



OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENTS & SCHOLARS

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CANADIANS CITIZENS COMING TO RICE UNIVERSITY

Prepared for: **Invited Canadian Visitors on F, J, or Visitor Visas**

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*Revised April 9, 2014*

Canadians citizens who are coming to Rice University to study, conduct research, teach, or give a one-time lecture or consultation should consider the points mentioned below, in order to minimize problems while crossing the border to enter into the USA. Although Canadian citizens may not require a **visa stamp** to enter the USA, they are required to obtain the proper **visa status** in order to participate in their intended activity. Careful consideration to the necessary documentation in order to gain proper visa status is required.

Canadians oftentimes do not feel like “international students and scholars” while in the USA, however their visa status requires them to comply with immigration laws at all times. Movement between the U.S. and Canadian borders is dynamic, and procedures may change frequently. Therefore, Canadian students and scholars on F or J visas must take great care to proactively present the proper paperwork to the immigration official at the port of entry. Many visitors have just been allowed to enter with no paperwork, resulting in gaining automatic tourist visitor status. This visa status could halt your primary purpose for visiting the USA, as well as interrupt benefits attached to your visa status.

If you plan on coming to Rice on an F or J visa, please consider the points below:

- If you are coming on an **F or J visa**, you must show the officer (even if you are not asked to do so) at the U.S. Immigration office the following documentation:
  - ✓ I-20 (F visa) or DS-2019 (J visa)
  - ✓ Financial support, as shown on your I-20 or DS-2019
  - ✓ Offer letter of admission or employment/invitation from Rice University
  - ✓ Your SEVIS fee receipt (for F-1 or J-1 visa holders). Payment must be made in advance, and cannot be made at the airport or border.
  - ✓ Your passport, valid for at least six months into the future
  
- When entering the U.S. by land, you will receive an I-94 card (white arrival/departure card). If you enter the U.S. by air or sea, the paper I-94 would not typically be issued. In that case you will have the option of visiting the CBP website to print a copy of your electronic admission status at [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94). Upon clearing immigration, **check your I-94 card** (white arrival/departure card) or **entry stamp in your passport** to ensure that it grants F-1 status for “D/S” (students) or J-1 status for “D/S” (scholars). For dependents it should show F-2 status for “D/S” or J-2 status for “D/S”. If it is incorrect, return to the immigration officer to correct it there. It is quite time consuming to correct an I-94 error after you arrive to Houston.
  
- Canadian **One-Time Lecturers/Visitors being paid an honorarium** are recommended to come on the B-1 status. For visitors, the I-94 card or entry stamp should show the type of B visa you entered on (B-1 for business or B-2 for tourism) with a specific date of expiration. These dates usually range from 4-6 months after entry.

- Canadians also qualify for a **TN visa** which is specifically for professionals. These visas are valid for one year at a time and can be renewed annually. When entering, you must show the officer:
  - ✓ Proof of Canadian citizenship
  - ✓ Detailed letter of offer from the employer explaining the professional capacity of the position, duties, length of stay, educational qualifications, and how the payment will be coordinated.
  - ✓ Evidence that the job is listed in the Appendix 1603.D.1
  - ✓ Proof of qualifications (degrees, certificates, licenses, etc.).
  
- Upon arrival to Rice, **check in** with the Office of International Students & Scholars (OISS) bringing all your immigration documents. OISS issues the immigration documents for F (student) and J (Exchange visitor students and scholars), advises foreign nationals, and provides other services for all non-immigrants at Rice.
  
- **Delays in visa processing are unpredictable.** National security dictates security clearances and checks for many majors and people born in certain countries, despite Canadian citizenship. If you are delayed or denied entry due to a security check, try to find out: 1) as much information as you can as to the length of time it will take, 2) how you will be notified of the clearance, and 3) what options you have in the meantime.
  
- **SEVIS (Student & Exchange Visitor Information System):** Is a database system to interface with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) database to track and report all foreign nationals on F and J visa categories.
  
- For information about paying the one-time **SEVIS fee**, which must be done at least three days before trying to enter the USA, visit: [www.FMJfee.com](http://www.FMJfee.com). Also, please read the handout from: <http://oiss.rice.edu/forms/> (access the handout “[SEVIS Fee Handout for F-1 Students](#)” or “[SEVIS Fee Handout for J-1 Exchange Visitors](#)”).
  
- **Addresses:** All foreign nationals (non-U.S. citizens, including permanent residents) that are not reporting to SEVIS must report to USCIS within 10 days of moving their new address. Form AR-11 can be downloaded from <http://www.uscis.gov/ar-11>. In addition, all foreign faculty, scholars, staff, and dependents must have updated addresses registered with Human Resources; students must have addresses updated with Registrar’s Office. SEVIS will be tracking all foreign addresses of our F and J foreign nationals.
  
- **Laws and government procedures subject to change** from the U.S. government without notice.

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