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OVERVIEW

In order to travel and study abroad in the Republic of Panama, you must obtain a student visa. The receipt of a visa is a privilege, not a right. Each foreign country has the authority to establish its own parameters for granting a visa and you must abide by all requirements.

You will apply for your student visa while abroad in Panama, with the assistance of Panama Study Center Staff. However, there are a few visa application requirements you must complete and submit to the International Programs Office by the established deadline of FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2022.

Please be sure to read this document in its entirety as it contains pertinent information regarding your immigration requirements and travel.

PASSPORTS
A valid passport book is required for international travel and your program.
If you:
• Do not have a passport
• Do not have a current passport that meets all visa and validity requirements
• Have not yet applied for a passport
Please contact IP-Visas@fsu.edu immediately for guidance.
If you have a passport, please ensure it meets the following requirements:
  • Has six months of validity beyond your intended date of return (NOVEMBER 6, 2023)
  • Contains at least 2 blank visa pages.
Processing times for passport issuance are currently delayed – if you require a new passport, it's essential you apply as soon as possible. You can find a list of Passport Acceptance Facilities near you on the U.S. Department of State’s website, found HERE.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS
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 permitted to travel outside of Panama until they have received their multiple entry visa. Therefore, please be advised that outside of Panama may not be possible for the first 4-5 weeks of the program.
If a student fails to obtain the required visa before traveling outside the country, the Republic of Panama may fine the student $4,000. The student will be held liable for any imposed fines and fees due to violation of travel restrictions.

NON-U.S. CITIZENS & DUAL CITIZENS
Visa requirements for non-U.S. citizens are different from those of U.S. citizens. Please be advised that you will need to be in possession of your Permanent Resident Card, or U.S. visa, to allow re-entry into the U.S. following your program.
If you are a non-U.S. citizen or hold dual-citizenship status, please contact IP-Visas@fsu.edu.
UNDER 18 REQUIREMENTS
Students under the age of 18 are required to submit additional documentation with their visa application.

If you will be under the age of 18 as of Thursday, January 5, 2023, please contact the Immigration Team at IP-Visas@fsu.edu, immediately.

IMPORTANT WARNINGS
Please be aware that any expenses incurred during the visa process are completely non-reimbursable by International Programs under any circumstance.

FSU International Programs must receive your required visa application materials no later than Friday, October 14, 2022 – please review the VISA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS section of this Visa Packet for further details and instructions.

Failure to obtain a student visa does not release you from the responsibility of full program fees. If you are unable to, for any reason, submit your visa application materials by the outlined due date, please contact International Programs immediately at IP-Visas@fsu.edu.
All students must supply the following materials to the International Programs Office to meet the eligibility requirements to apply for their student visa:

- **FBI BACKGROUND CHECK**
  - I obtained my FBI Background Check through NBI and submitted it to International Programs
  
  Please see the [FBI BACKGROUND CHECK INSTRUCTIONS](#) section of your Visa Packet for further details and instructions.

- **PARENTAL INFORMATION**
  - I emailed International Programs the required information of both of my parents/legal guardians
  
  Please see the [SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS](#) section of your Visa Packet for further details and instructions.
FBI BACKGROUND CHECK INSTRUCTIONS

The FBI Background Check is a nationwide criminal history report that certifies you have not committed any serious criminal offenses which could disqualify you from receiving a visa.

To be eligible to apply for your Panama student visa, we require an electronic PDF copy of your official Criminal History Report provided to you by an FBI-approved channeler. Please refer to the instructions included below to request your FBI Background Check.

NATIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION (NBI)
International Programs contracts with the FBI-approved Channeler, National Background Information (NBI).

It is important you complete your background check request through NBI as they significantly expedite the processing time of criminal history report requests made to the FBI.

To request an FBI Background Check, you must complete and submit the following items to NBI:
- FBI Criminal Report Request & Mailing Checklist
- Fingerprints
- Payment

FINGERPRINTING
Fingerprinting is a required step in the FBI Background Check request process.

You have 2 options when having your fingerprints taken:

VIRTUAL FINGERPRINTING AT A PREFERRED LIVE SCAN LOCATION (Recommended)
Preferred Live Scan Locations are companies that work directly with National Background Information, allowing them to upload and transmit your fingerprints and other documents virtually. Only Preferred Live Scan Locations can transmit your fingerprints and documents directly to NBI.

To find a Preferred Live Scan Location near you, visit NBI’s website HERE.

Not all live scan locations are contracted with NBI, so it’s crucial that you only utilize a Live Scan Location if it’s listed on NBI’s website. Completing your fingerprints at a Live Scan Location not authorized by NBI is not recommended and will likely result in delays and additional fees related to your background check request.

FINGERPRINTING AT A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OR NON-LIVE SCAN LOCATION
If there are no Preferred Live Scan Locations in your area, you can have your fingerprints inkrolled at a local Law Enforcement Agency or non-Live Scan Location.

You must use an FD-258 form, which can be found HERE.

