School Transcript and/or National Exam Test Results:** If your school is outside of the United States or Canada, please have your transcript evaluated by a current member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). We require a course-by-course report. Please visit www.naces.org for more information.
5. **Official Transcripts for Any/All Colleges Attended:** If you have attended a college or university, have an official transcript sent to Providence. Again, if it is outside of the United States or Canada, please have it evaluated by a current member of NACES.
6. **Educational History:** Complete this summary of your educational history. Follow the directions given on the form.
7. **Proof of English Language Proficiency:** At this time, Providence does not offer English courses for non-native speakers. If English is not your native language or your secondary education was not conducted in English, you must demonstrate proficiency in English either by (1) a minimum IELTS band score of 7.0 (Academic or General Training) or by (2) a minimum TOEFL score of 563 (paper-based test), 223 (computer-based test), or 85 (web-based test). Students need a minimum of 21 on the writing portion and the reading portion of the web-based TOEFL. In addition to the TOEFL test, you would be required to have a telephone interview.
8. **ACT or SAT Reasoning Test Results:** Typically, you must pre-register for the tests at least one month in advance of the test date. The results of either test are used for admissions as well as class placement. Currently, a copy of the results is sufficient as we do not yet have a school code for direct reporting. You will find more information on testing locations and test dates at www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/about.html or www.actstudent.org
9. **Academic Reference:** Please have a teacher, counselor, or administrator who knows your academic abilities well complete the academic reference and send it directly to the Office of Admissions. Providing an addressed and pre-stamped envelope is suggested.
10. **Pastoral Reference:** This reference may be completed by either your pastor, youth pastor, or an elder at your church.
11. **Financial Resources Statement:** International students need to provide financial evidence that shows you have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period of your intended stay. As there are limited funds available, it is essential for you to start looking early for sponsorship if you are unable to completely fund your tuition and living expenses. You may want to check with your church, various government agencies, or international organizations. Official documentation that supports the information provided on the form is required. This includes, but is not limited to, an official letter of employment to verify income, an official bank statement to verify resources, and a signed and notarized letter from each sponsor. You will also need this information when entering the United States at a port of entry (POE).



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12. **Letter Requesting Financial Aid (optional):** There may be a possibility of limited funds being available for international students in the form of grants and scholarships. If there are extenuating circumstances that have not already been covered in the application process, you may write a letter detailing your need and what grants and scholarships you think you might be eligible for. See the course catalogue (<http://www.providencecc.net/docs/PCCcatalog2006-07Finaledition.pdf>) for more details on grants and scholarships.
13. **Christian Leadership Reference (optional):** This reference is necessary to apply for the Christian Leadership Scholarship and is separate from the pastoral reference. See the course catalogue or contact the International Student Advisor for more details on this scholarship.

Helpful Websites

<http://www.educationusa.state.gov> - If You Want to Study in the United States (an informative booklet series, especially booklets 1 and 4; published in several languages; look under publications)

www.naces.org - Provides contact information for the current members of NACES

www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/about.html - Information on the SAT Reasoning Test

www.actstudent.org - Information on the ACT

<http://www.providencecc.net/docs/PCCcatalog2006-07Finaledition.pdf> - Providence Christian College course catalogue for 2006-2007

HEALTH CARE

Providence Christian College is committed to enhancing the academic success of our students by helping them to achieve and maintain the highest levels of health and well being possible. For the safety of the student and the entire college community, each student must complete a Medical History and Health Form that will be kept confidentially in the office of student life. This form will help us care for the student in an informed way, especially in the case of an emergency. The information will only be used to ensure the health/safety of the student or college community. As a condition of enrollment, all students must provide evidence that they have health insurance coverage. Unfortunately, due to the low number of possible participants, we are not able to offer a group student health insurance plan through the college. Contact the Dean of Student Life for more information.

Providence requires students to be vaccinated for: mumps, measles, rubella, polio, tetanus and diphtheria toxoids, pertussis, influenzae type b (Hib), hepatitis B, varicella, pneumococcal, and influenza. We also ask that students are recently tested for tuberculosis (no more than 6 months to a year). Ask the U.S. embassy or consulate whether they require you to have a medical examination and/or certain immunization(s) before entering the United States. Regulations differ for each country of origin. If you plan to visit other countries before coming to the U.S., inform the embassy or consulate as this might change the requirements for you.



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Helpful Websites

<http://www.hthworldwide.com> - HYH Worldwide Insurance Services

<http://www.acsa.com/plans/healthapp/chooseplan.asp?pm=4&act=local> - American College Student Association (look at International Student Health Plan)

HOUSING

Providence Christian College requires students under the age of 21 to live either on-campus or with a parent/guardian/sponsoring family. The cost of on-campus housing includes room and board. Currently, Providence does not provide housing for married students or students with dependents. Thus, these students must find their own housing. Contact the Dean of Student Life for more information on housing suggestions.

