



UMBC

CENTER FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Preparing for Fall 2023: Visa Interview and Entry Process

Office of International Students and Scholars



Reminder:

Please **type questions in**
the Q&A not in the chat

Our team is monitoring the Q&A during this session. The chat is for links we share, but it is not monitored for questions.

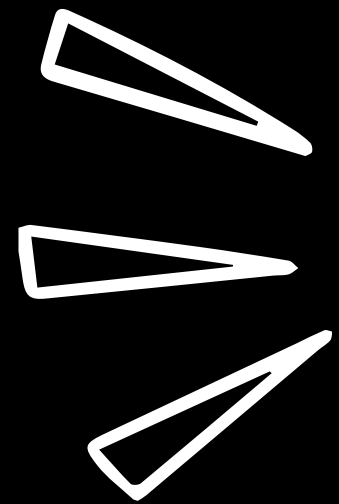
Your patience is appreciated as we answer your questions!



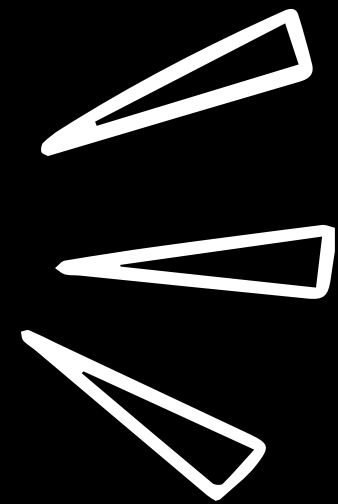
📌 Agenda 📌

- Working With ISSS
- Overview of student visa and entry process
- Scheduling the visa interview appointment
- The visa interview appointment
- What to expect and how to prepare
- Advice and tips
- Possible outcomes
- Traveling to and arriving in the U.S.
 - What to expect
 - How to prepare
- Q&A





Working with ISSS



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Your patience is appreciated as we answer your questions!



Need Assistance?

Visit our Contact Us page!

issss.umbc.edu/contact/




WORKING WITH ISSS
Contact us at issss.umbc.edu/contact/

- 1 CHECK THE WEBSITE!**
ALWAYS DO THIS FIRST!
• Most answers can be found on the website
• Contact us page has links to common questions
Get the answer you need? Great! No need to go on to #2
- 2 ASK US ON LIVE CHAT**
• Can't find the answer on the website? Then...
• Fastest way to contact advisors
• You'll chat directly with an ISSS advisor
• Keep it brief. Other students may be waiting
Has your question been resolved? No need to go on to #3
- 3 SUBMIT A HELP TICKET**
• Need more than help?
• Once you submit a ticket, an ISSS staff can see it
• You don't lose an or casual follow up (ticket)
• Response time: 3-7 business days
Get your answer? No need to go on to #4
- 4 ADVISING APPOINTMENT**
• We require further assistance!
• An advisor can let you know if your situation
• Requires an advising appointment
• Most questions are resolved before this point

Contact Us

Advising Hours and Live Chat ISSS advisors are available to meet with you to discuss questions you might have. You must have an appointment in order to speak with an ISSS advisor during Advising Hours, but you are welcome to connect with us on Live Chat whenever we are online.

 umbc.edu

University Center, 207a
(Appointment Required)



What should I do if I have a question?



**Check the
website!**

**Ask us on
Live Chat**

**Submit a
Help Ticket**

**Advising
Appointment**



Have a Question for ISSS? Follow the steps below!

Step

1

Always check the website first!

- Always do this first! Visit iss.s.umbc.edu
- Most answers are found on the website and there are icons that link you to common topics

Searched and can't find an answer? Go to step 2

Step

3

Submit a Help Ticket

- Once you submit a ticket, all ISSS staff can see it (no need to CC staff)
- Current response time: 5-7 business days

Still require further assistance? Go to step 4

Step

2

Ask us on live chat

- Ask an ISSS advisor quick questions
- Keep it brief, other students may be in the queue
- Don't use live chat to follow up on I-20 requests or help tickets

Question too complicated? Go to step 3

Step

4

Advising Appointment

- An advisor can let you know if your situation requires an advising appointment
- Most questions are resolved before this step
- Don't need an appointment anymore? Cancel it!

Remember: don't use live chat, tickets, or appointments to follow up on the status of your I-20 or other requests

Important:

Please **do not** use live chat or tickets to check on the status of your I-20 or other requests

- Once you submit your request, it has been received. **Always confirm any requests in the portal are in "submitted-under review" status.** If it's still in pending status, you haven't submitted it
- We receive a **very high number** of requests. Advisors work to process them as quickly as possible
- Following up on the status delays the turnaround time to process requests
- **Your patience is greatly appreciated!**



Where can I find this information?

How to work with ISSS and answers to your most common questions can be found on the



Contact Us
page here



Stay connected with ISSS



ISSS email list:
Read your email!



ISSS Portal:
issp-portal.umbc.edu



myUMBC Group:
ISSS Academy



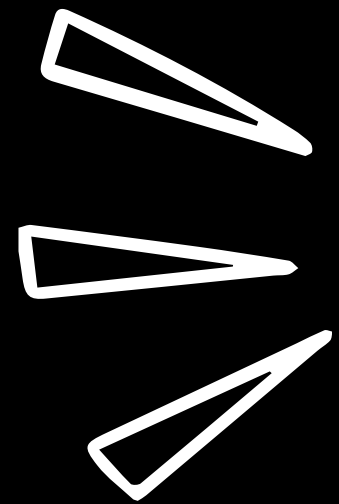
Contact Us:
issp.umbc.edu/contact/



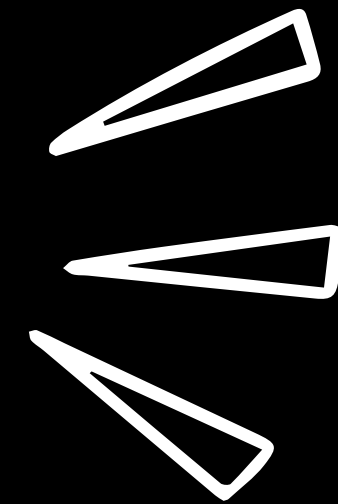
ISSS website:
issp.umbc.edu

Answers to most
of your
questions can be
found here!

