Your arrival as an F-1 student in the U.S. will be smoother if you know what to expect. The Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement has prepared the following guide to ensure the quality of your experience.

Through its “Student and Exchange Visitor Program” (SEVP), the Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement is committed to facilitating your stay in the U.S. as you enjoy our nation’s academic, educational and cultural offerings.

To enhance security without slowing legitimate travel, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has instituted some changes in U.S. entry and exit procedures. Careful planning and preparation by international students can ensure that any delay based on these procedures is minimal.

Plan Your Arrival
You may be refused entry into the U.S. if you attempt to arrive more than 30 days before the academic program start date listed on your SEVIS I-20 form.

Always Hand-Carry Your Documents
There are documents you will need to keep with you when you arrive. Please do not check these documents with your baggage. If your baggage is lost or delayed, you will be unable to present the documents at your port of entry. As a result, you may not be able to enter the United States.

Documents Needed
1. Your passport, valid for at least six months beyond the date of your expected stay.
2. Sealed nonimmigrant documents. (When you receive your nonimmigrant visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate, the Consular Officer will seal your immigration documents in an envelope and attach it to your passport. Do not open this envelope! The Customs and Border Protection Officer at the U.S. Port of Entry will open the envelope.)

We strongly recommended that you hand-carry the following additional documentation:
- Evidence of financial resources
- Evidence of student status, such as recent tuition receipts and transcripts
- A paper receipt for the SEVIS fee, Form I-797

4. Name and contact information for your “Designated School Official,” including a 24-hour emergency contact number at the school.

For comprehensive information on procedures for traveling and arriving in the U.S., visit: www.educationusa.info/pages/students/getready.php

International Student and Scholar Services Office
St. John Hall, Room 116  Phone: (718) 990-6083 Fax: (718) 990-2070  ISS@stjohns.edu
Complete Your Entry Paperwork
If you arrive by Air, flight attendants will distribute Customs Declaration Forms (CF-6059) and Arrival Departure Record Forms (I-94). These must be completed prior to landing. If you arrive by land or sea, the CBP Officer at the port of entry will provide necessary Customs Declaration Forms (CF-6059) and Arrival-Departure Record Forms (I-94) to be filled out upon your arrival.

When You Arrive At Your Port of Entry
Go directly to the terminal area for arriving passengers. Have the following documents available: your passport; SEVIS Form (I-20); Arrival-Departure Record Form (I-94); and Customs Declaration Form (CF-6059). The Form I-94 should reflect the address where you will reside, not the address of your University or academic department.

You will be asked to state your reason for entering the U.S and provide information about your final destination. It is important to tell the CBP Officer that you will be a student, along with the name and address of the University in which you will enroll.

When Your Inspection is Completed
Once your inspection is successfully completed, the inspecting officer will do the following:
- Stamp your SEVIS Form for duration of status (“D/S”) for F visa holders
- Stamp your SEVIS Form for 30 days beyond program end date for M visa holders
- Stamp the Arrival-Departure Record Form (I-94) and staple it in the passport

Following Your Admission Into the U.S.
You should report to St. John’s to register for your courses within 30 days of the date on your SEVIS I-20 form. Failure to do so may result in serious consequences.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Secondary Inspection Requirement
If the CBP officer cannot verify your information, or you lack some required documentation; you may be directed to an interview area known as “Secondary Inspection.” This allows inspectors to conduct extra research to verify your information - without causing delays for other arriving passengers. The inspector will attempt to verify your status using the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). They may also need to verify your university or program. You should keep on hand the name and phone number of your St. John’s foreign student advisor. In case you arrive during non-business hours, have an emergency phone number available.

Failure to comply with U.S. government entry-exit procedures may result denied entry to the U.S. Under certain circumstances, the CBP officer may issue a “Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor” Form (I-515A), which authorizes temporary admission. Work with your school to submit the proper documentation without delay.

U.S.-Visit
Every nonimmigrant visitor holding a Visa - regardless of race, national origin or religion - participates in the U.S.-VISIT program, a comprehensive registration system tracking entries to and exits from the United States. For more information, visit: www.dhs.gov/files/programs/usv.shtml

National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS)
Some nonimmigrant visitors with a Visa may be asked to give additional information under the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS). At your port of entry you can obtain a packet of information explaining the registration procedure.