

ArtCenter International Student Handbook



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New Students

Congratulations on your acceptance to ArtCenter! Your next step is to secure the proper documents in order to enter the United States and begin your studies.

New Students from Abroad

To legally enter the U.S., you will need the following documents when you arrive at the port of entry:

- A passport that is valid for at least six months upon entry
- A student visa stamped on your passport
- A SEVIS I-20

Student Visa

Most international students admitted to ArtCenter obtain F-1 visas. Unless you will be entering the U.S. as a dependent of your parents (such as E-2 or H-4 to study) you should obtain an F-1 student visa (<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student.html>). Do not enter the U.S. with a B-1/B-2 tourist visa, as you will not be permitted to begin school with this visa.

To apply for a student visa, you must take the SEVIS I-20 (see below), a passport valid for at least six months into the future, and certification of finances to a U.S. embassy (or consulate) that is located outside the U.S. Be advised that visa applicants are required to appear for an in-person interview. Each embassy (or consulate) sets its own interview policies and procedures regarding visas. Consult the local U.S. embassy or consulate website (usembassy.gov) for specific application instructions, as well as required application documentation.

Plan ahead so that you can avoid making repeat visits to the embassy. Allow enough time to overcome any unforeseen problems that might arise. Students are encouraged to apply for their visas several weeks before they plan to travel.

SEVIS I-20

To receive the SEVIS I-20 Certificate of Eligibility, you must return the completed Certification of Finances form and tuition deposit to:

ArtCenter College of Design
Attn: Admissions Office
1700 Lida Street
Pasadena, CA 91103

The Admissions Office will send you the SEVIS I-20 only when it has received the certification of finances and tuition deposit. As soon as you receive your SEVIS I-20 from ArtCenter, sign on the line (with your name on the bottom) of Page 1 and read Page 3, which describes your benefits and responsibilities. It is important to be aware of your responsibilities as an international student.

International Transfer Students

An international transfer student is someone who is currently studying at another U.S. institution on a valid non-immigrant visa and wishes to transfer to ArtCenter. In order to transfer, you must meet certain requirements to maintain legal status. The international transfer process varies depending on whether you leave the U.S. before you come to ArtCenter.

If you are currently studying at another school in the U.S. but will be leaving the U.S. prior to coming to ArtCenter, simply present the ArtCenter SEVIS I-20 upon re-entry to the U.S. If your visa expires while you are outside the U.S., you will need to apply for a new visa.

If you will not be leaving the U.S., the Transfer Eligibility form must be completed and returned to the Admissions Office. This form should have been included in your acceptance packet. Notify your current school that you will be transferring to ArtCenter. Have the international student advisor at your current school complete the Transfer Eligibility form and return the completed form to the ArtCenter Admissions Office as soon as you can. The Admissions Office must receive this form and tuition deposit prior to orientation in order to issue your new SEVIS I-20. Students who will not be leaving the U.S. must begin their studies at ArtCenter within five months of transferring out of their current school. Failure to do so will cause you to fall out of status.

You will not be allowed to register for classes until we have verified your status and issued your SEVIS I-20. We cannot guarantee that the process will be completed by registration day unless we are given adequate processing time.

If you are transferring from a U.S. school at which you have not pursued a full-time course of study, you may be out of status. This will require you to apply for reinstatement through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Notify ArtCenter immediately if you need to apply for reinstatement.

Students with visa status other than F-1, such as E-2 or H-4, may attend ArtCenter, but we strongly recommend you change to F-1 visa status. We will assist you with the change of status upon your arrival at ArtCenter. You must still complete the Transfer Eligibility form and submit it to the Admissions Office. Additionally, you will not be allowed to register for classes until we have verified your status.

Arrival

Congratulations on getting your visa! You are now ready to enter the United States to begin your studies.

Date of Arrival

The first step is to determine your date of arrival in the U.S. We recommend you arrive three weeks before the beginning of the term to find housing, get a driver license, and get accustomed to Pasadena. New U.S. regulations state that students entering on an F-1 student visa will be permitted to enter the U.S. no earlier than 30 days prior to the program start date indicated on your SEVIS I-20.

Preparation for Departure

Make sure you have all your proper immigration documentation before leaving. You will need to have a valid F-1 visa stamp in your passport, a passport valid for at least six months into the future, and ArtCenter's SEVIS I-20.

Traveling with Currency

We recommend that you arrive with traveler's checks. In addition, have some U.S. currency – \$200 should be sufficient – in small denominations (\$5, \$10, \$20) to carry you through the first few days before you can cash your traveler's checks and/or set up your bank account.

Arrival in the U.S.

When you arrive in the U.S., you will pass through the Immigration stations first. Give the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer your passport, SEVIS I-20, and I-901 (SEVIS Fee Payment Receipt). The CBP officer will also stamp your passport and indicate a date of admission, class of admission and "admitted until" date. The digital I-94 is the official record of admission into and permission to remain in the U.S. If you are entering with an F-1 student visa, the CBP official will stamp your passport with "F-1, D/S." If you do not receive a "D/S" (duration of status) stamp, contact the Center for the Student Experience (626 396-2370) immediately.

Next, you will retrieve your baggage and pass through Customs. Present the CBP Officer with your passport and customs declaration form, which would have been handed to you by the airline or sailing vessel crew.

Transportation from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)

If you do not have anyone to pick you up, we suggest you rent a car or take a shuttle bus to a Pasadena hotel. There are a number of shuttle services, taxis and rental car companies available at LAX. If you are renting a car, you might ask your travel agent to book a car in advance for you. Enterprise Rent-A-Car is one of the only agencies that will rent to drivers under 25 years of age. Visit artcenter.edu/student-life/living-in-los-angeles/transportation.html for a listing of transportation services.

Getting Settled

Welcome to Pasadena! Now that you have arrived, the next step is to get settled.

Housing

Off-Campus Housing Website

Although ArtCenter does not offer on-campus housing, the Center for the Student Experience (CSE) does coordinate information regarding local housing and roommate options on its Off-Campus Housing website. This resource is available for admitted and current students and includes a variety of living arrangements, including rooms within homes, guest houses, apartments and houses for rent, as well as information about the utilities, amenities, rental costs and landlord contact information for each listing.