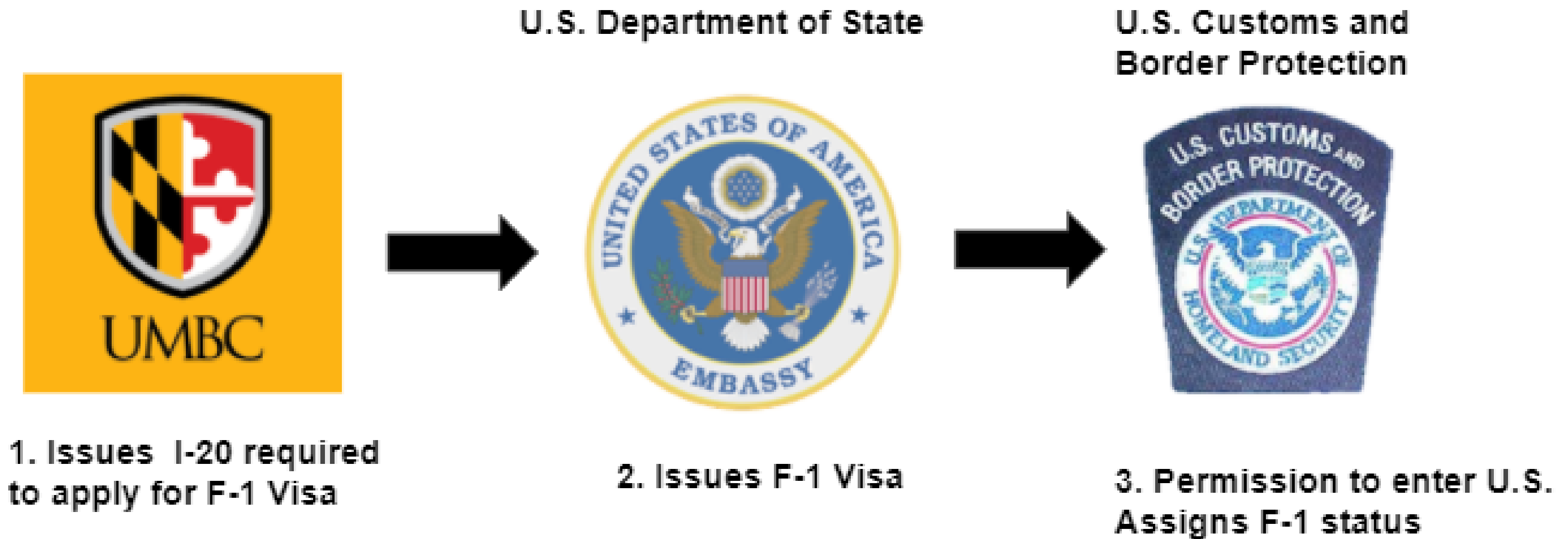




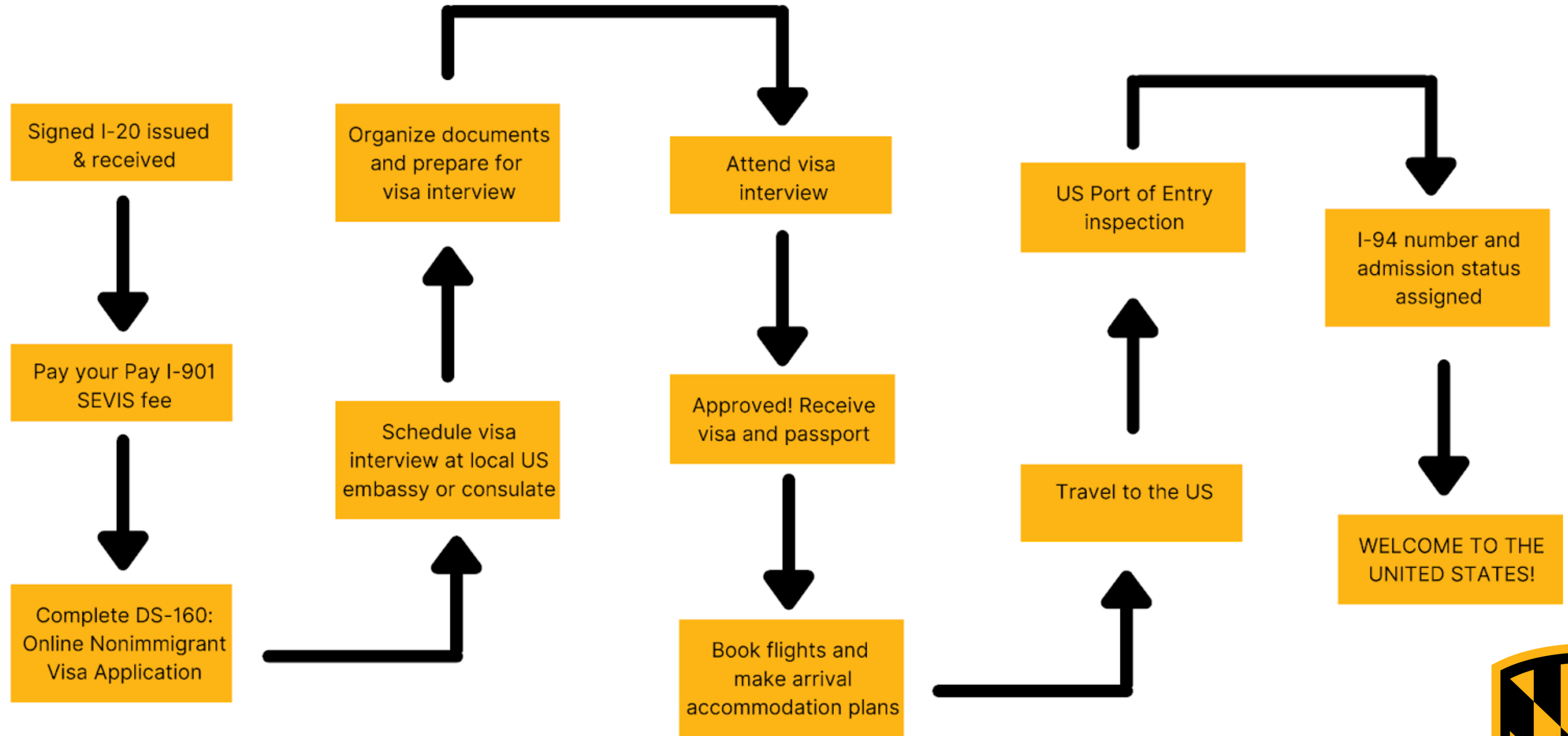
The Student Visa Process



The Student Visa Process



Next Steps: I-20 through Entering U.S.



Form I-20

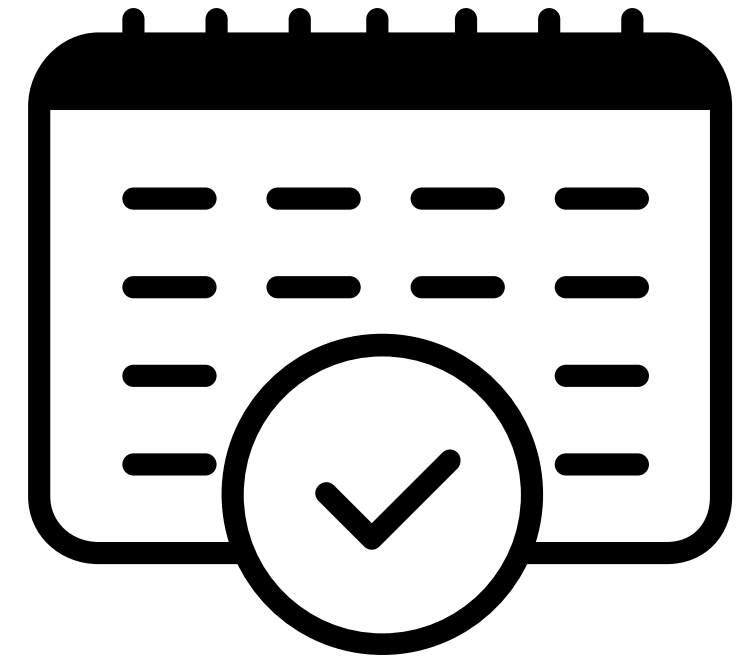
- Issued by UMBC **after** admission
 - Program dates, level, study
 - Estimated cost of attendance
 - Permission to apply for F-1 visa
 - Electronic - print and sign in blue ink
- Required at U.S. embassy and U.S. border
- Most important document for maintaining immigration status in future, not visa
- **DO NOT LOSE**

