

# Traveling to the U.S.

Bring the following documents with you in your carry-on luggage. You need access to them at all times and must present them for inspection at the U.S. port of entry before you can pick up your luggage.

- Passport and visa
- Original Form I-20
- Evidence of financial resources
- Bellarmine University admission letter
- Proof of SEVIS fee payment

See the Customs & Border Protection (CBP) website for information regarding travel with restricted and prohibited items: <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/know-before-you-visit>.

**You cannot enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the start date on your I-20.** Orientation is mandatory. Please make plans to arrive in time and notify us of your travel plans and when you safely arrive.

## Admission and Electronic I-94

A Customs Officer will review your documents at passport control. While your visa should permit you entrance to the U.S., the Officer ultimately decides if you will be admitted. Contact us if you are issued an I-515A (this grants conditional admittance, but is not issued often).

Once an Officer approves you, they will stamp your passport and mark it D/S, meaning your stay will be valid for the duration of your student stay. They will also create an electronic record of your travel, called an I-94. This will be updated every time you travel across the border and it should always be available to you online at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/>.

## Questioning and Tips

You may be fingerprinted or photographed as part of the admission process. It is also possible that an Officer will decide you need additional screening. This is not uncommon and involves more questioning. Record the Officer's name and badge number and make notes about your experience. Before you travel, please visit <https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/immigrants-rights/> for more information about your rights. The Officer may ask questions about why you're traveling to the U.S.

- Remain calm. Answer honestly and simply.
- Explain that you are travelling to Bellarmine to study. They may ask why you've decided to study in the U.S. or what you're studying.
- Answer any questions about your financial support and provide your documents if the officer asks. They may be ask about your ability to pay your expenses or about your ties to your home country.
- Officers are trying to confirm that it is your intention to return home after you complete your studies.