- Off-Campus Housing website: offcampus.housing.artcenter.edu
- Sign up as “Guest”
- Temporary password: `accdhousing`
- Create a roommate profile to connect with other students looking for a roommate

Artcenter Off-Campus Housing Listings on Facebook

We also encourage you to join the ArtCenter Off-Campus Housing Listings page on Facebook to help with your housing search and to connect with other current and new students looking for roommates. facebook.com/accdhousing

***Please note:** ArtCenter provides access to these websites as a service to help students find housing in and around the Pasadena area. However, ArtCenter **does not** investigate the quality or safety of the housing options available on these sites, nor does it involve itself in disputes between landlords and students.*

Other Housing Resources

You may also search the following sites to explore further housing options:

openlyfe.com/students

ushstudent.com

westsiderentals.com

walkscore.com

doorsteps.com

bevenandbrock.com

Housing Price Ranges

Housing prices vary a great deal depending on location and quality. As a general rule, housing can be found within the following price ranges:

One-bedroom in a house or apartment:	\$600-\$900
Studio apartment:	\$800-\$1,200
One-bedroom apartment:	\$900-\$1,400
Two-bedroom apartment:	\$1,200-\$2,300
Three-bedroom apartment or house:	\$1,900-\$2,500

Due to the increasing cost of transportation, paying more for a room closer to ArtCenter may have financial advantages over paying less for housing accommodations farther away. It is important to begin your housing search as early as possible, as the highest quality and most conveniently located properties go fast.

Tenant Tips and Responsibilities

For information on tenant rights, laws and protections in the State of California, visit the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's website: hud.gov/states/california/renting/tenantrights

- 1. Get it in writing!** Look the premises over and document in writing any agreements made between you and your landlord for repairs or cleaning that need to be done prior to move in. If you are renting a room in a home, have the owner put any house rules or stipulations in your lease.
- 2. Take pictures!** Before moving any of your belongings into your new home, take pictures (documenting carpet condition, appliances, windows and window coverings, etc.). This is a good way to protect yourself when you move out. Provide a set for your landlord and keep one set for yourself.
- 3. Utilities:** Ask which utilities are included with the rent. Typically the tenant is responsible for gas and electric but some might also require the tenant to pay water and trash.
- 4. Contract terms and conditions:** Know the length of your lease. If you decide to move out before your lease is up you will likely not receive your deposit back and may be subject to legal action.
- 5. Roommates:** Moving in with roommates? Know who is on the lease and what it means if one of your roommates moves out. Create a written agreement between you and all of your roommates that outlines how to address issues like returning a deposit to a roommate who moves out early, or determining who is responsible if damage happens to the property.
- 6. Rental documents:** Keep copies of all your rental documents in a file. You may need them in order to get your full deposit returned to you when you decide to move out.

Additional Tips: For additional housing tips and suggestions on dealing with roommates, bills and rental agreements, please see “[Rental Agreements 101: Things to Look Out for When Signing a Rental Agreement](#)” (Doorsteps).

Local Public Transportation

If you will not have a vehicle, make sure to ask landlords if their property is within walking distance to a Pasadena Transit route 51/52 stop. This bus route drops off and picks up at both the College’s Hillside and South Campus locations. For more information, see: cityofpasadena.net/pasadena-transit

Utilities

After finding a place to live, you will need to contact the utility companies to begin service in your name. The local companies that serve the Pasadena area are:

Pasadena Water & Power

cityofpasadena.net/waterandpower
626 744-4409

Southern California Gas Company

socialgas.com
800 427-2200

AT&T phone service (land line)

att.com
800 310-2355

Internet

AT&T provides cell phone, TV and internet (DSL). Charter Communications also provides internet (cable), TV and home phone services. If you live with others, someone in the home may already have these services and you will simply share the cost, depending on arrangements you make with them.

Transportation

Travel to ArtCenter from within the greater Los Angeles area is possible without a car. Here are some resources:

MTA Metro Bus and Rail System

metro.net
323 GO-METRO (323 466-3876)

Foothill Transit Authority

foothilltransit.org
800 RIDE-INFO (800 743-3463)

Pasadena Transit Service

cityofpasadena.net/pasadena-transit

Since services, housing and ArtCenter are spread out over a wide area, you may consider buying a car. ArtCenter's Hillside Campus is not located near most residential or commercial areas; and walking or bicycling is not always practical.

Most people buy new or used (pre-owned) cars from car dealerships. Others purchase cars directly from the car owner. Craigslist.org is one popular site to find such cars, but again, you need to exercise caution. In either situation, it might be useful to take a friend or relative with you. Purchasing a car requires research and negotiation skills. You are required by law to purchase auto insurance and register the car with the State. The Access Guide provides a list of insurance companies.

Before buying a car, apply for a drivers license. You cannot purchase auto insurance or drive a car without it. Sooner or later, you will need to visit the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Before you visit the DMV, first read about Social Security Numbers on the next page.

Social Security Number

The Social Security Number (SSN) was created in 1936 for the sole purpose of tracking the earnings histories of U.S. workers. Since then, SSN use has expanded substantially. An SSN is routinely requested by the Department of Motor Vehicles, banks, cell phone companies and landlords. However, an SSN is assigned ONLY to individuals who have been offered employment in the U.S., and international students typically do not have one. If you have questions, visit ssa.gov or call 800 772-1213.

The nearest Social Security Administration (SSA) office is located at:

Social Security Administration – Pasadena

104 N. Mentor Avenue

Pasadena, CA 91106

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9 AM to 4:30 PM

Applying for a SSN

If you are offered employment—whether it's any job on-campus or off-campus while on Optional Practical Training (OPT). Curricular Practical Training (CPT) only—it is necessary to apply for a SSN. Download the application form (SS-5) and instructions at ssa.gov.

Then take the following to the nearest SSA office:

- Completed application
- Valid passport, I-94 (visit cbp.gov/I94 to print your electronic I-94), and I-20
- Verification letters from your International Student Advisor and the ArtCenter hiring department (for an on campus job) OR the offer letter from the hiring company for CPT/OPT.

California I.D., Driver License and Car Registration

All of the above documents can be obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). DMV offices can be confusing and/or have long waits. Be prepared for the wait. For faster service, make an appointment ahead of time through dmv.ca.gov or call 800 777-0133. The Pasadena DMV Office is on 49 S. Rosemead Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91107, one block south of Colorado Blvd.

Applying for a California State Identification Card

If you do not want a driver license but want the convenience of having an I.D. card that is lighter than a passport, you might consider applying for a State I.D. card. It looks just like a driver license and is a government-issued I.D.

Before you go:

- Make an appointment if you wish.