EMPLOYMENT

Students must consult the International Student Advisor before seeking employment. F-1 students may seek on-campus employment their first year. While school is in session, they can work up to 20 hours per week. When school is not in session or during the student's annual break, they may work full-time. The student's SEVIS record will be terminated if the student engages in any unauthorized employment or works hours in excess of those allowed. Therefore, it is imperative that the student gets prior approval from the ISA.

Off-campus employment is a case-by case exception made for students based on severe academic hardship due to unforeseen circumstances. In order to gain approval for off-campus employment, students must have been in F-1 status for one full academic year; be in good academic standing; be enrolled in a full course of study; show that working will not adversely affect academic standing or attendance; and show severe economic hardship due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control. Remember that students must show that they have sufficient funds to cover tuition and living expenses before receiving their visa.

Students need to work with the ISA and their employer to apply for Social Security Card. IRS publications 519 and 901 provide tax information that will be useful. Students are also strongly advised to seek tax advice from a professional.

Helpful Websites

http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/061404emp_fs.pdf - Fact Sheet from U.S. Department of Homeland Security

<http://www.ice.gov/sevis/employment/index.htm> - Employment for International Students

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10181.html> - International Students and Social Security Numbers

<http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=96431,00.html> - IRS information website for foreign students and scholars



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VISAS

In order to study in the United States, most non-U.S. citizens will seek an **F-1** (non-immigrant) student visa. This is the most common visa for those who wish to pursue academic studies in the United States. In order to apply for a visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate, you must first have a **SEVIS** (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) generated document (**I-20**) issued by a college or university.

Plan on an **in-person interview** at the embassy or consulate which is required for most visa applicants. Each embassy and consulate sets its own interview policies and procedures regarding student visas. For current requirements and regulations, contact the U.S. embassy or consulate nearest you (<http://usembassy.state.gov>) for specific application instructions. Keep in mind that June, July, and August tend to be the busiest months. Therefore, appointments during those months are the most difficult to arrange. Be sure to **plan ahead** and be well prepared to avoid having to make multiple visits to the Embassy.

While students are encouraged to apply for the F-1 student visa early to provide ample time for processing, you should note that embassies and consulates are able to issue visa **up to 120 days in advance** of the course of study registration date. If you apply more than 120 days prior to your start date, the embassy or consulate will hold your application until it is able to issue the visa. Also note that all initial or beginning students are required to enter the U.S. **30 days or less** in advance of the start date shown on the Form I-20. Visa wait times for interview appointments and visa processing time varies for each embassy or consulate (http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors_wait.php).

A SEVIS generated **I-20** issued by an educational institution is your Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status. In addition to the I-20, you must also pay the SEVIS **I-901 Fee** before going to your visa interview. You may pay the fee online (www.FMJfee.com) by credit card or debit card. An official paper receipt (**I-797**) or an Internet-generated receipt will be issued for each payment.

Visa applicants should be prepared to provide a great deal of information at the interview. As each student's personal and academic situation is different, each may be required to submit different documents at the interview. Thus, the guidelines may be modified by consular officers overseas to include all, but are not limited to, the following:

- Form I-20 and payment of SEVIS I-901 Fee. The payment will be recorded in the SEVIS system. However, it is recommended that you bring the paper I-797 or the Internet-generated receipt to the visa interview.
- A completed nonimmigrant visa application (**Form DS-156 and Form DS-158**; some applicants will also be required to complete and sign **DS-157**) (http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/forms/forms_1342.html)
- A fingerprint scan as well as a digital photo will be taken during the visa interview.
- A passport valid for at least six months after the proposed date of entry into the United States.
- One (1) 2x2 photograph (http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/info/info_1287.html)



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- A MRV fee receipt to show payment of the visa application fee, and a visa issuance fee if applicable (<http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/reciprocity/index.htm>)
- Transcripts and diplomas
- Standardized test scores that are required by the educational institution such as TOEFL, SAT, ACT, etc.
- Financial evidence that you have sufficient funds for tuition and living expenses during the period of your intended study. This includes documents such as business licenses, income tax documents, and original bank books and/or statements for you or your sponsor.
- Those with dependents must provide evidence of the relationship to his/her spouse and/or children (e.g. marriage and birth certificates)

