

# Pre-Departure Information Guide

This information sheet is designed to give you a quick guide on your transition to Claremont, California. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need further assistance.

## **Academic Planning**

We recommend that you bring with you any syllabi, catalogs, course descriptions or other relevant materials issued by the college or university you previously attended. These materials can be helpful to faculty should questions arise concerning your placement in courses at KGI.

## **Getting an I-20 or DS-2019**

Before issuing you an I-20 or DS-2019 form, KGI is required to verify that you have adequate financial resources to support your studies. Please refer to the I-20/DS-2019 Application form provided by the KGI International Team for detailed instructions.

## **Obtaining a Visa**

The first thing you must do to arrange for your entry into the United States is to obtain an F-1 or J-1 student visa from a U.S. embassy or consulate near you. Visa procedures vary somewhat from one embassy/consulate to another. Before applying for a visa, check with your [embassy/consulate](#) for current procedures and required documents. At minimum, you will be required to submit the following:

- Visa application and fee
- Passport-style photo(s)
- Proof of \$350 (F-1), \$220 (J-1)  
[SEVIS I-901 fee](#) payment
- Valid passport
- I-20/DS-2019 from KGI
- Proof of financial support

DO NOT enter the U.S. on a B-1/B-2 tourist visa. You cannot study on this visa and changing status from B-1/B-2 to F-1 in the US is a lengthy and difficult process.

**Note:** Canadian citizens are not required to obtain a student visa. Instead, Canadians present an I-20 and proof of financial support at the point of entry.

**Transfer Students.** If you have been attending another institution in the United States as an F-1 student, please provide your current school with our [Transfer-In Instructions](#). J-1 students, please contact us for instructions on transferring to KGI.

## **Finances**

It is very important that you estimate your educational and living expenses carefully to make certain that you will have sufficient funds available to meet all your needs while studying at KGI. Institutional financial aid is very limited, so that, unless you have already been notified of an award in your admission letter, you should not expect to receive an award after you have registered for classes.

***KGI Student Loan.*** If you have received the International Student Loan, the Fall and Spring payments will be disbursed 10 days prior to the start of the Fall and Spring semesters.

## **Employment**

F-1 students are allowed to work on-campus up to 20 hours per week during the academic year. Students may work more during vacation periods. Permission to accept employment off-campus is strictly regulated by U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). You should not plan on working to support yourself during your studies, except during the required summer internship. F-2 spouses (husband or wife of an F-1 student) may not be employed at any time under any circumstances. J-2 dependents may apply for work authorization in the US.

## **Arrival in the US**

***Packing.*** Before packing, check with your airline to find out how much baggage you will be allowed to take with you. Please do not send any baggage in advance of your arrival to KGI as we do not have storage facilities for luggage or packages. Projects Abroad has created a wonderful [Ultimate Travel Checklist](#) that you might find useful when packing.

***Money.*** Do not carry a large amount of cash. Instead, purchase traveler's checks or use a major credit card such as Visa or American Express. **Do not place your cash, credit cards, or traveler's checks in your checked luggage.**

***Health & Medicine.*** Bring a small supply of familiar medicine, such as pain relievers, that you are used to. If you have prescription medicines, bring a larger supply and proof of your prescription. You may not be able to immediately renew your prescription in the US.

***Arrival in Claremont.*** Most international flights land at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), though you may choose to fly into Ontario International Airport (ONT). There are several shuttle services operating between Claremont and ONT or LAX.

***Weather.*** Claremont is 30 miles east of the city of Los Angeles, at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains in Los Angeles County. Situated at an elevation of 1,150 feet, the weather is almost always warm and sunny with an annual average rainfall of approximately 17 inches. The temperature may drop to near freezing (0 C) some nights in December and January, but will often climb to 25 C or higher in the daytime. The rainy season is in the winter, and summer is usually very warm and dry (temperatures can reach 30 C/40 C).

***City of Claremont Website.*** Further information about the city of Claremont is available on-line at <https://www.ci.claremont.ca.us/>.

### **Health Insurance**

Health care in the U.S. is very expensive. Therefore, all international students are required to purchase the school's [student health insurance plan or opt out](#) by purchasing an equivalent plan.

### **Check-In**

Within 10 days of your arrival in Claremont, you must complete your check in appointment. Most students will arrange and conduct their check in appointment during orientation week. Late arriving students must contact the International Student Advisor to arrange a check in appointment. Bring your passport and [I-94 admission record](#) print out to the meeting (you can email [international@kgi.edu](mailto:international@kgi.edu) a screenshot of your I-94 instead of bringing a print out).