Take with you:

- Valid passport
- I-94 (visit cbp.gov/I94 to print your electronic I-94)
- SEVIS I-20
- \$28 (cash, check, Money Order, ATM/Debit card accepted)

When you get there:

- Complete application form DL 44.
- Submit an original DL 44 form (copies obtained by photocopy, fax, or other methods will NOT be accepted).
- Provide a thumb print.
- Have your picture taken.
- Verify your birth date by showing your passport and I-20.
- Pay the application fee of \$28 (as of March 2016).

Applying for a California Driver License (DL)

Before you go:

- Study the California Driver Handbook (search for “handbook” at dmv.ca.gov)
- Make an appointment if you wish.

Take with you:

- Valid passport
- I-94 (visit cbp.gov/I94 to print your electronic I-94)
- SEVIS I-20
- Driver license from your home country or another U.S. state (if available)
- \$33 (cash, check, Money Order, ATM/Debit card accepted)

When you get there:

- Complete application form DL 44.
- Submit an original DL 44 form (copies obtained by photocopy, fax, or other methods will NOT be accepted).
- Provide Social Security Number; if you are ineligible for a SSN, let an officer know you are an international student and show your passport and I-20.
- Verify your birth date and legal presence (passport, I-94, I-20).
- Provide your true full name. If your true full name does not match the one on your passport, you must provide an additional acceptable document, such as a marriage certificate, adoption, or name change document.
- Pass a traffic laws and traffic signs test (sample questions available at dmv.ca.gov).
- Pass a vision exam and provide a thumb print.
- Have your picture taken.
- Pay the application fee of \$33 (as of March 2016).

If you have a license from another state, the DMV may waive the driving test and immediately issue you an interim license (valid for 90 days) until you receive your official photo license in the mail.

If you have a license from another country or have an international driver license, you will be required to take a driving test. You will have to make a driving test appointment for another day via phone or dmv.ca.gov. You will need to provide proof of insurance and financial responsibility at that time.

If you have not been licensed before, you will be issued a learner's permit and sent home.

You need to practice driving until you feel ready to take the driving test. When you practice driving, you must be accompanied by an adult who is age 25 or older and holds a valid California Driver License. This person must sit close enough to you to take control of the vehicle if necessary. It is illegal for you to drive alone. When ready, set up an appointment to take the driving test.

You have three chances to pass the driving test. If you fail, you may practice for a while, and then make another appointment. There is no waiting period, but you must make an appointment. You must pay a \$6 fee for each additional driving test that is administered under one application for an original or renewal driver license.

After you pass your driving test you will be issued an interim license valid for 90 days until you receive your new photo license in the mail. Double-check your name and address before you leave the DMV and tell the DMV representative if you have moved or if anything is incorrect. If you have not received your license after 60 days, call 800 777-0133. Have your interim license with you to provide information when requested.

Driving While Under the Influence (of alcohol or drugs, aka DUI)

A DUI is a serious offense. If you have been drinking or taking drugs, do not drive. It's really as simple as that. A DUI conviction can have serious implications when renewing a student visa abroad or when applying for a visa in a new category (such as H-1B).

Registering Your Car

Information needed to register your car is available at dmv.ca.gov/vr/vr.htm. Because the circumstances of ownership are different for each person, it is not practical to provide detailed information here. Instead, download forms that may apply to you at dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/detail/forms/formsreg_alpha. Here is important information you should know when you register a car:

- For faster service, make an appointment via the DMV website in advance.
- You must have proof of financial responsibility, such as a document from your auto insurance company or a cash deposit of \$35,000 with the DMV.
- You must enter a dollar amount for the value of the car on the registration application form. Typically, this amount is what you paid for the car.

Banking

As a student, you are responsible for paying for expenses such as rent, utilities and tuition. In general, it is unwise to keep large amounts of cash on your person or in your home. It is relatively safer to open a bank account and pay for expenses by personal check or debit card. Besides, your check can be used as a receipt/proof of payment. When you open an account, you will need to deposit money into it. You can deposit cash or traveler's checks or arrange for a wire transfer from your home country's bank. Consult the Access Guide for a list of banks in the Pasadena area.

If you want to wire funds from your home country to pay your tuition, you may use the following information on ArtCenter's bank:

Wells Fargo Bank

1000 Lakes Drive, Suite 250
West Covina, CA 91790
Account # 400-0022293
ABA # 121-000-248

Make sure your name (not your parents' names) is on the transfer information. If you have questions or encounter any problems, contact ArtCenter's Accounting Office (Cashier) at 626 396-2332.

Mobile Phone

You may need to purchase a new mobile phone for use in the U.S. You can purchase a phone and usage plan at large retailers such as Target, Best Buy or Staples. You can also visit mobile phone retailers such as Apple, T-Mobile or AT&T.

Many consumers incorrectly believe that signing up for a contract plan is the only option. Pay-as-you-go mobile phone service has come a long way since it first became available. T-Mobile, Verizon and AT&T (and others) now provide limited or unlimited monthly service without a two-year contract, and at affordable prices. This option, which does not require a Social Security Number (SSN), may be something to consider.

Otherwise, mobile phone companies will request an SSN in order to enter into a contract. If customers cannot provide an SSN, they are typically asked to provide a \$500 security deposit. This is necessary to ensure payment of any outstanding bills in the event someone chooses to leave the country without paying.

Orientation, Registration and Academic Policies

Once you are settled into your new environment, the next step is to begin your studies.

Language Placement Assessment

This mandatory assessment will evaluate the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, in English, of each student prior to the start of classes. The assessment results will be utilized to place each student into the appropriate section of English and/or writing. You are waived from taking this assessment if you meet any of the criteria below, as transfer credits have been applied. Contact Admissions (admissions@artcenter.edu) for questions regarding or confirmation of your English Composition transfer credit.

This test is **mandatory** unless:

- You have already completed a college-level English Composition class with a grade of “B” or better (at a regionally- or NASAD-accredited college/university where English is the primary language or instruction); OR
- You scored “4” or “5” in an English Composition or English Literature Advanced Placement (AP) test; OR
- You are an exchange student.

Digital Test

These tests are available only to students in the majors listed below. It will assess your competency levels in computer programs and online tools. The test results will influence the level of course you can register for in future semesters.

- **Digital Design 1 assessment test:** Illustration (mandatory)
- **Digital Design 1 waiver test:** Product Design (optional)
- **Digital Basics (Lynda.com) waiver test:** Graphic Design (optional)

Orientation Week

All new students are required to attend four days of orientation before the first day of classes of their first term. At these meetings you will receive important information regarding ArtCenter policies, procedures and resources. You will also meet members of the ArtCenter community who are here to assist you during your studies.

International Student Orientation

A special orientation session is held for international students as part of Orientation Week. The session usually occurs on Tuesday, but please pay attention to email(s) sent by the International Student Advisor for the most up-to-date information.

