HELPFUL TIPS FOR NON-U.S. CITIZENS

Many non-U.S. students, including permanent residents, have problems when trying to get a visa to study abroad. To help you get your visa without problems or delays, please use the information on this sheet. The Office of Study Abroad and Michigan State University are not responsible for getting student visas: it is your responsibility to get your own visa.

For instructions see the following webpage: studyabroad.isp.msu.edu/studenthandbk/predep_planning/visa.html

1. MAKE PLANS FOR ALL COUNTRIES YOU WILL TRAVEL TO AND THROUGH
   
   You will need to know your complete travel plans to make sure you have visas for every country you travel through, before, during, or after your study abroad program. You must apply for visas for all of these countries. For example, some students forget to get a “transit visa” to pass through a country on their way to their final destination and they are not allowed to enter the country.

2. FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS ON THE OSA WEBSITE CAREFULLY
   
   The Office of Study Abroad website has special instructions for how to apply for a visa. You should not use another website or try to figure it out for yourself. For example, many students have their visa denied because they do not follow the instructions carefully.

3. APPLY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
   
   Many students wait too long to apply for their visa and do not receive their visa in time to go on the study abroad program. You may need to travel a long distance to hand in your documents and pick up your visa and you will need extra time. If you cannot go on the study abroad program because you do not have a visa, you may still have to pay the entire program fee. For withdrawal policies see the following webpage: studyabroad.isp.msu.edu/studenthandbk/program_withdrawal/prior_to_departure.html

4. APPLY FROM THE U.S. (not from your home country)
   
   Applying from the U.S. is faster and easier because you are an MSU student and you live in the U.S. for most of the year. The instructions on the Office of Study Abroad website make it simple for students to apply from the U.S. If you apply from your home country the application can be very difficult. It will take a long time and you will have no connection to MSU. For example, students who apply from China often receive wrong instructions and have their visa denied or delayed until it is too late for them to study abroad.

5. KEEP YOUR U.S. VISA CURRENT
   
   You must make sure your U.S. visa is current so that you will be able to re-enter the U.S. when you return from your study abroad program. You can go to the Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) for U.S. visa immigration advice.

6. YOU CAN HIRE SOMEONE TO PROCESS YOUR VISA
   
   You can hire a company that will take care of the application for you. Below is a list of companies you can hire to help you get your visa:
   - Washington Express Visas (www.washingtonexpressvisas.com/visaservices/)
   - A Briggs Passport & Visa Expeditors (www.abriggs.com)
   - Travisa (www.travisa.com/nonuscitizen.asp)

While Michigan State University seeks to provide participants with updated information, MSU is not responsible for changes in immigration requirements, fees, and processes or the approval / rejection of visa applications. It is the responsibility of the participant to obtain updated information, complete application materials accurately and in a timely manner, submit all required documents in the appropriate form to the correct authorities, and provide the necessary documents to immigration authorities upon arrival.