Applying for Your Student Visa: China

What is a visa?
A visa is an official authorization allowing you to enter a country to travel, work, live, or study there for a specific period of time. Generally, a visa is an elaborate stamp that is sealed onto one of the pages of your passport. Visas are issued to American citizens by a foreign country's Embassy or Consulate located in the United States. Every country has its own regulations governing the issuance of visas.

Do I need a visa to go to China?
A visa is required for persons who wish to study in China, so you (and your dependents, if applicable) will need to obtain a visa for your period of study in China. Visas must be applied for in person at the Consulate with jurisdiction over your state of residence, unless you receive permission to apply through a travel agent who will submit your application in your place. Students who will study for six months or less should apply for the Business (F) Visa, and students who will study for between 6 and 12 months should apply for the Student (X) Visa.

U.S. Citizens can apply for a multiple entry (X) visa valid for 12 months. You must go through residential formalities in the local public security department within 30 days of entry into China.

What do I need to apply for a visa?
For Students Studying in China for 6 months or less:

► Attention: Visa requirements change constantly! Verify this information with the consulate, as the application process can change or may even vary by consulate.

You must go through residential formalities in the local public security department within 30 days of entry into China. You will need the documents listed below to apply for your visa. Application documents are also listed on the embassy’s website at: http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/visas/adr/. Remember to keep photocopies of all documents for your own records!

• A valid passport: send the original document, plus one copy of the photo page. The passport must have at least 6 months of remaining validity, and must have at least one blank visa page in it.
  ♦ Please see page 1 in the Study Abroad Handbook for information on how to apply for a passport.
  ♦ Apply early for your passport! It may take 6-8 weeks to process your application.

• Application form:
  • For students studying in China for less than 6 months: You will need to apply for a Business “F” visa. Complete the Visa Application Form of the People’s Republic of China (V2001A) that can be downloaded from: http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/visas/fd/.
  • For students studying in China for more than 6 months: You will need to apply for a Study “X” visa. Complete the Visa Application Form of the People’s Republic of China (V2001A), Supplementary Visa Application Form (V2011B) and Physical Examination Record for Foreigner (Q2) that can be downloaded from http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/visas/fd/.

• Photo: one recent 48mm x 33mm inch color photo, glued or stapled to the visa application form.

• Proof of U.S. Residency Status: original plus one copy of proof of U.S. residency, work or study, proof of residency in the consular district (e.g. ID, water or electricity bills, tenant agreement, etc.).

• Acceptance letter: Original and one copy of the acceptance letter from your host university.

March 2013
• **Foreign Student Visa Application Form (JW201 or JW202)** (original plus one photocopy) issued by a relevant Chinese government unit.

• **US$140 Visa fee**, paid by Visa, MasterCard, Cashier’s Check, or money order made out to Chinese Embassy (personal checks are not accepted).

► You will also find answers to many of your visa-related questions at: http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/visas/.

**How do I obtain a visa?**

**A. In person**

• Take the above documents to the Chinese Embassy/Consulate that has jurisdiction over your state of residence. Visit the following website to find the Consulate with jurisdiction over your state of residence: http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zmzlljs/t84229.htm.

• No appointment is required. For details on what to expect once you arrive in the office, visit http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/visas/hrsq/.

• Call the consulate before you visit to verify hours of operation and location.

• The Chinese Embassy suggests that it takes 4 working days to process a visa application when you apply in person. You may pay US$20 for express service of 2-3 working days, or US$30 for same day processing. You must apply before 12:30pm to pick your visa up between 2:30pm and 3:00pm.

• If the visa application form is not filled out completely, correctly and legibly, your visa application may be delayed or rejected.

• Applications should be submitted at least one month before you expect to leave for China, in case there are additional requirements made by the Consulate-General at the time of application.

**B. By travel/visa agent**

If you cannot come personally, you may choose to have a travel or visa agent apply in your place to the Embassy or Consulate-General which holds jurisdiction over the state of your residence.

**General tips for applying for a visa:**

Foreign embassies and consulates in the US receive hundreds of inquiries every day so contacting them can be a trying experience. Have patience. Some consulates only receive visitors or calls during certain hours of the day or on certain days of the week; visit their website to learn their hours or call back at different times of the day. You may find that you are placed on hold or that your call is never forwarded to the appropriate person. Don’t be discouraged: be persistent, but polite. Remember that US consulates in foreign countries operate in a similar fashion!