International students will be required to present a valid passport (stamped with a valid U.S. visa), their I-94 (visit cbp.gov/I94 to print your electronic I-94) and their SEVIS I-20 form.

It is critical that all new international students attend this special orientation. At this session, you will meet fellow international students, learn about maintaining your visa status, and gather some tips on adjusting to American life and ArtCenter. You will also meet representatives from the College's Center for the Student Experience (CSE) who will be available to assist you with nonacademic concerns, including visa status and immigration.

Registration

Registration for new students takes place on Friday morning of Orientation Week. Prior to registration, CSE will need to validate your immigration documents and verify that you are "in status" and eligible to enroll in school as a full-time student. For this reason, your immigration documents are collected at International Student Orientation. Be sure to bring them with you. If it is determined that you are not "in status;" you will not be permitted to register for the term. If you have any concerns regarding your immigration status, contact the International Student Advisor at 626 396-2370 well in advance of registration to resolve any issues. Failure to do so in a timely manner may result in registration delays or denial of attendance.

Academic Policies

Student Handbook

The ArtCenter Student Handbook is a digital publication presented to all students at orientation on a USB flashdrive. The handbook serves as your guide to ArtCenter's policies, services and facilities. While the International Student Handbook focuses more on concerns you will have as an international student, it is not a substitute for the ArtCenter Student Handbook. You are responsible for understanding the material in both publications. Take time to read both handbooks and keep them handy as a reference. If something seems confusing or you feel content in the two handbooks is inconsistent, ask for clarification. If you are not sure how something will affect you as an international student, please ask the CSE.

Full-Time Studies

As an international student, you must be enrolled full-time at least two consecutive terms of each year, making normal progress toward degree requirements. Full-time status, for both graduate and undergraduate students, means being enrolled in a minimum of 12 units each term. This minimum is enforced, regardless of whether you are taking only studio or only liberal arts courses. You may drop below the 12-unit minimum only during your final term at ArtCenter or if you are experiencing medical issues. Even under such circumstances, you still need to meet with the International Student Advisor before enrolling in fewer than 12 units. Failure to do so will cause you to fall out of status.

Academic Year, Term Off, and Lite Term

At ArtCenter, two consecutive terms of study constitute one full academic year. An ArtCenter Lite (ACL) term is a term during which students may enroll in less than 12 units. Each student is eligible for a maximum of two ACL terms while pursuing a degree program. The policy and procedure is slightly different for international students.

International students are permitted to take either a term off or an ACL term only after having completed two (2) consecutive full-time terms. You must notify the International Student Advisor that you intend to take a term off or an ACL term. In addition, you must obtain approval from the International Student Advisor prior to submitting a Leave of Absence (LOA) form to Enrollment Services. If there is no LOA form on file and you fail to register for the term, you will be considered “out of status.”

After taking a term off or an ACL term, you must enroll as a full-time student for the following term. You must complete two consecutive terms before being eligible to take another term off. International students may not take two consecutive terms off. Doing so will cause you to fall out of status.

International students should not withdraw from school during the term without prior authorization from the International Student Advisor. Withdrawing without prior permission will cause you to fall out of status, and you will be required to leave the U.S. immediately.

Students who withdraw with prior authorization are given a 15-day grace period to prepare for departure from the U.S.

Scholarships

International students are eligible to apply for ArtCenter scholarships. Scholarship eligibility is determined by grades, portfolio and financial need. You should attend the scholarship information meeting held at the beginning of each term to learn about the application process. Check the academic calendar in the Student Handbook for the exact meeting date. Scholarship applications are always submitted for the next term (i.e., you apply for a scholarship during your first term to receive a scholarship at the beginning of your second term). For new international students interested in scholarships, contact the Admissions Office when you apply for admission to ArtCenter.

Internship Terms

Students in their fifth term or above, with a minimum GPA of 2.5, may be eligible to apply for internship terms with academic credits. International students should attend the internship eligibility meeting held at the beginning of each term to learn about the process. Important information regarding employment authorization through Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is presented at this meeting. You may not begin your internship until you have applied and been approved for CPT.

Your Responsibility to Stay Informed

It is especially important for all international students to meet with the International Student Advisor upon arrival to review immigration matters. The International Student Advisor will provide regular updates concerning maintaining your status. It is imperative that all international students stay up to date with the latest immigration regulations. Failure to do so can cause you to fall out of status. The CSE provides workshops throughout the year regarding visa status and immigration to facilitate these updates. The following section of this handbook outlines your basic immigration responsibilities.

Be sure to check your ArtCenter email regularly. Look for fliers. Read the weekly CSE newsletter, international student listserv email announcements and ArtCenter bulletins. The International Student Advisor is available to help you with your concerns and invites you to stop by the office regularly. However, staying informed is your responsibility. The CSE and ArtCenter will not assume responsibility for any changes to your student or visa status that may result from the student's failure to stay apprised of important information.

Immigration Regulations

Like all nations, the United States has laws governing people residing temporarily within its borders. The following information highlights some of the rules and regulations set forth by the United States Department of Homeland Security.

If you understand and follow these rules and regulations, you will be able to maintain your legal F-1 student status in the U.S. However, please be aware that the federal immigration regulations can and do change. Therefore, if you are uncertain how an event will affect your immigration status or have any additional questions about these regulations, stop by the Center for the Student Experience (CSE) for clarification. A major role of the International Student Advisor is to provide advice about the regulations about F-1 non-immigrant status and to assist students in obtaining the benefits that are legally permitted.

This section provides a general summary of the basic terminology and regulations that all F-1 students should know while studying in the U.S. This material should not be used as a legal reference. Because immigration law is subject to change often, and because each student has a unique set of circumstances, you should always consult the International Student Advisor for the latest information. For additional information on these and other immigration-related topics, please stop by the CSE.

Immigration Documents

Passport

This document is issued by the government of your country. Your passport must be valid at all times during your stay in the U.S. Any time you need to interact with USCIS or re-enter the U.S., your passport must be valid for at least six months into the future. If your passport is nearing its expiration date, you may be able to renew it from within the U.S. Contact your nearest consulate or your embassy in Washington, D.C. for renewal procedures and applications.

U.S. Visa Stamp

The visa stamp in your passport issued by a U.S. consulate or embassy allows you to enter the U.S. and must be valid any time you wish to enter the country. Some visas are issued for “multiple entry” and others for “single entry” to the U.S. If you have a multiple entry visa, you can use it to re-enter the US any number of times during the period of validity. Once you have entered the U.S, your visa can expire. If you plan on traveling outside of the U.S. and your visa has expired, you need to apply for a new visa stamp at one of the U.S. consulates abroad.