Department of Homeland Security U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement		I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status OMB NO. 1653-0038	
SEVIS ID: N00XXXXXXXXXX			
SURNAME/PRIMARY NAME Trojan		GIVEN NAME Tommy	CLASS F-1 ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE
PREFERRED NAME Tommy Trojan		PASSPORT NAME	
COUNTRY OF BIRTH		COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	
DATE OF BIRTH		ADMISSION NUMBER	
FORM ISSUE REASON CONTINUED ATTENDANCE		LEGACY NAME Tommy Trojan	
SCHOOL INFORMATION			
SCHOOL NAME University of Southern California University of Southern California		SCHOOL ADDRESS Office of International Services, 300 Student Union, Los Angeles, CA 90089	
SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL Ariel Suarez Immigration Advisor		SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE 10S214F00291000 30 JANUARY 2008	
PROGRAM OF STUDY			
EDUCATION LEVEL MASTER'S	MAJOR 1 Playwriting and Screenwriting 50.0504	MAJOR 2 None 00.0000	
NORMAL PROGRAM LENGTH 24 Months	PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Required	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES Student is proficient	
PROGRAM START DATE 11 AUGUST 2014	PROGRAM END DATE 13 MAY 2016		
FINANCIALS			
ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR: 9 MONTHS		STUDENT'S FUNDING FOR: 9 MONTHS	
Tuition and Fees	\$ 37,561	Personal Funds	\$ 0
Living Expenses	\$ 20,348	NONE	\$ 0
Expenses of Dependents (0)	\$ 0	NONE	\$ 57,909
NONE	\$ 0	On-Campus Employment	\$ 0
TOTAL	\$ 57,909	TOTAL	\$ 57,909
REMARKS			
SCHOOL ATTESTATION			
I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.			
X		DATE ISSUED	PLACE ISSUED
SIGNATURE OF: Ariel Suarez, Immigration Advisor		16 March 2016	Los Angeles, CA
STUDENT ATTESTATION			
I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of any extension of stay. I certify that all information provided on this form refers specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full program of study at the school named above. I also authorize the named school to release any information from my records needed by DHS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.3(g) to determine my nonimmigrant status. Parent or guardian, and student, must sign if student is under 18.			
X			
SIGNATURE OF: Tommy Trojan		DATE	
NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN		X	
SIGNATURE		ADDRESS (city/state or province/country) DATE	



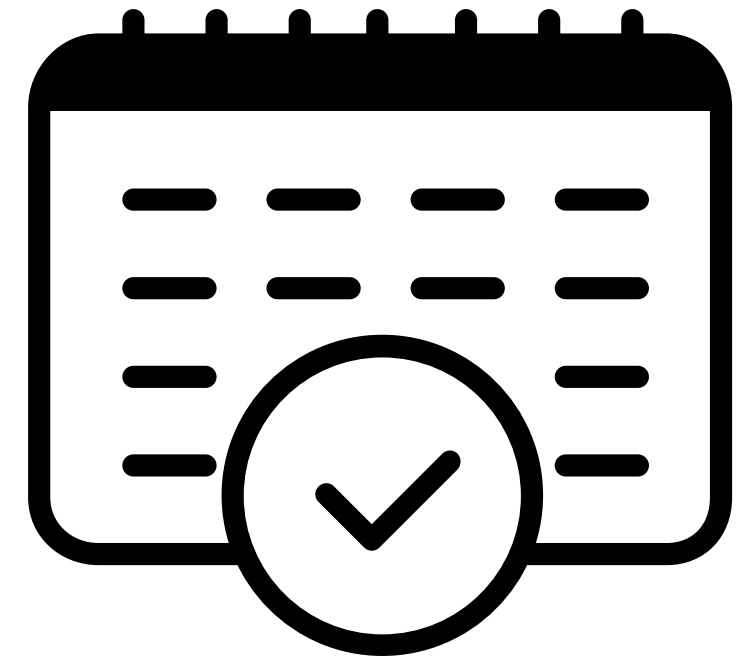
Scheduling Visa Appointment

1. Pay I-901 SEVIS fee - www.fmjfee.com
 - Form I-20 required
 - Current F-1 SEVIS fee \$350
2. Complete DS-160: Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application - www.travel.state.gov
 - Form I-20 required
 - Current DS-160 fee \$185
3. Schedule a visa interview appointment at local U.S. Embassy or Consulate
 - Each U.S. embassy or consulate process differs slightly
 - Refer to website of specific embassy or consulate for detailed instructions at that post



Scheduling Visa Appointment

- Many countries are experiencing delays or cancellations in visa appointments due to COVID conditions.
- The US State Department has stated the student visas as a priority, and as it is safe to start appointments again, student visas will be given priority
- **Monitor Embassy websites for updates**, like this one for India: <https://in.usembassy.gov/visas/>
- Embassy websites may have directions for Emergency appointments for students, or you can contact the Embassy to ask about emergency appointments if they are open



The Visa Interview Appointment

Required documents:

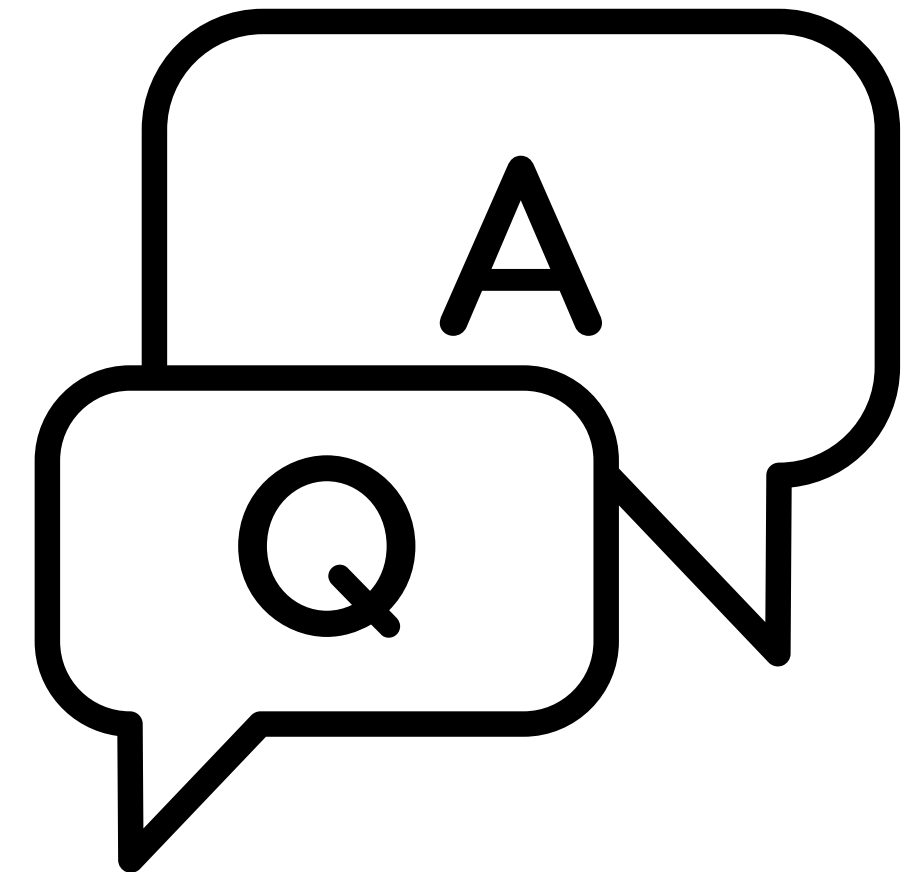
- Form I-20
- I-901 SEVIS fee receipt
- DS-160 receipt and barcode page
- Valid passport
- Transcripts from previous study (secondary school, undergraduate degree)
- Test results (TOEFL/iELTS, GRE, SAT, etc.)
- Financial documents



Global Ambassadors

Did you have any difficulty booking your appointment? Do you have any tips or suggestions for future students?

