



International Student Handbook



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Welcome Message

Welcome to City College of San Francisco! My name is Dr. Vinicio Lopez and I am the Dean of International Education, English as a Second Language, and Transitional Studies. The Office of International Programs encompasses many facets of international education including International Student Programs, the Institute for International Students (also known as the Intensive English Program), and Study Abroad Programs.

Here at City College we have over 1000 international students from 90 countries studying at our various campuses. Just like you, they contribute to a broad mosaic of multi-ethnic students studying in San Francisco. This diversity among the student body is mirrored in our faculty and staff to provide an enriching environment for your studies here and beyond.

The mission of our office is to:

- Support and assist all international students in successfully achieving their educational goals
- Provide seamless, coordinated service to current and prospective students in a friendly, supportive and professional manner
- Promote international/global awareness and intercultural understanding through development and implementation of programs/events

Please use this handbook as a guide to answer your many questions. Should you need further assistance, please feel free to contact the office in Cloud Hall Rm. 212 at:

+1-415-239-3895 or international@ccsf.edu

I hope that you enjoy your time with us!

Best Regards,
Dr. Vinicio Lopez



Maintaining F-1 Status

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regulations govern all international students who are on F-1 (student visa) status. It is your responsibility to keep in status. It is your responsibility to know when to submit forms and update records. Ignorance of the rules will not excuse you from non-compliance. If you violate the regulations, you are responsible for clearing any problems with USCIS.

You must learn the regulations affecting F-1 students. Regulations may change during your stay in the United States. Please keep yourself informed by checking the announcements sections of our website, USCIS announcements, or attending workshops for international students. It is recommended that you keep a copy of your documents (visa, I-94, passport, and I-20) on you at all times. Keep your originals in a safe place.

Quick Reference List

1. For the **first entry** for initial school attendance, the school listed on the visa and Form I-20 **must** be the same. **Make sure you are attending the school listed on the visa and I-20.**
2. Report to the Designated School Official (DSO) for Initial Registration into SEVIS upon arrival. New initial students must be registered in SEVIS **no later than 30 days** after the program start date.
3. **Take a “full course of study” (a minimum of 12 units) every semester (Fall and Spring).** Certain exceptions are allowed when approved in advanced by the DSO. Please consult with your International Student Counselor first for a written recommendation.
4. Every term, students **must be** registered **no later than 30 days** after the start of the term. In order to be registered, students must be enrolled full-time (12 units). If you are not in 12 units, you cannot be registered in SEVIS and will not be in status.
5. Make normal progress towards completing **your initially declared** studies before the expiration of the program completion date on your Form I-20.
6. Keep your Form I-20 valid by following proper procedures for program extensions, transfers or change in majors.
7. Keep your passport valid - at least 6 months into the future while studying in the U.S.
8. Report a change of address, name, e-mail address or phone number to the school **within 5 days** so that SEVIS can be updated. Forms are available in C212.
9. Check your e-mail for important messages from our office and the school. **It is your responsibility to report any changes in e-mail address.**
10. Follow rules requiring disclosure of information and prohibition of criminal activity.
11. Obtain the proper work authorization (if you qualify) **before** working. If you do not have work authorization, **do not work.**
12. Follow F-1 grace period rules:
 - a. Enter **up to 30 days** before start of program
 - b. Leave **up to 60 days** after end of program
 - c. Leave **up to 15 days** after authorized early withdraw

Immigration Documents

Make sure to make a photo copy of all the documents in this section in case of loss or theft.

Passport

You must keep a valid passport. USCIS regulations state that your passport **must be valid** for at least six (6) months into the future. For example, if your passport is going to expire on July 1, 2017, you should apply for an extension **before** January 1, 2017.

There are some countries that have agreements with the United States. For these countries, you have up to the expiration date to renew your passport in the United States. To extend your passport, please contact your nearest consulate or embassy. A list of consulates and embassies is on pages 18 – 22 of this guide book. Some countries allow you to renew your passport in the U.S. Others require you to return to your home country to process a renewal. You will not be able to re-enter the United States without a valid passport. Countries exempt of the 6 month rule (I.E., can travel with passports up until expiration) are listed on page 22 of this document.

Visa

A visa is necessary only to enter the United States. The issue and expiration date shows when you can enter the country, NOT how long you can stay. If it is expired, or if you have changed your visa status while in the U.S., you must reapply for a new visa **only** if you plan to travel abroad and re-enter the U.S. It is not necessary to extend your visa if you are not planning to travel and re-enter the US.