Immigration/Visa Status

This refers to the type of visa you hold, such as F-1, J-1, E-2, H-4, etc.

I-94 Form & Duration of Status (D/S)

Each person who entered the U.S. before May 2013 received a Form I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record). Those who enter after May 2013 will have a digital Arrival/Departure record in the Customs & Border Protection (CBP) database. To get a paper copy of this digital record, visit cbp.gov/I94 after entering the U.S.

In addition, the CBP officer will stamp your passport with the following information: date and place of entry, visa status and date until which you are permitted to stay. Instead of an actual date to which you are permitted to stay, most students should have the notation “D/S” on their I-94. This notation signifies that you may stay in the U.S. for “Duration of Status.” Therefore, as long as you maintain your student status (see the information below about maintaining F-1 status), you can stay in the US until the completion of your studies or the end of your post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT).

SEVIS I-20

The SEVIS I-20 is also known as the Certificate of Eligibility for Non-Immigrant (F-1) Student Status. Issued to you by ArtCenter, it is the primary record of your F-1 student status in the U.S. You must ensure that this document is valid at all times. Therefore, if you change your degree program or major, you must contact the International Student Advisor for a new SEVIS I-20. Page 2 of the SEVIS I-20 documents various student transactions, such as school transfer, curricular and optional practical training authorizations, and travel validation required for re-entry to the U.S.

Maintaining F-1 Status

Passport

Keep your passport valid at all times.

Duration of Status

F-1 students are allowed to stay in the U.S. for the duration of status (D/S), which includes:

- The time during which the student is pursuing a full course of study and making normal progress toward completing that course; plus
- The time the student may be working in authorized OPT after completion of studies; plus
- A 60-day period after completion of an academic program or post-completion OPT.

CBP grants duration of status to F-1 students by entering the notation “D/S” on both the passport and I-94 digital record.

Full Course of Study

To maintain a full course of study you must register and attend school as a full-time student two terms of each year, making progress in degree requirements. If you are eligible to take a term off for your annual vacation or for an internship, you must notify ArtCenter of your intent to do so before the beginning of the term you plan to take off. Not showing up for registration without prior notification is a failure to maintain a full course of study. Withdrawing from school during the term is also a failure to maintain a full course of study.

You must be enrolled for a minimum of 12 units in every term, regardless of whether you are taking only studio or only liberal arts courses. The only exceptions to the 12-unit minimum requirement are for medical conditions or if you are in your final term at ArtCenter. Even with these exceptions, you must still meet with the International Student Advisor before enrolling in fewer than 12 units. Failure to do so will cause you to fall out of status.

Working

Do not work without employment authorization from the International Student Advisor or USCIS, as required by law. Working without authorization is a serious violation of F-1 student regulations. Consult the section on employment authorization for approved work opportunities.

Change of Address

Report a change of address to update your SEVIS information within 10 days of moving. Stop by the CSE and fill out a change of address form right away.

Out of Status / Reinstatement

You may be “out of status” if:

- The date for completion of studies on your SEVIS I-20 has expired
- You have not maintained your F-1 status as defined above
- You have taken two consecutive terms off
- You have worked without proper employment authorization

Under any of these circumstances, you must contact the International Student Advisor immediately to seek advice about the possibility of reinstating your status with USCIS.

Travel Abroad and Re-entry

If you are planning to take a trip outside the U.S., you must have Page 3 of your SEVIS I-20 endorsed (signed) by the International Student Advisor. In endorsing the SEVIS I-20, the International Student Advisor verifies that you are maintaining F-1 status and are eligible to continue as a student at ArtCenter upon your return to the U.S. This signature is required even for short trips (e.g. Mexico or Canada) outside the U.S.

Any time you plan to leave the country, stop by CSE; the International Student Advisor can provide you with the latest travel updates and ensure that your immigration paperwork is current and valid for re-entry to the U.S. Plan ahead and get the travel endorsement at least one week in advance of your departure.

Employment

Students who have maintained F-1 status may work on and/or off-campus if you get prior proper authorization to work.

On-Campus Employment

Students maintaining F-1 status may work for ArtCenter a maximum of 20 hours per week while classes are in session and more than 20 hours per week during the Breaks and holidays. On-campus employment is a benefit of F-1 status and needs a letter from International Student Adviser’s letter to apply for social security number to work.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

CPT is an off-campus employment benefit available to students in F-1 status when the experience is considered to be an integral part of the established curriculum and directly related to the student's major. "Training" refers to a paid or unpaid internship, practicum, or other work experience that is required for the degree program, or for which course credit is awarded, or for institutionally sponsored cooperative education internships or research projects. Students are required to submit an application and receive an updated I-20 endorsed for CPT prior to beginning employment. Please submit an employment offer letter and a completed CPT recommendation form to CSE at least two weeks prior to your anticipated employment start date.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

OPT is an employment benefit that is available to students in F-1 status. OPT requires an application to, and authorization from, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) prior to beginning any employment. OPT applications may be received by USCIS a maximum of 90-days prior to completion of your academic program and must be received within 60-days after program completion. Contact CSE to schedule an OPT application appointment.

Post-completion OPT authorization is for full-time use only. Students who have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for at least one full academic year (minimum two terms) and have not taken two consecutive terms off may apply for OPT employment authorization directly with USCIS. The work must be directly related to the major field of study. Because authorization can take up to 90 days to obtain, students are encouraged to apply well in advance of the desired employment dates. Stop by the CSE or attend the OPT Information Session held at the beginning of each term for more information.

STEM OPT Extension

F-1 students currently on post-completion OPT based on a prior Bachelor's or Master's degree in a STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) field on the DHS STEM-Designated Degree Program List can apply to USCIS for a 24-month extension of OPT (for a total eligibility of up to 36 months). The following majors at ArtCenter are qualified for the 24-month STEM OPT Extension: Entertainment; Environmental; Interactive; Product; Transportation; Grad Environmental; Grad Industrial; Grad Media; Grad Transportation.

Detailed information will be found at [Study in the States](#).

Severe Economic Hardship Employment

Students experiencing serious, urgent, and unforeseen economic circumstances during their academic program may qualify for special permission to work off campus. Contact CSE to determine if you are eligible to apply.