What documents did you bring with you to your appointment?



The Visa Interview Appointment

- U.S. law assumes all applicants intend to immigrate
 - Burden of proof is on you to overcome that assumption
- Must establish strong ties to home country
 - 9 FAM 402.5(E)(1) “Possess residence in a foreign country he or she has no intention of abandoning”
 - “Intends to depart upon completion of the approved activity”
 - Be prepared to explain why you chose UMBC, and your specific degree program.
 - Articulate your plans for after graduation related to returning home
- Consular officers are under pressure to act quickly
 - Conducted in less than three minutes
 - Usually conducted in English

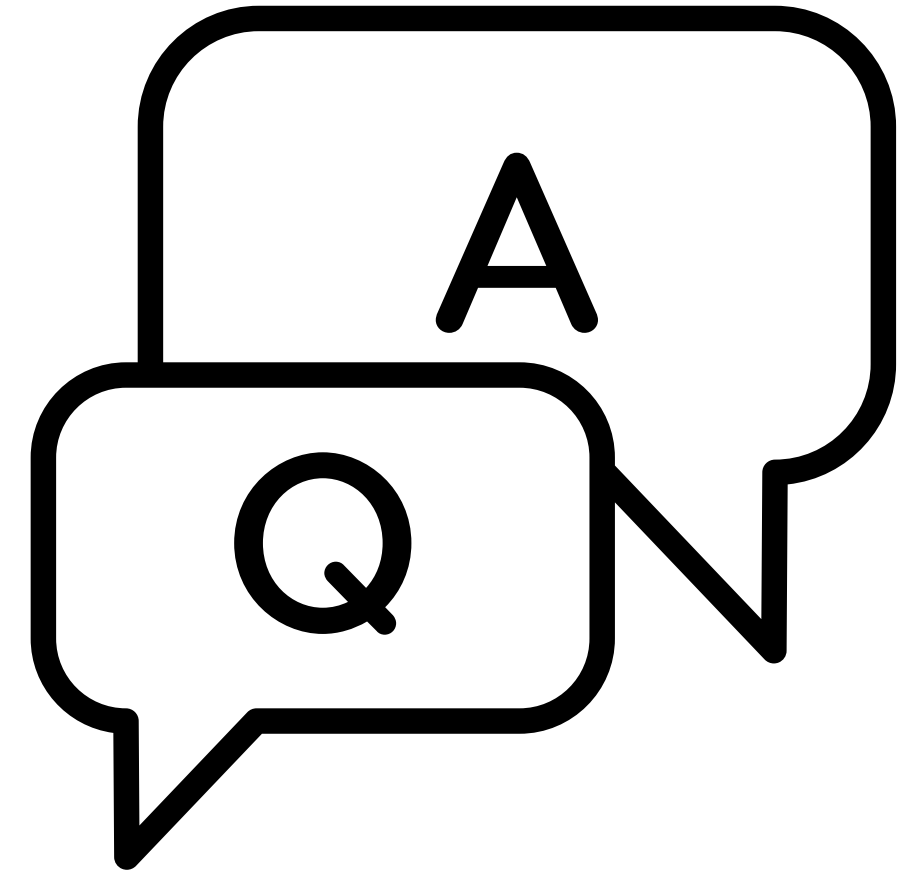


Global Ambassadors

Describe the day of your visa appointment?

What was the embassy like where you had your interview?

How long did your interview last?



The Visa Interview Appointment

Consular officer may ask:

- What do you intend to do after completing your degree?
- About your family's business in your home country or in the U.S.
- Why UMBC and why this particular program and degree?
- What are your long term career and academic goals?
- Where is UMBC?
- How will you support yourself while in the U.S.?
- How will you support your family in the U.S. or at home if they stay?

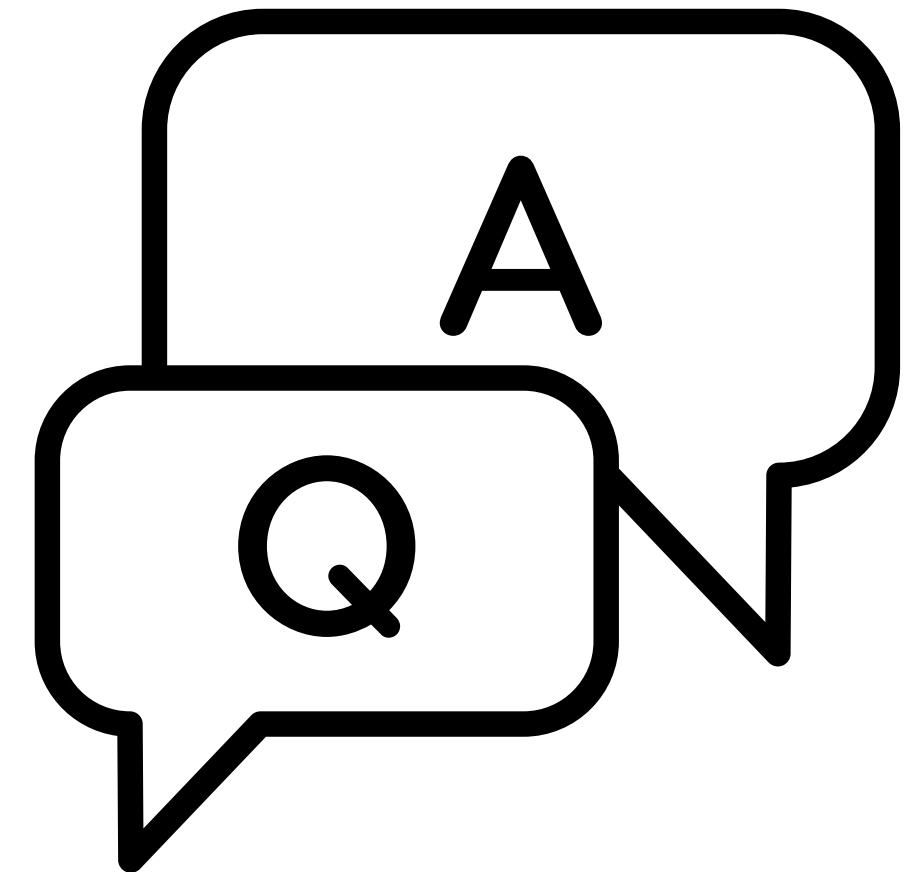


Global Ambassadors

What questions did the consular officer ask you?

When did you learn if you were approved?

What documents did the officer ask for?