Additional Information

- No assurances can be given in advance regarding the issuance of visas.
- Unless canceled, a visa remains valid until its expiration date even in an expired passport. Keep the expired passport to use with your new passport; do not remove the visa page from the expired passport.
- F-1 students are allowed an additional 60 days after completing the course of study to prepare for departure from the U.S. or to transfer to another school.
- Be consistent with the spelling of your name on all documents. They must match your passport. Irregular placement of spaces and hyphens may impact the process.
- Though you may reside in a participating country of the Visa Waiver Program, students are not eligible for the Visa Waiver Program as they will be staying for more than 90 days. Hence, a visa is necessary.
- F-1 visas are for non-immigrant status, so student visas may be denied based on the lack of evidence of strong ties abroad. Some examples of ties can be a house, a family, a job, or a bank account. It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate ties abroad that would compel them to leave the U.S. at the end of their temporary stay. Applicants who have been refused visas under Section 214(B) may reapply. When they do, they will have to show further evidence of their ties or how circumstances have changed since the original application (http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/denials/denials_1361.html).
- When you receive your immigration documents in a sealed envelope at the embassy or consulate in your country, do not open the envelope. The U.S. immigration inspector will open the documents at the Port of Entry.
- Canadian citizens are not required to obtain a U.S. visa. However, a U.S. immigration official will inspect your paperwork either in Canada or upon your entry to the United States. The paperwork must include, but may not be limited to, proof of Canadian citizenship, your admission letter to the college, your I-20, and proof of financial support that corresponds to the information on your I-20. Check with a U.S. embassy or consulate for more information.



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Helpful Websites

http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html - U.S. Department of State website, visa information
<http://usembassy.state.gov> - Listing of U.S. Embassies and Consulates
http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors_wait.php - Information on visa wait times
<https://www.fmjfee.com/index.jhtml> - Website to pay SEVIS I-901 Fee
http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/forms/forms_1342.html - Visa application forms
http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/info/info_1287.html - Nonimmigrant Visa Photograph Requirements
<http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/reciprocity/index.htm> - Visa Reciprocity Table

ENTERING THE U.S.

An F-1 visa allows you to arrive no more than 30 days before the program start date listed on your SEVIS I-20 form. Once you have finalized your travel arrangements, notify the International Student Advisor (ISA) of the details of your arrival. When traveling to the United States, you must hand-carry all your documents. You will be subject to an immigration inspection before you can collect your luggage. Before your arrival in the U.S., flight attendants will distribute customs declaration forms (CF-6059) and arrival-departure forms for immigration (I-94). These forms must be completed prior to landing.

For the immigration inspection, you must have the following documents available for presentation: your **passport**; SEVIS form (**I-20**); Arrival-Departure Record Form (**I-94**); and Customs Declaration Form (**CF-6059**). It is strongly recommended that you also have the following on hand: evidence of financial resources; evidence of student status; paper evidence for the SEVIS I-901 fee; and the name and contact information for your “Designated School Official” (ISA), including a 24-hour emergency contact number at the school in case you arrive during non-business hours (evenings, weekends, holidays). When asked to state your reason for entering the country, be sure to tell the immigration officer that you will be a student. If the immigration officer cannot initially verify your information or you do not have all of the required documentation, you may need a secondary inspection.

Once through with the immigration inspection, you will collect your luggage and proceed to U.S. Customs. There, a customs inspector will ask you to declare what you have brought into the country, inspect your bags, and review the customs form (CF-6059).

Helpful Websites

<http://www.educationusa.state.gov> - If You Want to Study in the United States , Booklet #4
http://www.ice.gov/sevis/factsheet/100104ent_stdnt_fs.htm - What to expect when arriving
<http://educationusa.state.gov/predeparture/travel/customs.htm> - U.S. customs information
<http://help.customs.gov> - A site to ask questions about U.S. Customs and Border Protection



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EXIT / RE-ENTRY

During our longer vacations, international students may choose depart the country to return home or vacation elsewhere. Students must consult the International Student Advisor prior to traveling. You must have a current I-20 endorsed for travel. You will also need to have your current passport as well as form I-94 to leave the country.

On your return, you will need the above documents along with a valid, current visa and financial information showing proof of necessary funds to cover tuition and living expenses. If you re-enter through a land POE, bring your most recent I-94 to facilitate re-entry. If flying, you will need to complete a new I-94 upon re-entry. If you have been away from classes for more than five months, you will most likely need a new visa. See the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement website for more information.

Helpful Websites

http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/faq_f.htm - U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions) on Entry and Exit

http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html - Student Visas (General Information from U.S. Department of State)

http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_2941.html - Student Visa Validity Following a Break in Studies (from the U.S. Department of State)

http://help.customs.gov/cgi-bin/customs.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=752&p_created=1077641280&p_sid=ADaGHioi&p_accessibility=0&p_lva=&p_sp=cF9zcmNoPTEmcF9zb3J0X2J5PSZwX2dyaWRzb3J0PSZwX3Jvd19jbnQ9MzMzZmF9wcm9kcz0wJnBfY2F0cz0wJnBfcHY9JnBfY3Y9JnBfc2VhcmNoX3R5cGU9YW5zd2Vycy5zZWYy2hfbmwmcf9wYWdlPTEmcF9zZWYy2hfdGV4dD1kaWQgbm90IHR1cm4gaW4gSS05NA**&p_li=&p_topview=1 - What to do if you did not turn in I-94 when you left the U.S.