Extension of Stay

If your SEVIS I-20 is about to expire and you need additional time to complete your degree program, you must request an extension of your stay from the International Student Advisor. This extension must be requested 30 days prior to the program end date found on page one of your SEVIS I-20. ArtCenter grants undergraduate students 48 months and graduate students 36 months to complete their programs of study. Students easily complete their studies within the time given, and therefore extensions of stay are rarely necessary.

Change of Status

Students who enroll at ArtCenter with a visa other than F-1 (e.g., E-2, H-4) are encouraged to change their status to F-1 to enjoy the various F-1 benefits, such as on-campus employment and practical training. All students must change to F-1 status prior to their 21st birthday. If you will be turning 21 soon, stop by CSE to initiate your change of status. Individuals in B-1/B-2 or F-2 status are not permitted to enroll as full-time students at ArtCenter. B-1/B-2 individuals must apply for F-1 status with USCIS and be approved prior to starting school. F-2 individuals may start school after an application for change of status (to F-1) has been submitted to USCIS. However, this should be done with caution, as a change in status denial may also result in a violation of F-2 status.

Students who have graduated and are interested in changing to another visa status (e.g., H-1B work visa) are encouraged to consult with an immigration attorney regarding application procedures.

Transfers of School/Program

If you wish to leave ArtCenter to continue your academic program at another school in the U.S., you must follow the transfer procedures established by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for F-1 students. Please see the International Student Advisor for more information about transferring.

It is your responsibility to comply with immigration regulations and to know and understand how immigration regulations affect a given situation. If you fail to fulfill these responsibilities, then you may not be eligible to continue to receive (or to apply for) benefits provided to F-1 students. For example, you may not be eligible to continue any type of employment (even on-campus employment) or to apply for school transfer, practical training or other F-1 benefits. In some situations, you may even be subject to deportation.

This information is always subject to change, so please make sure to read all announcements, letters and email from CSE. For additional immigration information, visit the [Study in the States](#) website.

Taxes

Sources of U.S. income include earnings from on-campus employment or practical training, scholarships and investments. Depending on your income, you may also be required to file a California tax return (ftb.ca.gov).

The U.S. tax code is complicated, and your tax responsibilities may be affected by various tax treaties between the U.S. and other countries.

The CSE is neither trained nor qualified to assist you with your taxes or to offer any tax advice. In order to ensure that you are submitting the correct and necessary forms, you may choose to consult with a tax professional. You can also visit the IRS website (irs.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers/References-for-Foreign-Students-and-Scholars) or the eduPASS website (edupass.org/finaid/taxes.phtml) for additional information.

The tax filing deadline is usually April 15 of each year. You should start thinking about filing your tax return as early as January. Do not wait until the last minute. If you plan to use a tax professional, set up a meeting well in advance of April 15. Appointments may be difficult to secure as the deadline approaches.

Staying Healthy

Adjusting to a new country and a new college environment means excitement and challenge. Your classes, projects and studies will keep you busy, but staying healthy is your personal responsibility and should be a priority. Smart diet, exercise and time management practices will help you maintain a good level of physical and emotional balance.

Disability Services

ArtCenter provides accommodations for students who have a documented physical or learning disability. If you need classroom accommodations, please visit the Student Disability Services Coordinator in CSE before the term begins, or as soon as the disability is diagnosed.

Health Insurance

You will automatically receive medical insurance as an ArtCenter student. This insurance policy is included in your tuition. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) handout and claim forms are available from CSE and will be provided at orientation. This insurance policy is mandatory and cannot be waived through coverage by other plans. Coverage begins on the first Saturday of each academic term and continues through each official school break. Students on a Leave of Absence may purchase the insurance plan for one term per plan year. This is strongly recommended to avoid medical bills and pre-existing condition limitations during your term off.

It is important that you keep ArtCenter informed of your most current address to ensure the health insurance card is mailed to the address in effect during enrollment/payment of fees. For additional information, visit aetnastudenthealth.com.

Health and Wellness Resources

CSE sponsors health, wellness and safety workshops throughout the year and carries educational literature on various health-related topics.

Personal Counseling

CSE staff members are available to discuss any problem, big or small, with ensured confidentiality. In addition, brief confidential counseling services by professional therapists are available to our students for 1-5 sessions per term. Referrals are also made to off-campus resources based on the individual student's needs.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is not allowed in any enclosed portion of the campus or any stairs leading to a building entrance or on the Hillside Campus Bridge. California state law prohibits smoking within 20 feet of any building.

Where To Get Help At School

ArtCenter staff and department contact information is available at inside.artcenter.edu, and additional campus resources can be found in Chapter 9 of the Student Handbook.

Center for the Student Experience (CSE)

The Center for the Student Experience (CSE) is your first stop when seeking information, advice and assistance related to your nonacademic needs. Staff members are generally available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to assist you. Most of the time, your questions can be easily answered with an informational handout. Other times, short questions can be handled during walk-in hours. For more involved matters, call 626 396-2323 to schedule an appointment.

Contacts

International student advising

Jeonghan Ryu
Diana Yung
626 396-2370 / 4287
international@artcenter.edu

Student support services

Kendra Stanifer
626 396-2396
kendra.stanifer@artcenter.edu

Student leadership programs

Celeste Guarneri
626 396-2473
celeste.guarneri@artcenter.edu

Counseling services

Sean Cheng, Director
626 396-2447
sean.cheng@artcenter.edu

Associate Provost of Student Affairs

The Dean of Student Affairs is your advocate and available to discuss a problem or receive general advice.

Associate Provost of Student Affairs

Raymond Quirolgico
626 396-2325
raymond.quirolgico@artcenter.edu

Cashier (Accounting Office)**626 396-2332**

Tuition and fees payment information is sent to you at your ArtCenter email address. Contact the cashier for questions about payment plans, payment by mail or in person.

Campus Safety**626 396-2211**

The Campus Safety department provides security and emergency response services for the College at Hillside and South Campus 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A safety escort program is available to students when walking across campus after dark. Contact a Campus Safety Officer or the receptionist in the Student Gallery any hour of the day or night. Be sure to program our number into your cell phone.

Emergency**911**

If you feel your personal safety is threatened at any time, do not hesitate to call this number. It works everywhere in the U.S. and should be programmed into your cell phone.

Career and Professional Development**626 396-2320**

The Office of Career and Professional Development provides general career counseling and specific information on available jobs and internships. International students need to stop by the CSE to discuss regulations and eligibility for employment in the U.S.

Department Chairs Office (DCO)**626 396-2343**

The Department Chairs Office is your first point of contact for academic advising and any academic questions.

Enrollment Services**626 396-2314**

Enrollment Services processes Leave of Absence and ArtCenter Lite forms. Upon request, the department issues transcripts, verification letters and copies of diplomas. Enrollment Services staff can also assist with class selection and schedule changes.