Tips for a Successful Visa Interview Appointment

- Be prepared to establish **ties to home country** and **nonimmigrant intent**
 - Do you or your family own property?
 - Investments or inheritance in home country?
 - Did you apply to the visa lottery in the past?
 - Do you have close relatives who are U.S. citizens or permanent residence?
- Do your research
 - What is UMBC? Where is UMBC? Why UMBC?
 - What do you know about Maryland? Baltimore? Baltimore County?
 - Be prepared to explain your academic program/field of study in layman's terms
 - Why did you choose UMBC and not a different university?
 - What are your career plans and how does this program help you achieve them?



Tips for a Successful Visa Interview Appointment

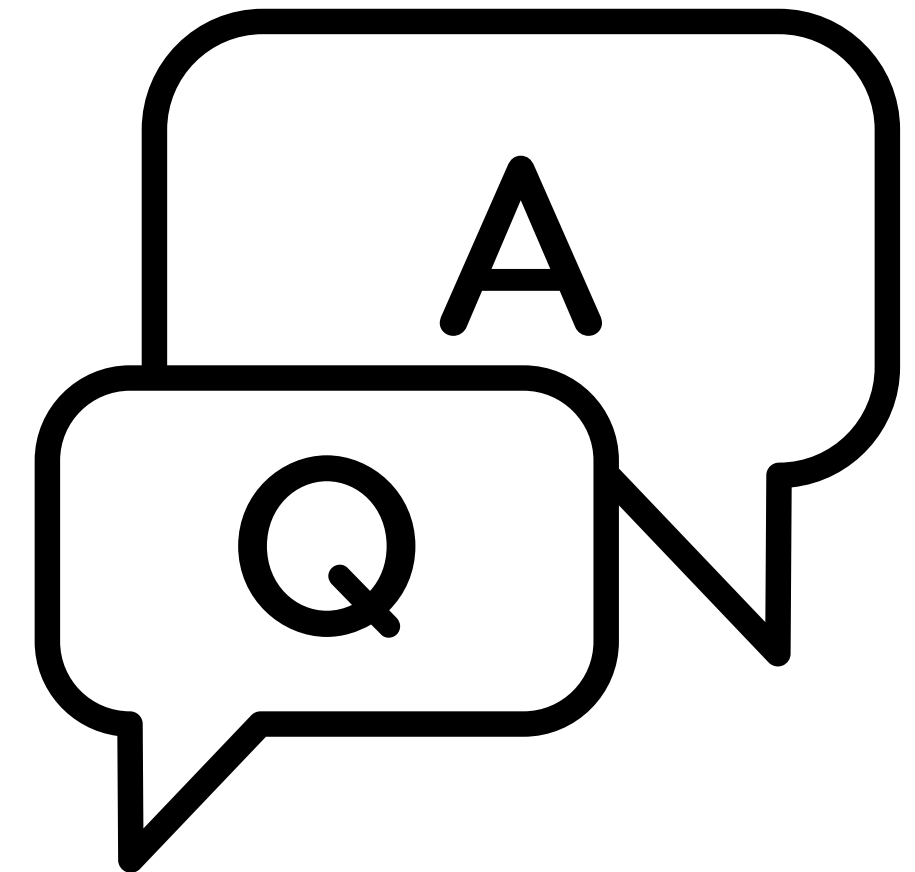
- **Practice, Practice, Practice**
 - Most interviews conducted in English
 - Speak for yourself
 - Be brief and be positive
- **Be honest**
 - A lie (however immaterial) will likely result in denial
 - Social media question on DS-160
- **Be concise and prepared**
 - Organize supporting documents in advance
 - Remember, you have 2-3 minutes (if you are lucky)



Global Ambassadors

What tips and advice do you have for visa applicants?

What is one thing you know now that you wish you knew before your interview?



Visa Interview Outcomes

1. Approval

- The vast majority of visa applications are approved

2. Failure to demonstrate nonimmigrant intent - INA 214 (b)

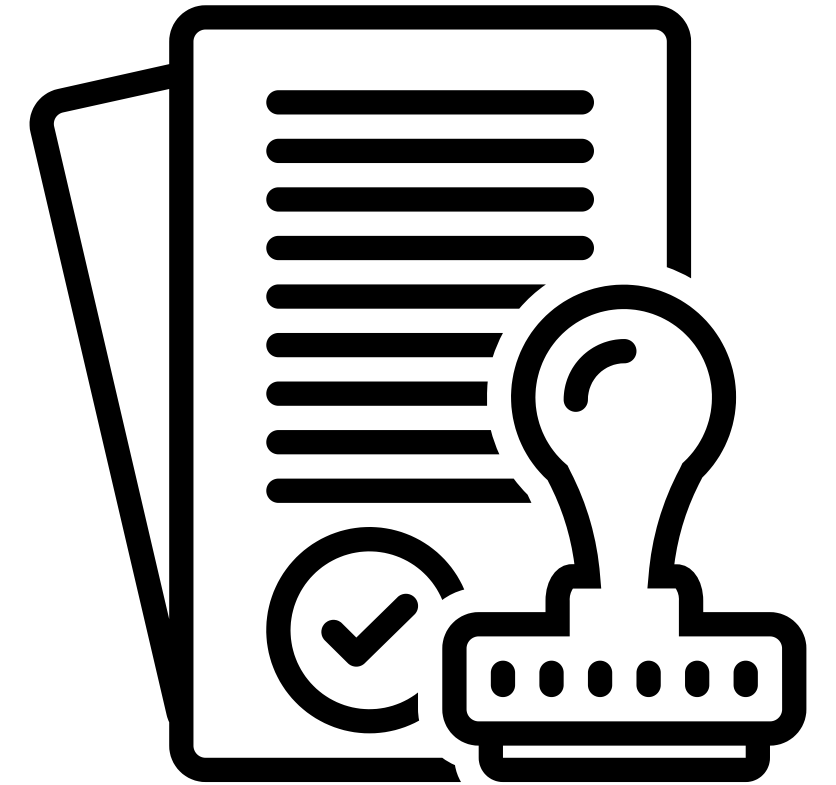
- Burden of proof is on applicant
- Credibility and evidence - does your plan make sense?
- May apply again

3. Administrative Processing - INA 221 (g)

- Consular processing - clerical or security (sensitive technology, terror, clearance)
- “Washington-related”

4. Serious Ineligibilities - INA 212 (a)

- Health, previous overstay, security concerns, previous criminal charge, etc.





Traveling to the U.S.



Traveling to the U.S.

- **A visa is not a guarantee of entry to the U.S., it is only permission to apply**
- F-1 Visa holders can request entry to the U.S. up to 30 days before I-20 start date
 - August 30th start date = July 31st earliest entry
 - Check your I-20 for your "Earliest Admission Date"
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has broad authority at U.S. Ports of Entry
 - All arriving “applicants for admission” are inspected by CBP to determine admissibility



Inspection at Port of Entry

Primary Inspection

Required documents:

- Passport with at least six months future validity
- Form I-20

Suggested documents:

- Admission letter/academic transcripts
- Evidence of financial support



Inspection at Port of Entry

Secondary Inspection

- Not a cause for alarm
- Applicants to taken to secondary:
 - SEVIS technical issues
 - Efficiency
 - Extra screening
 - Review documents
 - Officer training issue