I-94

As of April 30, 2013, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) no longer issue paper I-94s. If you arrived before the above date, your I-94 is a white paper that is stapled in your passport. (Note: some land ports and sea ports are still issuing paper I-94s due to instability of the internet and frequency of travel for certain group of students.)

If you entered the country after April 30, 2013 your I-94 can be printed out through the CBP Website at <https://i94.cbps.dhs.gov>. Be sure to check your I-94 after entering or re-entering the country, provide a copy to the Office of International Education in Cloud Hall 212, and if you notice any mistakes on your I-94, please contact any local CBP Deferred Inspection Office or port of entry (POE)

- <https://www.cbp.gov/contact/deferred-inspection/overview-deferred-inspection>.

I-20

It is your responsibility to ensure that your I-20 is valid and up-to-date. Here are some things to keep in mind in regards to the I-20

1. **Note the program end date for your I-20.** If your I-20 is about to expire and you haven't completed your program, see your International Student Counselor for a new education plan and discuss about your new program end date.

2. **Keep your I-20 up-to-date.** If there are any changes while studying, you may need an updated Form I-20. Please inform the Office of International Education of any changes in C212 and request an updated I-20 if needed. Here are some examples of items that require a new Form I-20 and where to go to start the process.

Travel – C212

Change of Major – MUB 125

Program Extension – MUB 125

RCL – MUB 125

Change of Name – C212

CPT/OPT – MUB 125

Economic Hardship – MUB 125

Reinstatement – C212

Lost/stolen/damaged I-20 – C212

Academic Policies Governing F-1 Students

Full Course of Study

All F-1 students are required by regulations set forth by USCIS to carry and complete a **minimum of 12 units** each semester. Students must also maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average (GPA). If you do not comply with this regulation, our office is required **by law** to report your status to USCIS and terminate your I-20.

No more than one online/distance education class (**or equivalent of 3 units**) per session may be counted towards the “full course of study” requirement of 12 units.

If your I-20 is terminated, you must apply for reinstatement with USCIS to continue studying in the U.S. It is up to USCIS to approve or deny your application for reinstatement. If it is **denied**, you are required to return home. You may apply for re-admission to CCSF when you return to your home country. If accepted, you will be issued a new I-20 and will **have to repay** the SEVIS fee. You **may** also have to apply for a new visa before entering the country if your previous visa has expired or **if you have been outside of the U.S. for more than 5 months**.

To avoid being terminated for having less than 12 units, consult with an international student counselor prior to withdrawing from classes and dropping below 12 units.

Exceptions to Full Course of Study

Federal immigration regulations severely limit a student’s ability to be less than full-time, but it **may** be allowed in some circumstances. If you drop below full-time enrollment without authorization, the Office of International Education is required to report this to SEVIS as a violation of your F-1 status. A student who wishes to drop below full time must obtain the approval from a PDSO/Dean in advance, regardless the reason. Reduced course load must be requested in the beginning of each semester, **no later than 30 days after** the first day of class.

Exceptions to “full course of study” are limited. Conditions for an exception (reduced course load) are listed below:

Academic Difficulty (First semester only. Can only be approved once per program/education level)

- Initial difficulties with the English language
- Initial difficulties with reading requirements
- Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods
- Improper course level placement

Students who use the above option must then enroll for a full course of study the **following semester**.

Medical Conditions

A student must apply for Reduced Course Load (RCL) if, due to a **temporary** illness or medical condition, he/she is unable to be enrolled full-time (or, if necessary, no course load). Students must provide current medical documentation from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or licensed clinical psychologist for approval. Complete process and requirements can be found on our website or on the RCL request form in C212.

Please note: a normal pregnancy/delivery is **not** a medical condition warranting a full semester RCL.

Completion of Course of Study

A reduced course load for the final semester is possible with proper documentation. This type of RCL can only be applied for prior to or during your final semester with approved Educational Plan from an international student counselor. Student’s academic record must not show that the student is intentionally planning for the final semester RCL.

Academic Probation

You are expected to remain in good academic standing while you are attending City College of San Francisco. If you are placed or at risk of being on academic probation or disqualified for inadequate academic performance, **contact your International Student Counselor immediately.**

Hold

A hold on your account means that you have not met certain terms and conditions required for students attending City College of San Francisco. When a hold is placed on your account, you will lose access to certain student services. Some examples include but are not limited to:

You will not be able to add/drop classes

You will not be able to obtain transcripts or a copy of your academic record

You may not be able to access your student account at all

If you are having trouble getting a hold removed from your records, consult your International Student Counselor in the MUB or one of the staff in C212 for assistance and guidance.

