

Pre-Departure Check List

You must complete the following before you arrive at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

1. Add iss@uah.edu to your safe senders list – important pre-arrival emails with orientation information will be sent from the International Student and Scholar Services Office and to ensure you are receiving information please add this email address to your contact list to avoid it going to your SPAM folder.

2. Pay SEVIS I-901 fee

The U.S. Government requires students and exchange visitors to pay a SEVIS fee in order to qualify for a non-immigrant F visa for an initial entry to the U.S. to begin a program of study. If you have questions about the fee, please refer to <https://www.fmjfee.com/help.jhtml>. *Canadian and Bermudian citizens, who are not required to have an F1 visa stamp, must show proof of I-901 payment at a U.S. Port of Entry.*

1. Use the I-20 issued by UAH to pay the fee on-line at www.FMJfee.com.
2. Print the receipt and bring it to the consulate interview as proof of payment in order to be qualified for the F1 visa.

3. Schedule U.S. Embassy/Consulate appointment

The U.S. Embassy/Consulate (<http://usembassy.state.gov/>) will make the final decision in granting you an F-1 (student) visa to enter the U.S. An F-1 visa can be issued to you up to 120 days before the school start date listed on the I-20; **APPLY EARLY!** Plan your visa and travel 1-2 months prior to the start of classes so you can arrive at UAH in time for orientation.

1. Find the U.S. Embassy/Consulate nearest your home.
2. Contact this Embassy/Consulate to make an appointment for non-immigrant visa application review.

4. Go to U.S. Embassy/Consulate appointment

You have to speak with a consular official who reviews many visa applications every day. The officer will quickly review your documents, ask about your plans of study, and verify that you have the academic ability, English language skills, and the financial resources to study at UAH. Since you are applying for a non-immigrant visa, the officer will require documentation of proof of intent to return to your home country. The officer will give you instructions about picking up your documents and your visa or when to expect them in the mail. You must take **all** the proper documents with you during your visa appointment. If you don't, you may have to return for a second time, which may delay your visa for several weeks.

Common Items Required for Visa Application (<http://travel.state.gov/visa/index.html>)

- visa application forms from the Embassy/Consulate
- photographs for visa
- visa application fee – amount varies per country
- receipt for SEVIS I-901 fee payment
- I-20 from UAH
- letter of admission from UAH
- valid passport
- TOEFL/IELTS Score (non-native English speakers)
- proof of finances and assistantship letter
- previous school transcripts, diplomas or records

Important: You plan to be a student and should not apply for a tourist visa (B1/B2 or WT-Visa Waiver). If you already have a tourist visa in your passport, this will not prevent you from getting a student visa. You should be certain that you show your F1 visa and I-20 at the U.S. Port of Entry. Immigration laws do not allow a person who entered the U.S. on a tourist visa to take classes at a university or college.

5. Buy airline ticket

1. Check the start date listed on your I-20. You may not enter the U.S. more than 30 days before this date.
2. Buy a ticket to Huntsville, Alabama. The code for Huntsville International Airport is HSV.

Important: Do not arrange to fly to the U.S. before receiving your F1 visa from the U.S. Consulate.

6. Contact UAH

1. Send your flight information to iss@uah.edu and let us know if you would like to be picked up at the airport. UAH will provide transportation to as many students as possible in the days before orientation and if we cannot offer an airport pick up we will send suggestions of taxi cab companies that can bring you to campus. Having your request and flight info as early as possible will increase your chances of having a ride provided by the University. It is not guaranteed but we will do our best as we enjoy greeting students as soon as they arrive to Huntsville.
2. Wait for a confirmation email with your airport pickup time (if you will arrive during a time when pick-ups will be offered by our office).
3. Contact the Housing Office if you plan to live on campus to learn about what you need to do before arriving to campus to ensure housing will be available – you must also inquire about an early move in request form. <http://www.uah.edu/housing/>
Housing application <http://www.uah.edu/housing/prospective-residents/apply>
4. Contact the Student Health Center to ask any questions about immunization forms and read the attachment titled Student Health Information. <http://www.uah.edu/health-and-wellness/student-health-center/immunizations>

7. Fly to Huntsville, Alabama

1. Carry your immigration documents with you onto the airplane.
2. When you first arrive in the U.S., you must show your passport and immigration documents to the Port of Entry Officer. Your passport will be stamped with an entry date and your I-20 will be reviewed. Keep these documents in a safe place at all times. If you lose these documents, you will pay a lot of time and money to replace them.
3. Arrive in Huntsville, Alabama. If you requested someone to pick you up at the airport, he/she will be waiting for you in the arrivals hall. If previously confirmed that a UAH staff member will pick you up, you will have an email instructing you where to meet.

8. Come to UAH

1. Your first day at UAH will be Monday January 5, 2015 so you should arrive to Huntsville no later than January 4, 2015. Students in the US can report to University Center room 116 for immigration check-in.
2. Class registration will be possible after attending a mandatory orientation and an information session with the Office of International Engagement/International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS). An updated schedule of events will be emailed to you in December and available hard copy upon arrival.

Important: You must report to the school listed on your I-20 you used to enter the U.S.

ITEMS TO CARRY WITH YOU ON THE AIRPLANE (include in your carry-on)

- I-20
- Valid Passport
- Valid visa for UAH
- Your admission letter
- Airplane ticket(s)
- Cash, traveler's checks, or any international bank card
- Phone numbers and email addresses of emergency contacts at home and in the United States
- Phone numbers and email addresses of relatives, friends, the International Student and Scholar Services Office (256-624-6055 during business hours)
- An English translation of your medical history and documents
- Prescriptions for medications you take and a fresh supply of prescription medicines you need
- Medical records (including vaccination records) for your accompanying spouse/children (if applicable)

AFTER YOUR ARRIVAL IN HUNTSVILLE (a schedule will be provided upon arrival):

1. Attend New International Student Orientation
 - a. Mandatory immigration check in and information session
 - b. Student ID card
 - c. Student Health Center
 - d. Activating student accounts – BANNER, UAH email
2. English Language Placement Test -ELPT (only those students required – you will be notified before orientation)
3. Graduate or undergraduate program
 - a. GTA orientation – mandatory – to be announced
4. Meet with your academic advisor and register for classes
5. Pay your tuition – due first day of class by 5pm
6. Buy books – University Center Bookstore
7. Familiarize yourself with campus – campus tours
8. Social Security Number – or non-eligibility letter
9. Driver's License/AL State ID card

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU TO HUNTSVILLE!

Office of International Engagement (OIE) Staff

Anita, Janet, Mona, Reva, Sabrina, and Suzy

Contact information: International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), iss@uah.edu, www.uah.edu/OIE, Phone (256) 824-6055, Fax: (256) 824-4515

University Center 116 (after November 15, 2014), 301 Sparkman Drive, Huntsville, AL 35899

