This guide is for students applying for a visa on their own and not through the group processing appointment with the Office of Global Studies. This process can be a little tricky at first, but these tips and instructions should make things a bit easier to understand – and if you have any questions along the way, we're always here to help!

BEFORE YOU BEGIN (Read this first!):

- You must have a passport that's valid for at least 6 months past the program end date. If you don't have a passport, or your passport will expire before that date, you should apply immediately for a new passport in order to have it in time to apply for your visa. We can assist you in getting a passport on short notice, but don't postpone this step!

- You must apply IN PERSON at the Consulate – no mailing it in! Remember, this means you'll be making two trips to the consulate: one to drop off your application, and another a few weeks later to pick up your passport.

- Remember that you will not have access to your passport while your visa is being processed, so don't make any international travel plans until after your visa has been issued. Processing times can vary based on the consulate and your country of origin, but at the very least you should expect to be without a passport for two weeks.

- Each country has many consulate locations in the United States, and each consulate has its own application process and requirements. You can use the group visa checklist as a guide, but you’ll want to refer to your consulate’s website for specifics if you’re applying outside of New York. St. John’s students can choose to apply either at the New York consulate or the consulate that includes your state of permanent residence within its jurisdiction. Check the consulate’s website for details.

- Due to the high volume of inquiries regarding visa applications, we ask that you please reference the Frequently Asked Questions (enclosed in this packet) before contacting the Office of Global Studies. We'll be happy to answer your questions if you cannot find the information you need!

WAIVER NOTICE: By applying independently for your visa, you accept full responsibility for the application process. Our office won't be able to work with the consulate on your behalf, so be prepared to take charge! If you experience any difficulties in applying for your visa, you’ll need to work directly with the consulate officials to have them resolved. The Office of Global Studies can provide advice and guidance, but is not liable or responsible for independent visa applicants.

HOW TO APPLY:

STEP 1: Check the appropriate Consulate’s website to determine which consulate location you need to apply to. You may submit your application to the Consulate presiding over your permanent address or your campus address, so all St. John’s students have the option of applying in New York. Visa requirements and the length of time required to obtain a visa can vary based on your country of origin, so start doing your homework right away!

STEP 2: Schedule a consulate appointment ASAP, as appointment slots fill up very quickly. The earliest you can book is 90 days before the start of your program – just make sure that the date you select gives you enough time to gather all required documents for the visa application. Check the consulate’s website for instructions on how to make an appointment.

STEP 3: Review the Consulate’s website to ensure you have all of the documentation you’ll need for your appointment. It can take between 1 – 2 weeks to collect all the required documents, so plan ahead! You can use the checklists and pre-completed applications available on the Accepted Students’ Site (www.stjohns.edu/goingabroad) as a guide to help you complete your application.

Note: French visa applicants have the added step of completing the “Campus France” application prior to applying for the French visa. This application can take 3-4 weeks to process; for instructions on the Campus France process, please attend the Campus France workshop on Thursday, October 23 (2:00-3:00pm) in Sullivan 205.

STEP 4: Stop by the Office of Global Studies to collect the letters required for your visa application and to review your application.

STEP 5: Arrive at the consulate at or before your appointment time and submit your application and passport. If you arrive at the consulate after your scheduled appointment time, you will not be permitted to apply and will have to re-schedule your appointment.
Independent Visa Application FAQs:

When should I make a visa appointment?
Your appointment can be no more than 90 days prior to your departure date. That said, you can schedule your appointment right away, so it’s a good idea to make it as soon as possible—slots are limited, and fill up fast. You’ll also want to make sure that your appointment date is at least one month prior to your departure date to allow for the consulate’s processing time.

How do I make a visa appointment?
Appointments for the Italian and French consulates in New York can be made on their websites (Italy – visit http://www.consnewyork.esteri.it, then click “English” in the top right corner select “Visas” under “Services”; France – visit http://www.consulfrance-newyork.org, select “English” in the top right corner, then click “Visas” under “You are going to France”), while those in need of appointments at the Spanish consulate in New York should email the consulate at cog.nuevayork@maec.es. Students who plan to apply outside of New York should consult the website of their local consulate.

Can I use the visa materials listed on the OGS Accepted Students page?
The guidelines and required documents listed in each country’s visa packet will be the same for independent applicants as long as they are participating in an OGS semester program (Discover Italy, Discover France, Discover Spain or Discover the World). Students participating in other programs should download a blank application form from the consulate’s website and check the required documents based on the type of visa they’ll be applying for.

Do I need anything from OGS before I apply?
Yes. You’ll need to pick up a set of letters from our office that are a required component of your application. You can pick up these letters from our office – just send us an email letting us know that you need them, and when you’d like to pick them up.

If I apply on my own, how long does the appointment take? How long will it take them to issue my visa after that?
Generally speaking, your visa submission appointment should take no more than an hour, including wait time. Visa processing times can range from a week to a month depending on which consulate you submit to and how busy they are, and you should always give yourself at least a month before your departure date.

How much will it cost to apply for my visa independently?
That will depend on which country you’re applying to. The Italian consulate does not charge a fee for student visas. The Spanish and French consulate fees generally range between $125-$175, though they are dependent on exchange rates and may change over time.