Exchange and Study Away**626 396-4215**

If you will be participating in a study away program or want to find out more about what study away opportunities exist and how to apply, visit the Exchange and Study Away website at artcenter.edu/studyaway or contact their office.

Financial Aid**626 396-2215**

The Financial Aid Office answers ArtCenter scholarship questions.

Human Resources (HR)**626 396-2270**

The Human Resources office handles employment for on-campus student workers.

Student Store**626 396-2227**

Books, art/school supplies, computers/accessories and ArtCenter logo merchandise are available at the Student Store, across from the cafeteria.

The Writing Center in Room 278 at Hillside Campus provides individualized assistance for all students, from first term to graduate level. Besides writing assignments, the Writing Center can also help with reading and research.

Social Life at ArtCenter

A good social life is important to a student's success. Recreation, diversion and friends contribute to a balanced life.

Degrees of Friendship

Just as it probably does in your own culture, it takes time for friendships and close relationships to develop among Americans. You may hear Americans refer to acquaintances, such as persons who happen to sit together in class, as “friends.” There are, however, degrees of friendship.

Greeting people is the first step toward building a relationship. Common greetings in the U.S. include, “Hi, how are you?” or “How are you doing?” These are polite phrases—not necessarily questions—and you will find that the person asking may not always wait for a response. This does not mean the person greeting you is being rude; it is merely a reflection of the social customs in the U.S.

As an international student, try to make an effort to meet people so that friendships can develop. Talk to people, even if your English is not strong. ArtCenter is a very international community. Take this opportunity to get to know people from different cultural backgrounds. Because crossing borders to study is a unique and powerful experience, some students initially find that they have more in common with other international students than they do with Americans. However, do not let this keep you from making American friends. You will develop a better understanding of American culture and values if you also make the effort to seek out Americans.

Cafeteria

The primary student social center on campus is the cafeteria and the adjacent Student Dining Room. Cafeteria hours are Mondays–Thursdays 7:30 a.m.–9 p.m.; Fridays 7:30 a.m.– 6 p.m.; and Saturdays 8:30 a.m.–2 p.m. Daily menus and updated hours are available from a link at Inside ArtCenter. The Student Dining Room is open 24 hours a day, whenever the College is open.

Student Organizations

Participating in student life outside the classroom is a great way to make friends. There are various student organizations at ArtCenter representing many different interests. You will find cultural and religious organizations, sports clubs, student government and social groups.

If you want to enhance your leadership skills, you will find a number of opportunities on campus. You can choose to run for ArtCenter Student Government (ACSG) office or lead an international student club or other campus organization. You can also organize activities with the Center for the Student Experience (CSE) or volunteer with many community programs. These are all opportunities to meet and work with others on issues that matter to you. Being involved is one of the best ways to develop new connections outside of classes.

Current information, schedules of meetings, and special cultural events are announced in the weekly CSE email.

Outside ArtCenter

Pasadena and Los Angeles (L.A.) offer a wide variety of restaurants, theaters and cultural activities. See “Art, Music and Theatre” in the next section for a list of local museums and concert venues.

Additionally, both cities have fantastic websites curated by their Convention and Visitors Bureau departments that cater to both visitors and natives alike.

Discover Los Angeles

Highlights events happening throughout the Greater L.A. region. Includes an interactive tool for exploring L.A.’s neighborhoods, as well as handy sections like “What to Do,” “How to Explore” and “Where to Stay.”

discoverlosangeles.com

Pasadena Official Visitors Site

A great place to learn about concerts, sporting events, art exhibitions and more happening in the City of Pasadena. Includes a printable visitor’s guide as well as sections like “Eat,” “Stay” and “Transportation” to plan your leisure time.

visitpasadena.com

You may find additional useful information on the cities’ official sites:

City of Pasadena

cityofpasadena.net

City of Los Angeles

lacity.org

Resources And References

The following information is provided for your convenience and reference. Neither ArtCenter nor the Center for the Student Experience endorse the following websites or companies.

Measurement Conversions

convert-me.com

World Time

timeanddate.com/worldclock

Currency Exchange

x-rates.com

Government Sites

U.S. Department of State - state.gov

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services - uscis.gov

U.S. Internal Revenue Service - irs.gov

U.S. Postal Service - usps.com

State of California - ca.gov

City of Pasadena - cityofpasadena.net

City of Los Angeles - lacity.org

Entertainment and News

cnn.com

imdb.com

latimes.com

laweekly.com

moviefone.com

netflix.com

pasadenastarnews.com

pasadenaweekly.com

ticketmaster.com

Art, Music and Theatre

Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens

1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, CA 91108

huntington.org

Pasadena Playhouse (State Theatre of California)

39 S. El Molino Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101

pasadenaplayhouse.org

Norton Simon Museum
411 W. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91105
nortonsimon.org

Pasadena Museum of California Art
490 E. Union St., Pasadena, CA 91101
pmcaonline.org

Pasadena Symphony and Pops
pasadenasympphony-pops.org

USC Pacific Asia Museum
46 N. Los Robles Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101
pacificasiamuseum.org

The Broad
221 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90012
thebroad.org

California African American Museum
600 State Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90037
caamuseum.org

The Music Center
musiccenter.org

The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
250 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90012
moca.org

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90007
nhm.org

Walt Disney Concert Hall
111 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90012
laphil.com

Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)
5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036
lacma.org

Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90049
getty.edu

Getty Villa
17985 Pacific Coast Hwy., Pacific Palisades, CA 90272
getty.edu

Housing and Moving Resources

offcampushousing.artcenter.edu

apartments.com

move.com

losangeles.craigslist.org

dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/index.shtml

Search Engines

google.com

yellowpages.com

Travel

cheaptickets.com

expedia.com

priceline.com

travelocity.com

Directions To ArtCenter

For automated phone directions to the campus, call 626 396-2246.

To Hillside Campus

1700 Lida St., Pasadena, CA 91103

From Downtown Los Angeles

North on 110 freeway to Pasadena, approximately three miles past Dodger Stadium to Orange Grove Blvd. exit and turn LEFT onto Orange Grove Blvd. Go two miles and turn LEFT at the light onto Holly St. Follow Holly St. to the end and turn/veer RIGHT onto Linda Vista at the light. Continue for two miles and make a LEFT at the light onto Lida St. Continue up the hill on Lida St. and you will see a sign for ArtCenter on your LEFT.