Concurrent Enrollment

Students who have been admitted as an F-1 student at City College of San Francisco and wish to enroll in a course or courses (part time studies only) at another college or university (known as concurrent enrollment) **must:**

1. Be enrolled in a minimum of twelve (12) semester units
2. Be in "good academic standing." This means enrolled fulltime with a minimum GPA of 2.0
3. Be in status as an F-1 student
4. Obtain permission to enroll at another college/university. Permission will be granted on a case-by-case basis, in writing. Please come to C212 first to request a permission letter. After, you may want to meet with an international student counselor for advice on classes and transferability.

Tuition Refund Policy

All students who register for classes must pay the tuition and enrollment fees. You must pay your fees at the time of registration or before the deadline of the automatic system drop date. Be sure to check the deadlines for each class to see when the deadline for dropping a class for a refund is. If you do not drop your class in time, you will be charged partially/fully for the class even if you did not attend. Please refer to the CCSF Schedule of Classes for specific refund deadline dates listed for each semester. It is the student's responsibility to apply for a refund. Tuition refunds are not automatic. Keep in mind that you must maintain 12 units for full-time study. More information about refunds for non-resident students can be found here: <http://www.ccsf.edu/en/student-services/admissions-and-registration/registration/billing-and-payment.html>

Last Day to Enroll

You **should** register for full-time courses at the time of your available online registration appointment. If you must register for classes after the semester begins, **you must register no later than 30 days after the start of the semester.** Please refer to the academic calendar for the last day to add classes and or the late add period.

Withdrawals/Incompletes

You are required to meet with a DSO or international student counselor prior to withdrawing from a class or earning an incomplete grade to prevent you from being out of status.

Leave of Absence

If an emergency occurs and you have to leave the country, you may apply for a leave of absence, lasting no longer than 5 months. Please see an international student counselor in MUB 125 and a DSO in C212 to talk about your options

Travel and Re-entry to the United States

If you are traveling outside the U.S. and will return to continue your studies you will need the following:

1. Valid I-20 endorsed with travel signature

To get your I-20 endorsed, you will need to bring in your Form I-20 and a copy of your flight ticket to Cloud Hall 212. Please do so at least two weeks before leaving the U.S. You will also need to fill out the Travel Request Form found in our office.

2. Valid passport with more than 6 months remaining until expiration

If you travel outside the United States and your passport is not valid for at least six months after your return, you may not be able to reenter the country. Passports may be renewed at your country's embassy or consulate in the U.S. You can find information about embassies in the student resource guide.

3. Valid Student Visa – If it is expired, you will need to renew your visa

If your F-1 visa has expired in your passport, this does not mean you have to leave the country. You can stay in the U.S. as long as you are maintaining your F-1 status and if your Form I-20 is valid and up-to-date. If your visa is expired and you are leaving the U.S., you will need to renew your visa before you can return to the U.S. Please be sure to discuss your situation with our office in Cloud Hall 212 before making any travel arrangements. Note: traveling for 2 weeks may not give you enough time to obtain a brand new visa from the U.S. Consulate.

4. Other documents

Be sure to take your health insurance card in case of accident, injury, or illness. You may want to also have your CCSF student ID as well as a copy of your transcripts /class schedule/ verification of enrollment letter with you.

5. Hold on your student account

Expect a hold on your student record with a future effective hold date. This is to remind you to submit your new I-94 or any other immigration documents to our office in Cloud 212 in order for us to report your most updated information to USCIS upon your return (e.g. a new passport, a new F1 visa, or a new I-94).

If you leave the country without informing a DSO/PDSO prior to your departure travel, you may not be eligible to return or continue your studies at CCSF. Keep in mind it is your responsibility to make sure you are ready for travel and inform our office accordingly.