Guidance on how to complete this form is included in this packet. We recommend bringing personal copies of form FD-258 to your appointment to be used for fingerprinting – however, you may also use the FD-258 forms provided by the fingerprint technician.
When having your fingerprints ink-rolled, it’s easier for prints to be rejected due to quality, therefore **it is recommended that applicants provide more than one set of fingerprints** if the prints appear questionable – please note there may be extra cost involved.

NBI provides a fingerprinting information and reference guide, found HERE. Please review the guide and compare the examples to your fingerprints to ensure that they are good quality.

It’s highly recommended you contact the location via their listed phone number to confirm operating hours and appointment availability, **prior to visiting in-person. If you are unable to locate a fingerprinting facility, please contact IP-Visas@fsu.edu.**

**FSU International Programs will not be able to reimburse fees paid towards a background check under any circumstances.**

You must use the channeler, National Background Information (NBI), to complete your FBI Background Check and Fingerprinting. FSU International Programs will **not** be able to advise on any issues related to the FBI Background Check or Fingerprinting process.

Please read and follow the instructions below to obtain your FBI Background Check:

1. **Go to the National Background Information website, HERE.**

2. **Request application forms & instructions from NBI**
   
   Scroll to the bottom of the home page → in the box labeled **“Get Your Application Forms and Instructions Immediately”** type and submit your email address. Picture for reference:

   ![Get Your Application Forms and Instructions Immediately](image)

   All required forms will be sent to the email address you entered. If you do not receive the forms, check your “junk” or “spam” folders, or resubmit your email address.

   **You will receive the following documents from NBI:**
   
   - Instructions
   - FBI Criminal Report Request & Mailing Checklist
   - Credit Card Authorization
   - Blank FD-258 Fingerprint Form
   - Privacy Rights
   - Top Ten Tips

3. **Complete the FBI Criminal Report Request & Mailing Checklist**
   
   All information entered in the application should be that of the student, **not** the parent(s)/guardian(s).
APPLICANT INFORMATION
Fill out all required fields with your personal information.

APPLICANT HOME ADDRESS
This is the address that NBI will send your official Criminal History Report to – so please ensure that this is the address of your current residence. Fill out all required fields with your personal information.

MAIL RESULTS TO THIS ADDRESS (ATTORNEY ONLY)
Do not fill out this section.

REMAINING FIELDS
FBI Criminal Report: The form will already list the cost for your background check request and processing.

Shipping & Handling Options: Please select one of the options presented.
- This is the method NBI will use to return your official criminal history report via mail. When selecting your shipping option, keep in mind that we only require you to submit the official PDF version of your background check, therefore overnight and priority mailing are not required.

Additional Copies: International Programs requires the electronic PDF version of your official background check – no additional copies are required.

Total FBI Report Payment: After selecting your shipping option, the total required payment for your request will auto populate in this section.

Payment Type: Select the box indicating your method of payment.
- Accepted Forms of Payment: Cashier's Checks, Money Orders, or Credit/Debit Card.

Reason For My Request: Check the box for “Work Visa/Student Visa”.

Date & Signature: Type the date in the field indicated. DO NOT electronically sign the document – you must print the forms when directed, and physically sign the document.

MAILING CHECKLIST
Carefully review the statement outlined in the Mailing Checklist.

Promo Code: Use promo code “FSU3” for a discount on your order.

Applicant's Name: Type your legal name in the field.

Date & Signature: Type the date in the field indicated. DO NOT electronically sign the document – you must print the forms when directed, and physically sign the document.

4. Print FBI Criminal Report Request & Mailing Checklist
After completing the steps outlined above, print the FBI Criminal Report Request and Mailing Checklist and sign in the signature fields.

5. Prepare your payment
NBI accepted the following methods of payment:
- Cashier's Check
• Money Order
• Credit or Debit Card
  • Visa, MasterCard, or American Express

PAYING VIA CREDIT OR DEBIT CARD
If you wish to pay with a credit or debit card, you must fill out the Credit Card Authorization form to include and submit with all other materials.

You must fill out all required fields with your personal information:
Promo Code: Use promo code “FSU3” for a discount on your order.
Applicant Name: Type your legal name in the field – please ensure this matches the name on your request form.
Name on Credit Card: Please enter the name of the credit card owner, only if different from the name of the applicant.
  • The name on the card does not have to match the name on your request form.
Billing Address: Please enter all required billing address information.
Card Information: Select the type of card you will be using from the available options.
Total Amount to be Billed to Card: Enter the total required payment amount listed in the Total FBI Report Payment section of your FBI Criminal Report Request form.
  • The amounts indicated on both forms must match.

PAYING VIA MONEY ORDER OR CASHIER’S CHECK
Payments made via Personal Check will not be accepted and will likely cause delays in the processing of your request.

Required Information when addressing Money Orders:
Total Amount to be Paid: When requesting the amount for your money order, please reference the Total FBI Report Payment section of your FBI Criminal Report Request form.
Payee/Pay to the Order of: Please write “National Credit Reporting”
Payment for/Acct #: Please write “FBI Criminal Report Request” – or a shortened version.
Purchaser’s Address: Please write your personal address.
Purchaser’s Signature: You will provide your signature in the identified field.

6. Complete your fingerprints
Please review the important fingerprinting information provided in the FINGERPRINTING section.

