

Guideline for Non-Resident Travel to the United States for International Students

Please Note: This is a high level guideline that highlights the general process to follow when planning to travel to the United States for the purpose of participation in a International Design Competition. This document **is not** all encompassing and **does not** capture all of the relevant details to arrange travel to the United States. **Every individual's situation is different** and this document cannot capture the nuances associated with travel for every student. It is your responsibility as the person travelling to understand the requirements of your student visa, and to plan accordingly.

Step 1: Reach out to Memorial's Internationalization Office

Before planning any travel you should understand the restrictions associated with your student visa. The Internationalization Office specializes in helping students **enter** Canada. They can help you understand the risks associated with re-entering the Country, but they cannot advise on travel to other Countries.

Arrange an appointment with the Internationalization office to discuss your specific circumstances before planning any international travel.

<https://www.mun.ca/international/contacts-new/>

Step 2: Procure a Letter of Invitation (optional)

Many student competitions and events designed to encourage international participation can provide a "Letter of Invitation" for their event. This letter of invitation can be provided after your team pays the event registration fees. It will be a generic letter and will include the name of the invited institution (i.e. Memorial University). Please note, all competitions and events do not provide this. Please ask your team lead to reach out to the competition organizers so one letter can be provided to the team. These letters are not drafted for individuals.

This document can be used to support your application for your travel Visa, and should be included in your documentation package when you plan to cross the border (if your visa is approved).

Step 3: Apply for a Non-immigrant Visa

The next step in making your travel arrangements is contacting the United States Consulate of your choice to apply for a Non-Immigrant visa to enter the United States. Processing times vary based on circumstance so it is important that you apply as early as you can to avoid delays in Visa processing.

The U.S. Consulate General in Halifax is the closest Consulate to St. John's and handles applications for non-immigrant visas by appointment only. All visa applicants at the U.S. Consulate General in Halifax must complete the online visa application form (CEAC DS-160) and pay the non-refundable, non-transferrable visa application fee **prior** to securing a visa appointment.

The following websites provide further guidance on how to proceed with your visa application. Each individual's situation is different so there is no way to create a "one size fits all" approach for visa applications. Please read each resource below in detail so you fully understand your personal circumstance:

- Video Overview of the Process:
 - [YouTube Video](#)
- Complete the DS-160 application:
 - Instructions on how to complete and [submit your DS-160](#)
- Pay the Visa Application Fee (must be done before scheduling the interview):
 - <https://ais.usvisa-info.com/en-ca/niv/information/fee>
- Scheduling, cancelling, or changing your visa interview:
 - <https://ais.usvisa-info.com/en-ca/niv/information/niv>
 - Your interview will be **IN PERSON** at the consulate of your choice. You will need to travel to the Consulate to have your interview. **This is not an expense your team will incur, it is the responsibility of the individual to ensure they are eligible to travel.**
- Review all required documents for the application. Make sure you have them readily accessible and you bring copies to your interview:
 - Required Documents https://ais.usvisa-info.com/en-ca/niv/information/required_docs
 - **Please note** during this online application process you will need to digitally upload a passport quality photo. Effective November 1, 2016 the Department of State will no longer accept photographs of visa applicants wearing eyeglasses. Please review these [guidelines for the digital image requirements](#).
 - **NOTE:** you may have additional requirements not outlined in the "required documents" link above. That is why it's important that you reach out to the consulate in advance to ensure you understand all requirements.

If you are unsure if you need a visa to enter the United States please visit the U.S. Embassy website <https://ca.usembassy.gov/visas/do-i-need-a-visa/> for additional information.

Some countries are permitted to enter the US under a Visa Waiver Program. This may apply to you and you can learn more <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html>. It is suggested that you reach out to the consulate to verify that you meet the Visa Waiver Requirements to confirm that you are eligible under the program.

Additional Verification and Administrative Processing

Some visa applications require further (read this as **additional**) administrative processing, which takes additional time after the interview by a consular officer. You will be advised of this requirement during your interview. Most administrative processing is resolved within 90 business days of the visa interview. However, when administrative processing is required, the timing will vary based on the individual circumstances of each case. Visa applicants are reminded to apply for their visa early and well in advance of their anticipated travel date. **Before making inquiries about the status of the administrative processing, applicants, or their representatives, will need to wait at least 60 business days from the date of the interview, or submission of supplemental documents, whichever is later.**

Other Helpful Links:

Track the status of your visa application: <https://ceac.state.gov/CEACStatTracker/Status.aspx>

Any member of the public wishing to inquire about visas can send an email inquiry to Consularh@state.gov

Step 4: Book Your Travel

Book your travel to the consulate as soon as you've confirmed your appointment. If you have enough time between your interview and the competition you can wait to book your travel until after you receive your visa. However, if you are on a tight timeline you should consider booking your travel and paying for travel cancellation insurance. This will ensure that you're covered in the event your visa isn't awarded in time to travel. Ensure that you understand the restrictions on the travel insurance you purchase, and verify that you can receive a refund if your visa is not approved.

Even with a successful visa application there is always a risk that you will be denied entry to the United States at the border. This is a risk for all travelers. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have all required documentation when you cross the border.