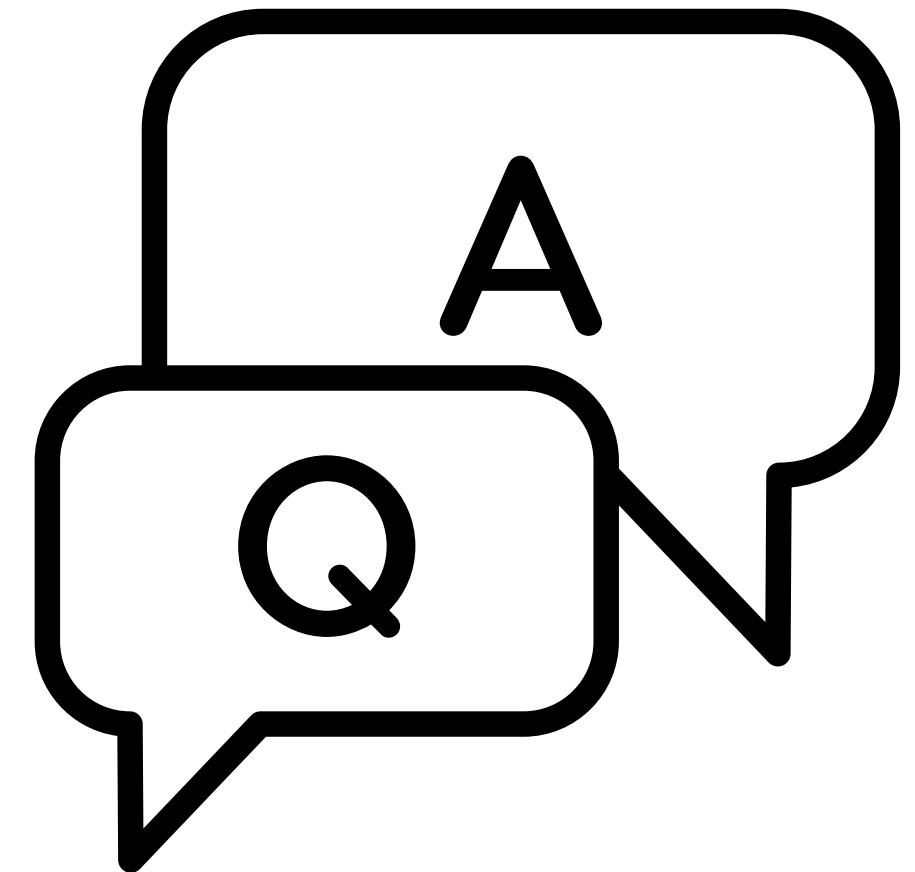


Global Ambassadors

Tell us about your experience(s) at U.S. Ports of Entry

What kind of questions have you been asked?

Have you ever been taken to secondary inspection?



Admission to U.S.

Assigns I-94 number and admission status:

- F-1
- D/S
- May or may not stamp your passport

I-515A

- Temporary admission
- Must contact a DSO (ISSS team) to comply



Most Recent I-94

Admission (I-94) Record Number : 51415565885

Most Recent Date of Entry: 2017 July 25

Class of Admission : F1

Admit Until Date : D/S

Details provided on the I-94 Information form:

Last/Surname :

First (Given) Name :

Birth Date :

Passport Number :

Country of Issuance : China



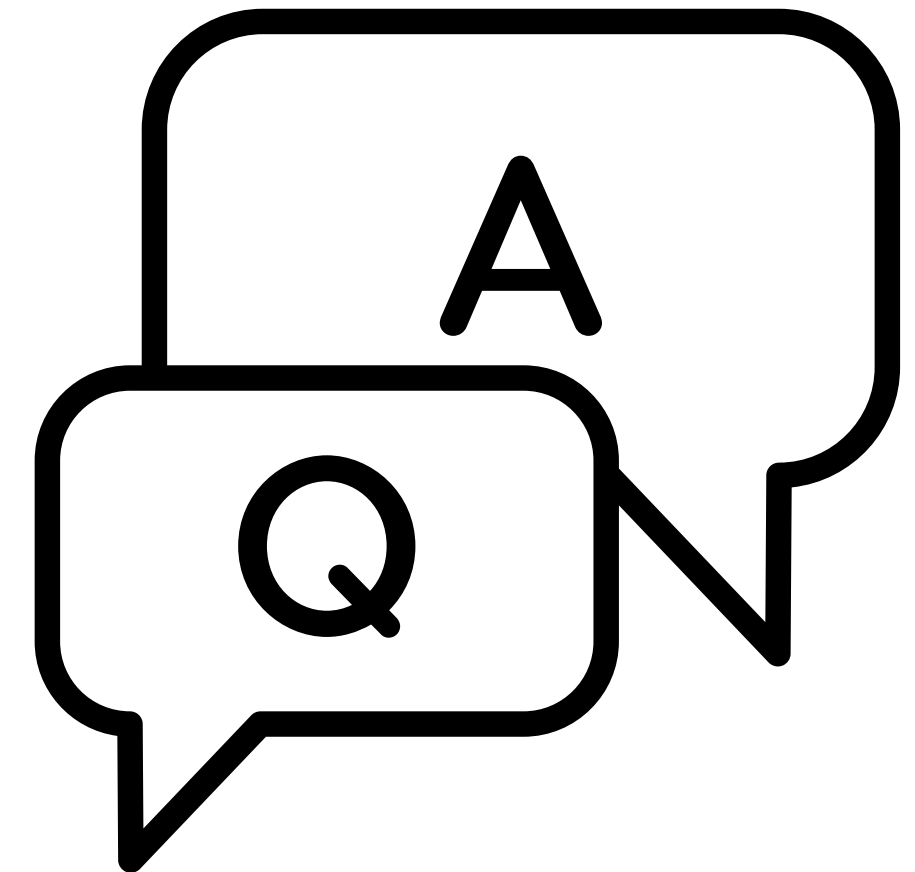
Port of Entry Tips

- Review International Student Arrival Guide
- Remain calm
- Keep your documents in your carry on luggage
- Ensure your passport has six months of future validity
 - Present F-1 visa foil, not B-1/B-2
- Do not lie to a CBP officer
- Know how to contact UMBC in case of emergency
 - After hours: 410-455-5555 ask to speak to “ISSS”
- Check your I-94 record



