Dear Prospective Student,

The Office of International Education at Alvernia University would like to thank you for your interest in coming to our school. We offer a competitive and rewarding English as a Second Language Program, as well as undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Please refer to this Pre-Arrival Guide in applying for your visa, transferring, or changing your current status. If you have any questions or concerns regarding admissions to our Alvernia, please contact our office.

Office of International Education, Alvernia University

1355 W. Cheltenham Ave.
Melrose Park, PA 19027
215-635-4734 Ext. 200, 206
Admissions: jae.lee@alvernia.edu
Website: http://www.alvernia.edu/philadelphia/esl/index.html
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1) Admissions procedure
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3) Visa interview tips
4) Arriving in the United States
5) Transferring students
6) Procedure for change of status in the United States

Office of International Education: Philadelphia Center, Alvernia University

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

You may obtain the forms needed to apply to our programs from our website:
http://www.alvernia.edu/philadelphia/esl/apply.html
Admission to ESL Program at Alvernia University

An international student is a non–U.S. citizen or a non–U.S. permanent resident. Please allow two weeks for the Office of International Education to review your application and create an initial I-20.

New Students:

1) Application form
2) Non-refundable $100.00 application fee (money order or check only)
3) Express mail shipping fee of $20.00 (money order or check only)
4) Financial statement form
5) Bank statement: must be valid for six months
6) Dependent form (if applicable)
7) Valid passport

Transferring Students:

1) Application form
2) Non-refundable $100.00 application fee (money order or check only)
3) Express mail shipping fee of $20.00 (money order or check only)
4) Financial statement form
5) Bank statement: must be valid for six months
6) Dependent form (if applicable)
7) Valid Passport
8) Valid VISA & I-94
9) All previous I-20s

Admission to Undergraduate & Graduate Programs at Alvernia University

Alvernia University welcomes international students to pursue higher education studies at our school. Alvernia ESL students who have completed level five are not required to take TOFEL for entrance into a degree program.

New Students:

1) Application form
2) Non-refundable application fee $25.00 for undergraduate or $50.00 for graduate (money order or check only)
3) Express mail shipping fee of $20.00 (money order or check only)
4) Financial statement form
5) Bank statement: must be valid for six months
6) Dependent form (if applicable)
7) Statement of purpose letter explaining your immediate and future goals
8) *Transcript (High school diploma and college transcripts required for undergraduate program. College transcript required for Graduate program.)
9) Valid Passport
10) TOEFL scores taken within the past two years unless you have completed level five of the Alvernia ESL program.
Transferring Students:

1) Application form
2) Non-refundable application fee $25.00 for undergraduate or $50.00 for graduate (money order or check only)
3) Express mail shipping fee $20.00 (money order or check only)
4) Financial statement form
5) Bank statement: must be valid for six months
6) Dependent form (if applicable)
7) Statement of purpose letter (Please explain your immediate and future goals)
8) *Transcript (High school diploma and college transcripts required for undergraduate program. College transcript required for Graduate program.)
9) Transfer form at http://www.alvernia.edu/philadelphia/esl/apply.html
10) Valid Passport
11) Valid Visa & I-94
10) All previous I-20s
11) TOEFL scores taken within the past two years unless you have completed level five of the Alvernia ESL program.

*Transcript Evaluation

Any non-U.S. college or university coursework not already included on a U.S. university transcript (i.e., study abroad) must be evaluated course-by-course and translated into English by a foreign credential service. A copy of the report should be sent directly from that company to our office. We recommend that you start this as soon as possible.

World Education Services, Inc.

www.wes.org/students/index.asp
E-mail: info@wes.org
Ask for a “Course-by-Course Report”
PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING F-1 VISA

Applying for a visa: http://usembassy.state.gov/, please select the city and the country where you will apply for the visa.

a) Visa Application fee:
   • You may receive specific information about the process for paying the visa application fee at: http://usembassy.state.gov

b) SEVIS fee:
   • Pay online at: http://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee
   • Pay with check or money order by printing the I-901 form at http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/I-901.pdf
   • By Western Union: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/wu_instr.htm

c) Documents needed for the visa interview:
   • Visa and SEVIS application fee receipts
   • Visa application form:
     DS-156 (http://evisaforms.state.gov/ds156.asp),
     DS-158 (http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/79965.pdf)
     DS-157 (http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/79964.pdf) - Only male nonimmigrant visa applicants between the ages of 16 and 45 must submit the DS-157 or form DS-160 electronic form which is the new visa application form being used in a few consular posts.
   • Original I-20
   • Original copies of financial statement
   • TOEFL score and academic transcripts (it is not required but highly recommended by the U.S. State Department)
   • Valid Passport

Once the F-1 visa is approved, the form I-20 will be returned in a sealed envelope that must be available at the U.S. port of entry. It is highly recommended that students carry their passport, I-20, and financial statement at all times during travel.

Visa Interview Tips

Under U.S. law, all applicants for nonimmigrant visas are viewed as intending immigrants until they prove otherwise; therefore, giving solid reasons for returning to your home country is crucial during the visa interview. The following tips may be helpful.

a) Speak English. Interview will be conducted in English and it is always helpful to give the impression that the student has at least a basic understanding of the English language.
b) Be yourself and maintain a positive attitude. Student will be interviewed alone. Be concise and try not to repeat information. The consular is interviewing many applicants and must conduct a quick and efficient interview. Do not be argumentative. If you are denied, request the reason in writing.
c) **Familiarize yourself with the academic program and how it fits your career plans.** It is important to explain your reasons for wanting to study in the United States and how this will help meet your career plans. Your main purpose for coming to the United States is to study, not to work before or after graduation.

d) **Preparation for your dependents.** If for any reason you are leaving behind your spouse and or children, be prepared to explain how they will support themselves financially. If you are taking your spouse and children with you, be prepared to show a financial statement that is able to support your dependents.

e) **Organize your supporting documentation.** Organize your documents so that the consular can identify them at a glance. The most important document is your financial statement, so make sure it is translated into English and notarized.

**Arriving in the United States**

Students are not allowed entry into the United States more than 30 days before the form I-20 start date. It is important that you fill out your I-94 card completely to avoid any delays once you arrive in the United States. You will be required to present the following documentations: Passport with valid visa, I-20, I-94 card, and financial statement.

Customs and Border Protection officer will stamp the pages of the I-20 and sections of the I-94 card. Once it is returned to you, be sure that your I-94 card and the form I-20 are stamped with the date and immigration status and that your I-94 card is in your passport. Always double check your documents and email us at angela.jeon@alvernia.edu if there are any problems at the port of entry.

**Transferring students**

Student must first apply and be accepted to Alvernia University before they can transfer out of their current school. Ask your DSO to fill out a transfer out form in order for your current school to release your records to SEVIS. We will then create an I-20 on your behalf. Please refer to above admissions requirements for transferring students in order to complete your application.

**Procedure for Changing Status in the United States**

Student is not in F-1 status until the Department of Homeland Security adjudicates the change status request. It is important to follow the instructions given by USCIS when applying for a change of status. Please refer to [http://www.international.psu.edu/iss/fl_status.html](http://www.international.psu.edu/iss/fl_status.html). You must sign a notification of change of status form when requesting an initial I-20 from our office.

Thank you for your interest and we look forward to meeting with you!