

For greater detail on procedures for traveling and arriving in the United States, visit: [studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students). There have been recent changes to the immigration entry procedure. The information below will help you anticipate what to expect at the U.S. Port of Entry.

### **What You Need to Remember Before You Leave Your Country:**

- If you are an initial student entering the USA to attend school for the first time, **you may not enter the United States more than 30 days before the program start date indicated on your I-20.**
- Though there are exceptions, your passport needs to be valid for at least six months beyond the date of your expected arrival.

**Documents You Should Carry With You:** When you travel, you should carry some specific documents with you. **Do not check them in your baggage!** If your baggage is lost or delayed, you will not be able to show the documents to the immigration officer and, as a result, may not be able to enter the United States. You need to have the following with you:

- Passport with Visa (Note: Canadian citizens will not have a visa stamped in their passport)
- I-20 and SEVIS I-901 Fee Receipt
- Evidence of Financial Resources (Financial Aid letter from Colgate, Sponsor's bank statement, etc.)
- Name and contact information for the Designated School Officials (DSO) at Colgate:
  - Kerra Hunter, Assistant Dean and Director of International Student Services, or
  - Makiko Filler, Associate Director of International Student Services  
Office: 315-228-6131  
After business hours, contact Campus Safety at 315-228-7333
- Your letter of admission to Colgate and any other documents that prove your student status
- A pen to complete the customs documents you will be given on the plane

**Immigration Procedure:** There have been many recent changes to the entry procedure. You will first pass through immigration where you will present the above listed documents to the officer. Your photograph and fingerprint scan will be taken, you will be asked to state the reason you wish to enter the United States, and to provide information where you will be staying. **It is important that you tell the immigration officer that you will be an F-1 student at Colgate University and that you will be living on-campus at 13 Oak Drive Hamilton, NY 13346.**

After the officer reviews your documents and admits you, you will be able to retrieve an Arrival Record (commonly known as an I-94) by visiting [cbp.gov/i94](https://cbp.gov/i94). After your arrival to campus, you will need to provide a copy of your I-94 to OISS.

***Note to Canadian Citizens:*** Since you do not have an F-1 visa in your passport, you will apply for F-1 status at the port of entry. It is important that you present the officer with your I-20 and let him/her know that you want to enter the U.S. as an F-1 student. Do not enter the U.S. as a tourist under the visa waiver program as you would need to depart the U.S. and reenter as an F-1 student before you would be permitted to study.

**Customs Procedure:** After passing through the immigration inspection, you will collect your baggage (if you have traveled by airplane) and proceed to Customs. You will give the Customs Declaration Form (provided to you at the port of entry) to the officer when instructed and you will not receive it back. There is a possibility that your bags may be randomly searched. In the case that your bags are selected for a search, be sure to comply with the officer's instructions. After you pass through Customs, you are officially in the USA!

**Secondary Inspection:** If your information cannot be automatically verified by the immigration officer or if you do not have all of the required documentation, you may be directed to an interview area known as "secondary inspection." Secondary inspection allows immigration officers to conduct additional research in order to verify your information. If you are sent to secondary inspection and need assistance, please contact OISS.

**Temporary Admission:** Failure to provide proper documentation and/or to comply with entry/exit procedures is cause to refuse a student admission to the United States. In limited circumstances, if a student is mostly, but not fully in compliance, the student may be issued a Form I-515A "Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor." This form authorizes temporary admission to the United States and requires the student to take immediate action to submit proper documentation. Noncompliance with the directions contained in these forms may result in denied reentry. If you receive an I-515A, it is important that you contact OISS as soon as you arrive to Colgate.

**Upon Arrival to Colgate University:** Once you arrive to Colgate University, you will need to check-in with the Office of International Student Services during the designated times that will be listed on your International Student Orientation schedule. When you check-in, you should bring all of your immigration documents with you so that a copy can be made for your immigration file and so that your SEVIS record can be activated. If there are any issues, please do not wait. Let your Core Group Leader know.