

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.

What do I need to apply for a visa?

For Students Studying in China for 6 months or less:

You will need the documents listed below to apply for your visa. 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:** One completed visa application form (Q1)
- **Photo:** one recent photo, 2x2 inch black and white or color, attached to the visa application form
- **Invitation letter** from your host university
 - **US citizens may apply for a Single Entry (valid for 3-6 months), Double Entry (valid for 6 months), or Multiple Entry.**
 - **Attention:** This list may not be all-inclusive! Verify this information with the consulate, as the application process can change or may even vary by consulate.

For Students Staying in China for longer than 6 months:

You will need the documents listed below to apply for your visa; make a photocopy of each item below to include with your application *and* a photocopy for your own records.

- **A valid passport;** send the original document, plus a copy of the photo page. The passport must be valid for at least six months past the date of application, 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.
- **Letter of admission from the Chinese school you will attend.** Do not apply for your visa until you have received this official letter.
- **Foreign Student Visa Application Form (JW201 or JW202),** the original plus one photocopy.
- **One completed Q1 visa application form.** Contact the consulate that has jurisdiction over your state of residence to obtain the application form or you can download it from the appropriate consular website.

- **One passport-sized photo, 2x2 black and white or color**, attached to visa form.
- **US\$130 Visa fee**, sent by Cashier's Check or money order made out to Chinese Embassy (personal checks are not accepted)
- **Copy of round trip flight itinerary (visas will not be issued without proof of a return flight)**
- **Proof of a Physical examination**, for students staying in China for one full year.
- ▶ **Attention:** This list may not be all-inclusive! Verify this information with the consulate, as the application process can change or may even vary by consulate.
- ▶ You will also find answers to many of your visa-related questions at:
www.china-embassy.org/eng/hzqz/zgqz/t84243.htm

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. For Montana residents, the Chinese Embassy in Washington DC has jurisdiction over the state.
- 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 12:30 pm 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.

B. By travel/visa agent

You may choose to have a travel or visa agent apply in your place to the Embassy in Washington DC.

For a list of accepted travel/visa agents, visit the following website:

<http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/hzqz/yisq/t169580.htm>

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!

Chinese Embassy in Washington DC.

If the appropriate consulate is not listed below, visit the following website to find the Consulate with jurisdiction over your state of residence: www.china-embassy.org/eng/hzqz/t84229.htm

Chinese Embassy in Washington DC:

Area Served: Washington DC, Delaware, Idaho, Kentucky, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wyoming.

Address: 2201 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 110, Washington DC 20007

Phone: (202)338-6688 **Fax:** (202)588-9760

Website: WWW.CHINA-EMBASSY.ORG **Email:** CHNVISA@BELLATLANTIC.NET

Consulate-General in San Francisco

Area Served: Alaska, Northern California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington

Address: 1450 Laguna Street, San Francisco, CA 94115.

Phone: (415)674-2940

Website: <http://www.chinaconsulatesf.org/eng/>