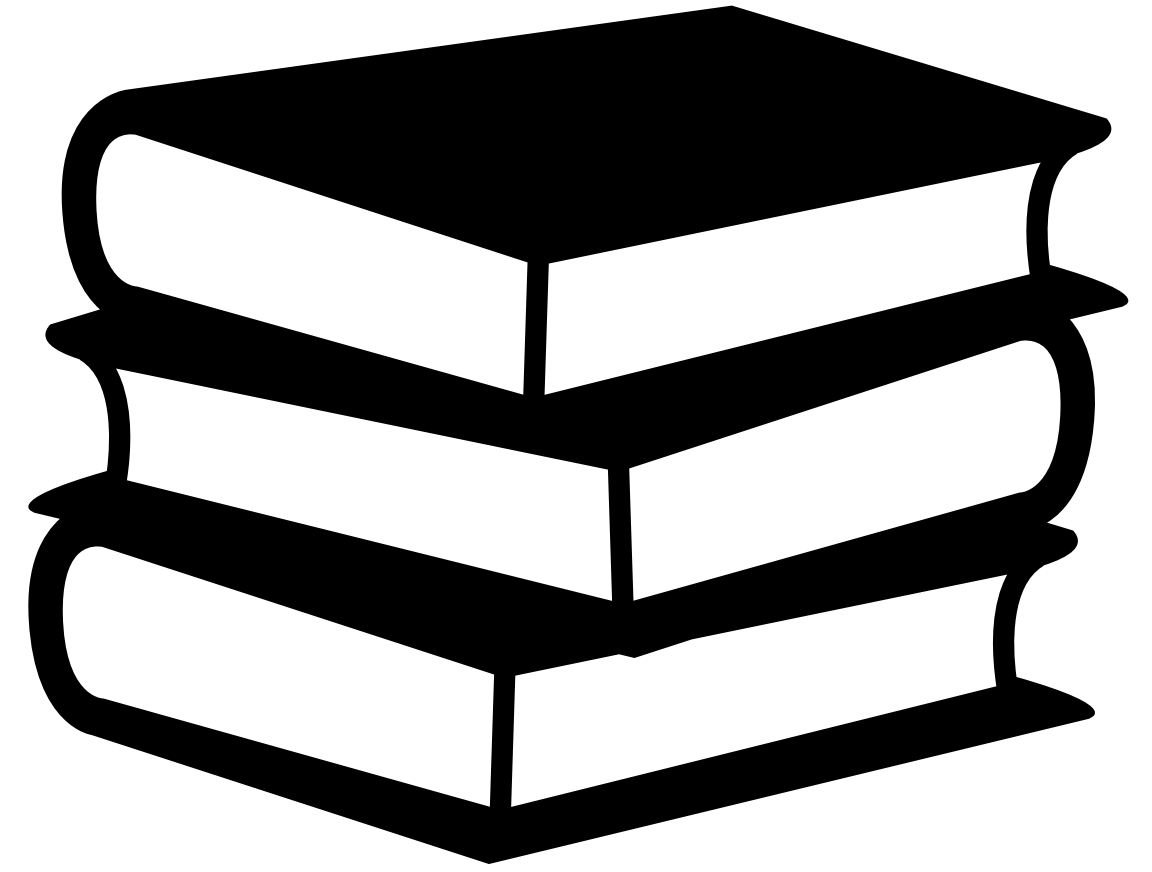
Global Ambassadors

What tips do you have for students traveling to the U.S.?

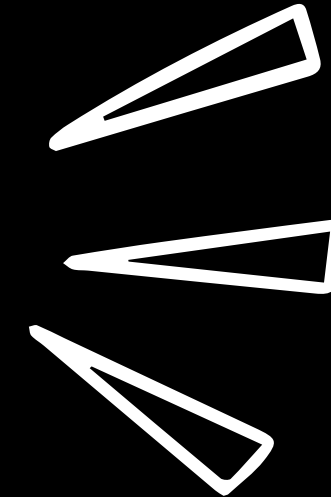
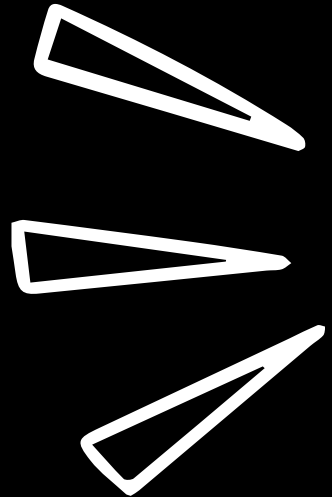


Resources

- NAFSA Ten Points to Remember When Applying for a Student Visa
 - Be sure to checkout the videos at the bottom!
- International Student & Scholar Services- “F-1 Visa Process” www.issc.umbc.edu
- U.S. Department of State Student Visa Page
- Your local embassy or consulate is always the best source of information



Fall 2023 Considerations



Things To Consider For Fall 2023

- Visa or visa interview appointment by early August
- The earliest you can arrive in the US is 30 days before your I-20 program start date
- **Must enter US by August 30th**
- Be informed of travel and vaccine requirements in your home countries as well as in the U.S.
- Full time enrollment required (UG: 12 credits, Graduate: 9 credits)
- UMBC is offering a combination of in person, hybrid and online courses
- As you are planning your course schedule, please don't plan to enroll in more than one online class. Formal guidance on online course limits to come

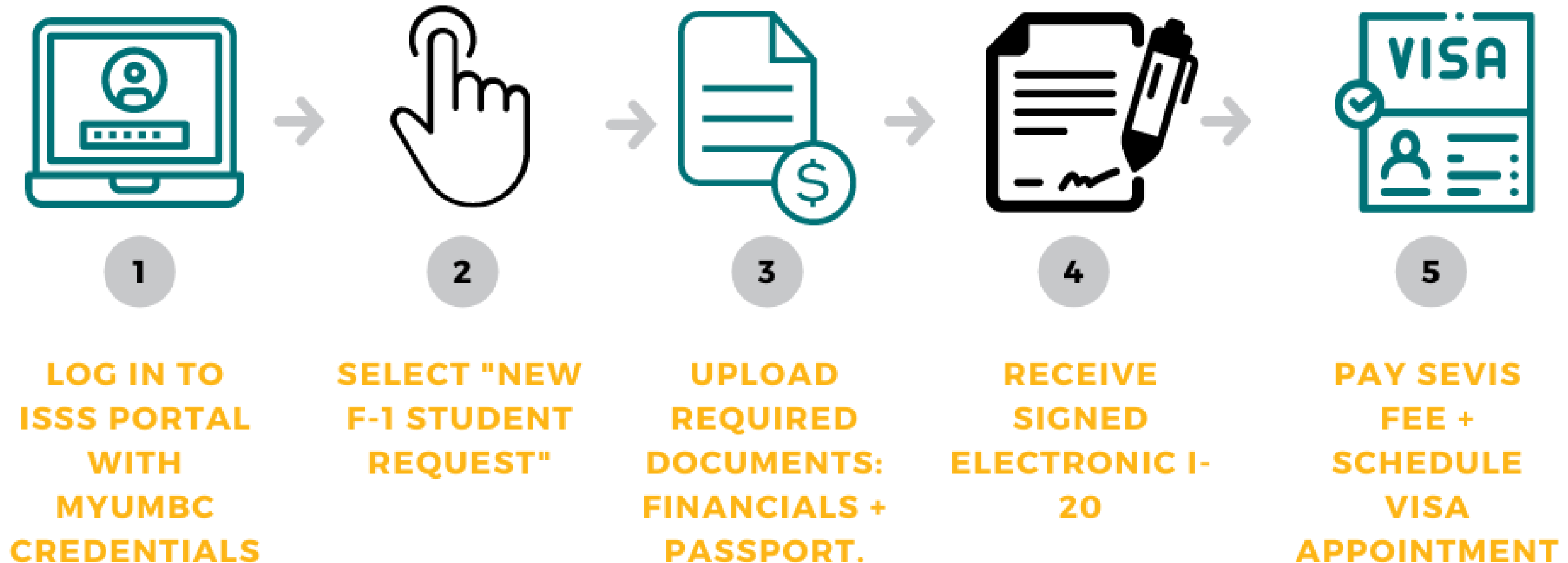
Transfer Students:

- Students currently in F-1 status in the U.S. transferring to UMBC from another institution
- Please follow regular I-20 transfer guidelines
- Planning to travel home? Already at home and planning to return for Fall 2023?

