In order to be in Panama legally as a student on our program, you must apply for a student visa. Keep in mind the receipt of a visa is a privilege and not an automatic right. Each foreign country has the right to establish its own parameters for the granting of a visa, and as an American requesting permission to enter that foreign country, you must abide by all of the requirements.

The Student Visa will be applied for and obtained in country with the help of the Panama Study Center Staff. However, there are a number of visa support documents listed below that must be supplied to the International Programs office by July 20th. You must present your documents IN PERSON or by traceable mail (e.g. FedEx, UPS, DHL) to the FSU International Programs Office by **July 20th 2016**.

FSU-International Programs Office  
Attn: Meghan Munroe  
A5500 University Center  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-2420  
850.644.3272

Please note: Fall, Spring and Summer 13 week session students must attend all immigration appointments in the Republic of Panama in a timely manner in order to receive their visa. Students will not be able to travel outside of Panama until they have received their multiple entry visa. Therefore, travel outside of Panama may not be possible for the first 4-5 weeks of the program. If a student fails to obtain the visa before traveling outside the country, the Republic of Panama may fine the student $2,000 which the student will be held responsible for.

**1. FBI BACKGROUND CHECK AND APOSTILLE CERTIFICATION**

In order to stay in Panama for over three months, a background check and an apostille is required. An apostille is a form of authentication similar to a notarization. Overall, the processing may take up to 3 week to complete. The FBI Background check takes up to 7 business days with standard shipping and the Apostille takes an additional 7 business days. Please make sure you start the process with enough time to meet the visa deadline, **July 20th**.
A. FBI Background Check: You will be working with the company, My FBI Report, in order to complete your FBI Background Check. This company is an approved channeker by the FBI. International Programs asks that you please use this channeker as they offer all FSU students a discount, but they are also one of the few companies that supply FBI background check results on blue tamper proof paper required to obtain the apostille (the second step).

My FBI Report will guide you through the background check process. Please visit http://www.myfbireport.com/index.php, scroll to the bottom of the page and enter your email address to receive application forms and instructions. In order to receive a discount, please use promo code: FSU3

B. U.S. Department of State Apostille: Once the hardcopy, blue, tamper proof background check results have been returned to you, you will start the apostille process. You cannot use the results offered online.

Step 1: Fill out the DS-4194: http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/183033.pdf
   Section 1: Fill in your contact information.
   Section 2: Not Applicable to you (Skip)
   Section 3: The results must be mailed back to you, not to International Programs.
   Section 4: Country of use will be “Republic of Panama”
      Number of Documents: 1
      Document Type: “FBI Criminal Background Record”
   Section 5: Total Number of Documents: 1
      Estimated Cost: $8

Step 2: Payment: The fee for the apostille is $8. Allowable payment methods include U.S. Postal Money Orders, Checks (personal, corporate, certified, cashiers, travelers) all payable to “U.S. Department of State”.

Step 3: Self- Addressed, prepaid envelope: Include a pre-filled, pre-paid shipping label and corresponding envelope. This is for the U.S. Department of State to return the certification to you. International Programs recommends using a traceable method of shipping (priority, UPS, FedEx, etc). The shipping label must be made out to you and from you (you will be listed as both the sender and the recipient).

Step 4: Mail: Mail the DS-4194 request for authentication service form, check or money order, pre-paid and prefilled return shipping label and envelope and original FBI background check to:

Office of Authentications
U.S. Department of State
Step 5: Follow up: Processing for the apostille takes approximately 7 business days once received. Call the Office of Authentications to inquire about the status of your documents at 202-485-8000.

Please note: The visa cannot be obtained without the FBI Background Check and Apostille. It is very important to keep track of processing and complete each task in a timely manner. If you believe for any reason you will not have the background check and apostille by the July 20th deadline, please notify International Programs at ip-visas@fsu.edu before the deadline.

2. Six Passport Photos:
   Photos must be official passport-style photos: white background, no hats/spaghetti strap tops, etc. For details on proper passport photos, visit: http://travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotoreq/pptphotoreq_5333.html. Please do not attempt to create the passport photos at home and make sure all six photos are the same.

   The 6 passport photos are in addition to the two passport photos required for your “Important forms packet”. In total, you will have 8 passport photos; 2 will go towards your Important Forms Packet so that International Programs can create your International Student ID Card and 6 passport photos will go towards your visa packet.

   You can obtain passport photos in the International Program’s office for an additional fee of $10.74 per set. Contact: 850.645.9714.

3. Parents’ Names and nationality:
   E-mail Meghan Munroe (IP-visas@fsu.edu) both of your parents’ or legal guardians’ full names and their nationality. If either of their last names differs from your own, you should explain why in your e-mail.

4. Minors:
   If you will be under the age of 18 when the program begins, August 17, 2016, please contact Meghan Munroe at ip-visas@fsu.edu. You will have additional paperwork.

5. Non-U.S. Citizens:
   Certain countries require student visa of program participants regardless of country of origin, while other countries may require a student visa only of non-U.S. citizens.
Rules, requirements, and procedures change frequently. **It is imperative that you contact Meghan Munroe if you are a NON-U.S. Citizen.**

6. **Passport:**
   Please make sure that your passport holds at least 6 months of validity beyond your planned return from Panama and that you have at least 2 blank visa pages. You will not be required to turn in your passport to international programs. However, we do ask for you to supply a copy of your passport information page.

You can now apply for a U.S. passport through the International Programs office. Please visit [http://international.fsu.edu/Passport/Default.aspx](http://international.fsu.edu/Passport/Default.aspx) or call 850.645.9714 for more details.

If you have any questions about this process, contact:
International Programs
[ip-visas@fsu.edu](mailto:ip-visas@fsu.edu)
850.644.3786