**VISA**

**What is a visa?** A visa is usually a stamp, applied to a passport page, showing that a person is authorized to enter the country for which it was issued (subject to permission of an immigration official at the time of actual entry) and stay there for a specified period. The visa typically has conditions, such as: dates of validity, purpose of stay (e.g. study), whether the visa is valid for multiple entries, whether employment is permitted, etc.

**Where does one obtain a visa?** Countries issue visas through their **consulates** overseas.

**What’s a consulate?** It is the building or office where representatives of a foreign government may work to 1) assist their citizens abroad; 2) issue visas to foreign nationals; 3) promote positive relations between their home and host nations.

**Must I have a visa?** Most countries require students to obtain a “student visa” prior to arrival. To find out if you need a visa for a particular country, and the application requirements, use **Google**: “Consulate of [name of country] in New York” -- then follow links to “visa,” or “student visa.”

**How do I apply for a visa?** Visas are sometimes applied for in person by **appointment** at the consulate; sometimes the application is on-line; sometimes the application must be sent by mail. **Each nation sets its own visa requirements and application procedures.**

Obtaining a visa can be a long, complicated, and costly process. The process cannot begin unless you have a valid passport. **You must not apply for a visa too early:** wait until you’ve received the “go ahead” from your MIP Coordinator or overseas program administrator before submitting a visa application.

Please note:
- An incomplete visa application is usually rejected.
- A visa application may be denied (visa not granted).
- Possession of a visa is not a guarantee of entry into the country that issued it.
- A visa can be revoked at any time.
- A student visa application may ask for dates of previous visas, proof of financial resources, evidence of good conduct, evidence of good health, proof of student status, offer of admission by the host educational institution including program dates, and any other documentation the consulate deems necessary.

**IMPORTANT: NON U.S. PASSPORT HOLDERS**

If you are traveling on a passport other than a U.S. passport, you should check with the nearest consulate of your host country to determine whether a visa will be required. Do this as far in advance as possible. You should also check with the local consulate of your home country to determine whether there are any passport or travel restrictions of which you need to be aware. You should also determine whether you need to apply for a new visa to re-enter the United States.