From Burbank/East or South San Fernando Valley

East on 134 freeway through Glendale, exit on Linda Vista. At top of exit ramp, turn RIGHT at the light onto San Rafael Ave. Make an immediate LEFT at the light onto Colorado Blvd., then veer RIGHT at the split in the road onto Linda Vista Ave. At the second light, turn LEFT onto Lida St. Continue up the hill on Lida St. and you will see a sign for ArtCenter on your LEFT.

From South Campus

Turn RIGHT out of the main parking lot to drive north on Raymond Ave. Turn LEFT onto California Blvd. Turn right onto Orange Grove Blvd. Drive two miles and turn left at the light onto Holly St. Follow Holly St. to the end and turn/veer RIGHT on Linda Vista Ave. Follow Linda Vista Ave. for two miles and turn LEFT at the light onto Lida St. Continue up the hill on Lida St. and you will see a sign for ArtCenter on your LEFT.

To South Campus

870 S. Raymond Ave., Pasadena, CA 91105

950 S. Raymond Ave., Pasadena, CA 91105

1111 S. Arroyo Pkwy, Pasadena, CA 91105

From Downtown Los Angeles

North on 110 freeway to Pasadena. Freeway will end (turns into Arroyo Pkwy). Turn LEFT at first light onto Glenarm St. Turn RIGHT onto S. Raymond Ave. Parking lots for 870 and 950 S. Raymond are on your RIGHT.

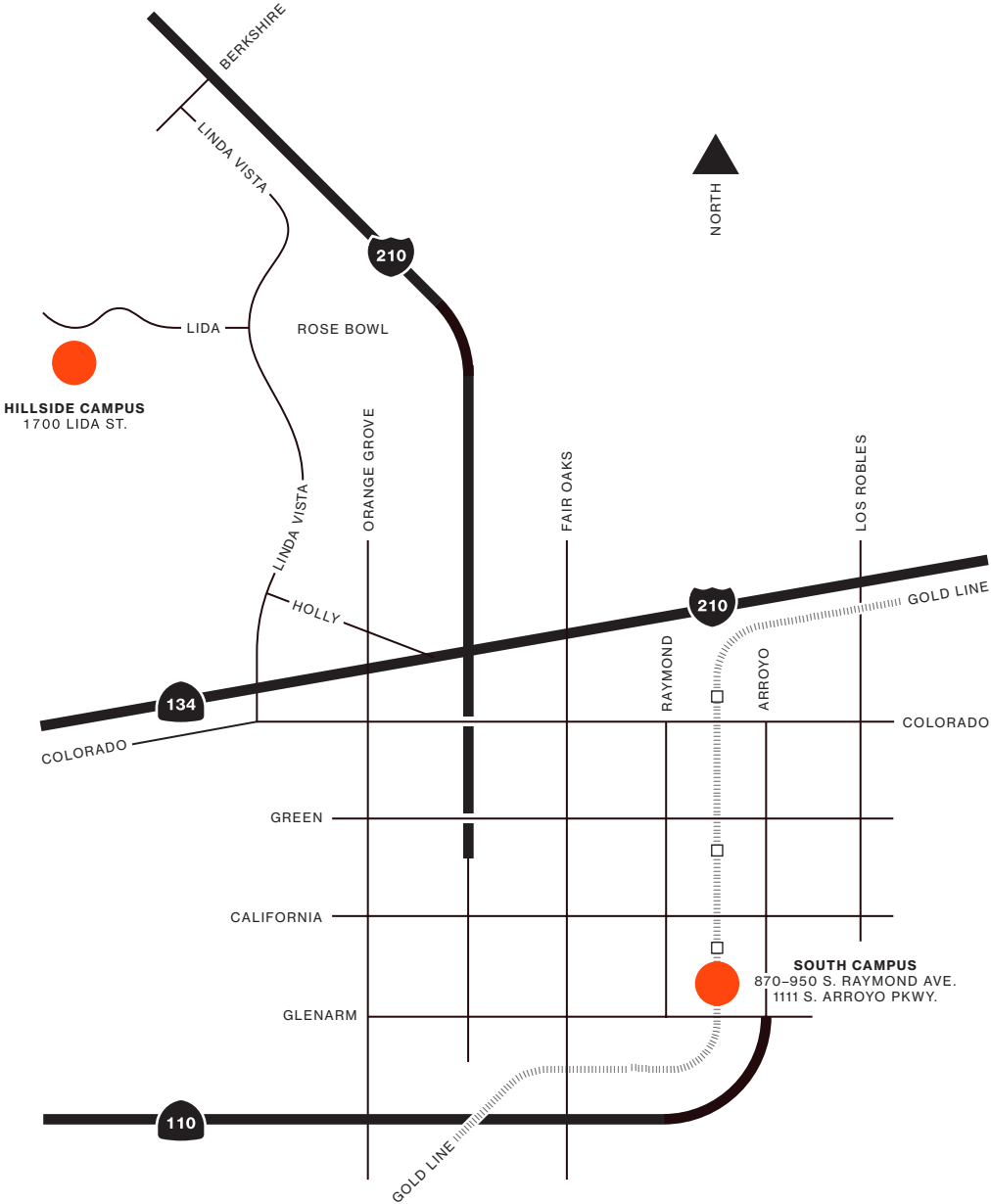
From Burbank or South San Fernando Valley

East on 134 freeway toward West 210 freeway. Take the Del Mar/California Blvd. exit. Follow signs for California Blvd. to end of freeway. At light, turn LEFT onto California Blvd. At third light, turn RIGHT onto S. Raymond Ave. 870 and 950 S. Raymond are on your LEFT at the end of the street.

From Hillside Campus

As you leave campus, turn RIGHT onto Lida St. At first light, turn RIGHT onto Linda Vista Ave. At light, turn LEFT onto Holly St. At first light, turn RIGHT onto Orange Grove Blvd. At fourth light, turn LEFT onto California Blvd. At fifth light, turn RIGHT onto S. Raymond Ave. 870 and 950 S. Raymond are at the end of the street on your LEFT. To Hillside Campus 1700 Lida Street, Pasadena, CA 91103

Hillside and South Campus in Pasadena



Acknowledgements

The information included in this handbook is intended only for members of the ArtCenter College of Design community. Readers understand that the information contained is subject to change at any time, and may not necessarily apply to people outside the ArtCenter community.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the materials and information presented in this handbook are accurate. However, the handbook is not intended to be used as a legal reference.

Portions of this handbook were compiled using resources from other institutions, including California Institute of Technology, Occidental College, University of Southern California; NAFSA: Association of International Educators; and 8CFR214.2(f).

CSE 04/2019