Contact us: iss.umbc.edu/contact



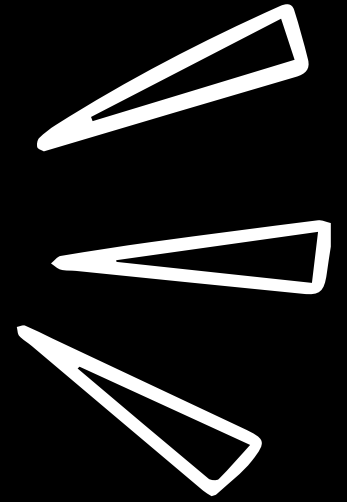
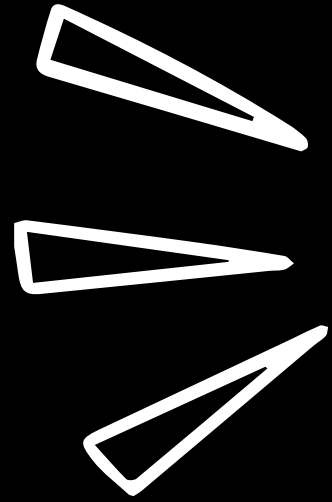
Need to request an I-20?



**Join our general info session for a detailed overview
of the I-20 request process and more**



Upcoming Events & Additional Resources



Join Our Next Webinar!

Join ISSS info sessions and webinars to learn about UMBC, get your questions answered and hear from advisors and current international students.

Webinar dates and links to join are posted on the

Student Communications page

iss.s.umbc.edu/new-student-communications/

View the page here



Additional Resources

Missed a session, want to review, or have more questions?

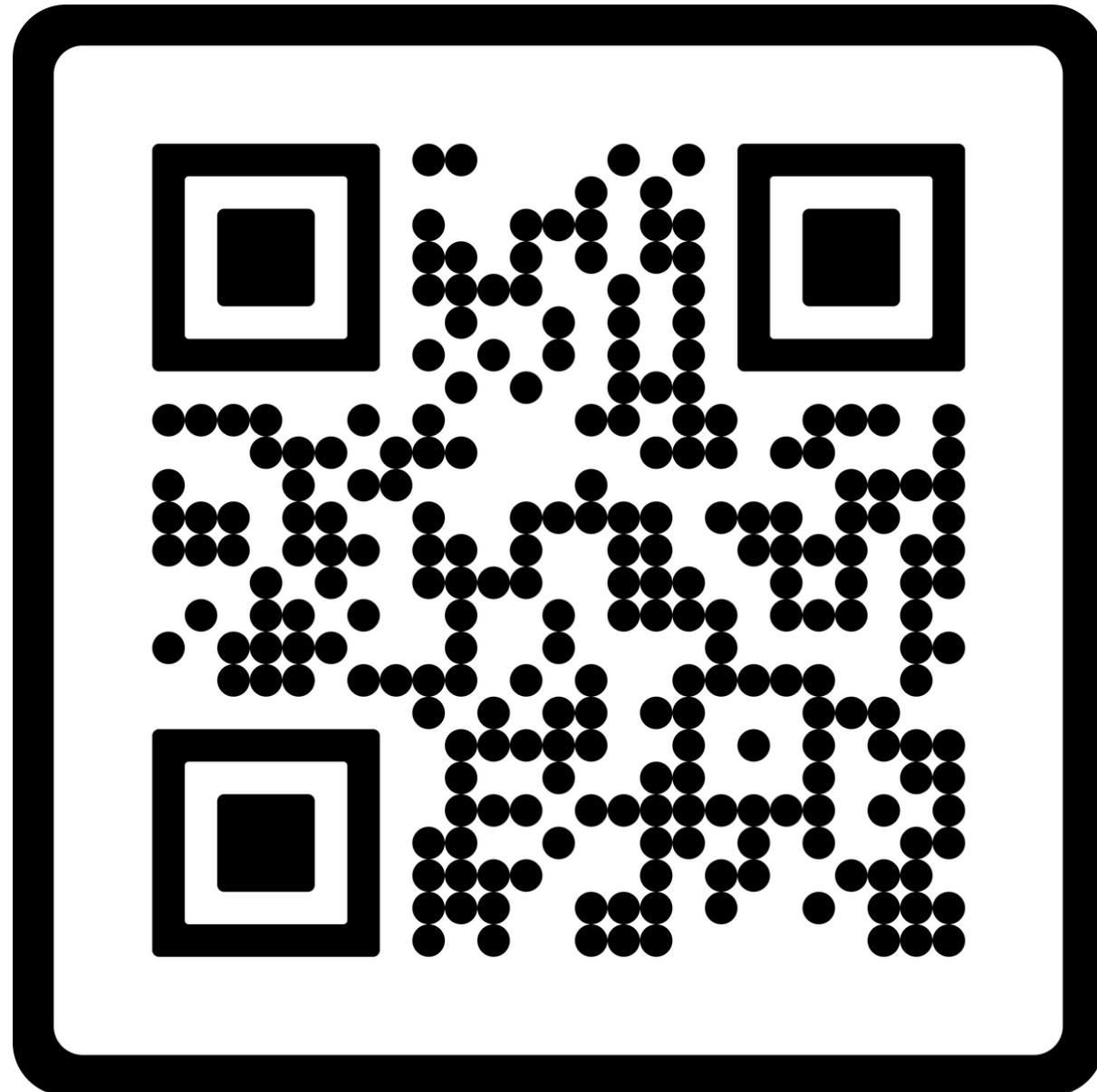
- We have info sessions every week, so come more than once to get the latest info, get your questions answered and hear from ISSS staff!

International Student Arrival Guide!

- Use this guide to find contact details and information you'll need about preparing for your arrival and your first weeks at UMBC. [Download the guide here.](#)



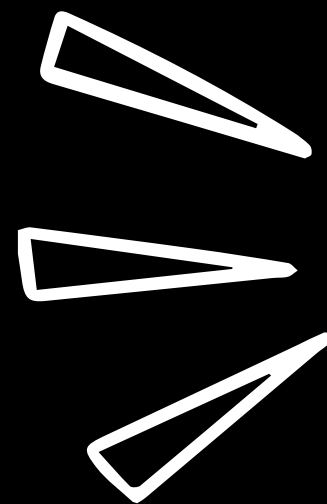
Meet other new students on Unibuddy Community!



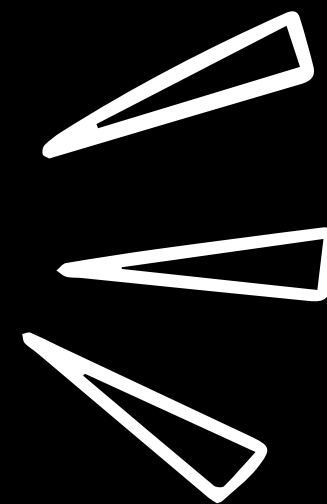
Scan the code to join the Fall 2023 community!

- Chat with other admitted students as well as our UMBC Global Ambassadors
- Get to know your classmates and talk about student life at UMBC!
- Ask current student questions about starting at UMBC





Q&A



Follow us on social media!

We're online! Follow us to learn about ISSS activities!



Facebook:
umbcisss



Instagram:
@umbc_iss

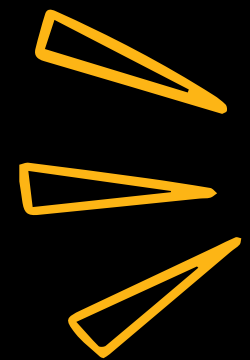


Twitter:
@umbc_iss





Congratulations!



We look forward to seeing you in Fall 2023!