When you arrive at a location for fingerprinting, you will be required to provide 2 forms of identification, one of which must be a government issued photo ID.
The following are acceptable forms of photo identification:
• State Issued Driver's License
• State Issued Identification Card
• US Passport
• Work Visa (with photo)
• Military Identification Card
7. Submit Your Request to NBI

IF YOU UTILIZED A PREFERRED LIVE SCAN LOCATION
If you completed your fingerprinting at a Preferred Live Scan Location, your request form, mailing checklist, and payment will be collected by the technician and submitted directly to NBI.

IF YOU UTILIZED A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OR NON-LIVE SCAN LOCATION
If you completed your fingerprinting at a Law Enforcement Agency or non-Live Scan Location, you must compile the following documents for submission:

- FBI Criminal Report Request & Mailing Checklist
- Fingerprints
- Payment
  - Credit Card Authorization Form – for all Debit/Credit Card payments

Mail all documents to the address listed below:
National Credit Reporting
ATTN: FBI Consumer Report Request
6830 Via Del Oro, Suite 105
San Jose, CA 95119

IMPORTANT
When mailing your FD-258 fingerprint form **DO NOT fold your prints** – this could result in a rejection of your background check request.

POSTAGE INFORMATION
When mailing your background check request materials to NBI, you may utilize the courier of your choice. **We recommend ensuring that your shipment is trackable to prevent your important identity-related documents are not lost while enroute to NBI.**

Please keep in mind that **electing to use USPS First Class mail can cause significant delays in mailing and delivery times.**

If you have any questions or issues during this process, you must contact NBI directly at (800) 441-1661 or support@nbinformation.com.
FD-258 FORM & GUIDANCE

It’s acceptable for you to use an FD-258 fingerprint card printed on standard white letter-sized copy paper. It is recommended that you complete more than one form when having your fingerprints ink rolled.

All fields highlighted in yellow on the FD-258 form must be filled out completely. Please type or print legibly and use BLACK INK. The FD-258 Form can be found, HERE.
LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, MIDDLE NAME: Please print your full, legal name clearly in the field.

SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING FINGERPRINTED: You must sign this section after your fingerprints are applied to the form, in the presence of the agent taking your fingerprints, do not sign the card before your fingerprinting visit. The signature must be your full legal name.

RESIDENCE OF PERSON FINGERPRINTED: Enter the address of your current residence.
- Please ensure this address matches the applicant home address on your FBI Criminal Report Request.

SIGNATURE OF OFFICIAL AND DATE: The form must be signed and dated by the agent/technician taking your prints.

REASON FINGERPRINTED: Please write ‘Student Visa Application’.

DATE OF BIRTH (DOB): Please enter your date of birth in MM/DD/YYYY format.

CITIZENSHIP: Please enter the country of your citizenship.

SEX: Indicate ‘M’ for Male and ‘F’ for Female.

RACE: Reference and use the following abbreviations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A – Asian</th>
<th>H – Hispanic</th>
<th>B – Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I – American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>W – White</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HGT (HEIGHT): Enter your height in feet and inches. (Example: 5’5”)

WGT (WEIGHT): Enter your weight in pounds. (Example 140 lbs.)

EYES: Reference and use the following abbreviations for Eye Color.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLK – Black</th>
<th>GRN – Green</th>
<th>BLU – Blue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRY – Gray</td>
<td>BRO – Brown</td>
<td>HZL – Hazel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HAIR: Reference and use the following abbreviations for Hair Color.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLK – Black</th>
<th>GRY – Grey/partially grey</th>
<th>RED – Red</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLD – Blonde</td>
<td>BRO – Brown</td>
<td>WHI – White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BAL – Bald</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLACE OF BIRTH (POB): Enter the U.S. state in which you were born, or the country of birth if your place of birth is outside of the U.S.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SOC): Enter your social security number.
FSU International Programs must receive your required visa application materials no later than FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2022.

PARENTAL INFORMATION
You must provide International Programs with specific information regarding your parents/legal guardians.

Please send an email to IP-Visas@fsu.edu including the following:

Both Parent’s/Legal Guardian’s
- Full Legal Name
  - If either parent’s/guardian’s Last Name differs from yours, you must include a statement of explanation in your email.
- Nationality
- Permanent Address

FBI BACKGROUND CHECK
Once you receive the electronic PDF version of your official FBI Background Check from NBI, please submit it to International Programs through your IP Student Portal.

UPLOAD INSTRUCTIONS
You must upload the electronic PDF version of your FBI Background Check directly to your IP Student Portal.

1. You can log in to your IP Student Portal, HERE.
2. Once directed to your IP Student Portal Dashboard, navigate to the Upload Area tab.
4. Select the correct file and upload your FBI Background Check to the Checklist Item ‘FBI Background Check’.

The FBI Background Check Checklist Item will be marked as ‘complete’ once an Immigration Coordinator has reviewed, and confirmed all materials were completed correctly. You will receive an email from the Immigration Team regarding any questions, concerns, or edits to your visa materials.

Should you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact International Programs IP-Visas@fsu.edu.