Extension of Program

You must apply for an Extension of Program if you will not complete your program within the length of study that is stated on your current I-20. You are responsible for keeping track of the expiration of your I-20 and consulting with a counselor for the proper procedures. It is extremely important for you to review and become very familiar with the expiration date of your I-20. If you need to extend your I-20 to complete your educational goals at City College of San Francisco, you must request an extension of program (a program extension) at least 30 days prior to the expiration date of your I-20 by making an appointment with your international student counselor. Then submit the paper work to Cloud 212 for the Dean/PDSO's approval. The counselor will assist in the development of a new Educational Plan indicating the length of the extension. When the Office of International Education receives the recommendation of the international student counselor, an updated Form I-20 will be issued to you with a new expiration date if the extension is approved by the Dean/PDSO.

Remember: You must request an extension to your I-20 before it expires. Once it expires, we cannot issue a new I-20 with an extension of time. Once your I-20 expires, you will be required to apply for reinstatement or return to your home and re-apply for admission. You will be considered out of status. As a student who is out of status, you will not be entitled to any benefits, such as practical training, school transfer, employment, etc. until the conditions are met again.

Transferring to Another School

When you are ready to transfer to another school, you must bring your letter of acceptance to Cloud 212 as well as a completed Transfer Out Form with required documents listed on the form and a Transfer-in Form (if available) from your new school. Please keep the following in mind when considering transferring to another college/university:

1. If you have been pursuing a full-time course of study at CCSF and you have been in good standing while on F-1 status, CCSF will update your SEVIS record as a “transfer out” and indicate a release date which will most likely be the last day of the semester.
2. If you have **not** been pursuing a full-time course of study without prior approval or you have violated your status, you must apply for reinstatement with USCIS before requesting a transfer. You can also leave the U.S. and apply as a new student to the school you wish to transfer to.
3. If you are currently on reinstatement and the case is still pending, you are not allowed to transfer until the reinstatement is granted. If you insist on transferring, CCSF must cancel the reinstatement and transfer your ‘out of status” I-20 to the other institution, and then you must re-file the reinstatement after obtaining the new reinstatement I-20 from the new institution.
4. The new program enrollment must “make sense” to your “normal progress” towards your declared educational goal in the U.S. For example, if you have been studying in the academic program at CCSF for 4 semesters and have been obtaining decent grades and your intention is to obtain a Bachelor’s degree, then your request on transferring out to a language school in the middle of your studies at CCSF is most likely not a valid reason to request to be transferred out.

The transfer school will be able to issue you a new transfer I-20 after CCSF updates your SEVIS record by transferring it out to the new school.

Health Insurance



All F1 visa students are required to purchase mandatory health insurance through the college each and every semester that they attend CCSF. The coverage period begins from January 1st and ends on June 30th for the spring semester, and starts from July 1st and ends on December 31st for the fall semester. Coverage is provided by Anthem Blue Cross, a large insurance company which is based in California. Your plan is what is known as a “Preferred Provider Organization” or a “PPO”. This insurance is meant to cover you in case of illness, injury or accidents. It is not meant for preventative care, with the exception of women’s wellness visits, and does not include dental or vision care. There are other exceptions to your coverage, as well. Please read the “Plan Brochure” at www.4studenthealth.com/ccsf for details

Information on your health insurance policy and how to use it is included in the new student orientation packets for international students. Workshops are also offered every semester to provide you with further information about your insurance and how to best use your plan to keep your healthcare costs to a minimum. Your questions can also be answered by the CCSF International Student Insurance Coordinator and her student assistants.

Insurance enrollment can be completed online with a VISA or MasterCard debit or credit card at: www.4studenthealth.com/ccsf. If you do not have a valid VISA or MasterCard, please see the International Student Insurance Coordinator for a paper enrollment form and information on other acceptable forms of payment. Please note that we cannot accept cash.

Shortly after enrolling online, students will receive a health insurance ID card by e-mail or mail. They should keep this card with them at all times and present it anytime they receive health care.

Exceptions to the mandatory health insurance requirement **MAY** be made in the following cases IF the college’s requirements are met:

1. If you are married, in a domestic partnership or the child of someone working in the United States and THEIR EMPLOYER provides you with comparable health insurance coverage.
2. If you are studying in the United States on a scholarship through your government and that scholarship includes comparable health insurance coverage with a company whose claims administration is based in the United States.

In both cases listed above, the student must file a “Request for Waiver of Health Insurance Form” with the International Student Insurance Coordinator, as well as required supporting documents. Your waiver and supporting documents will be evaluated and you will be informed if you are eligible for a waiver or not. If you are not eligible for a waiver, you will be required to purchase the college’s policy with Anthem Blue Cross. Waivers for health insurance must be submitted and updated every semester that the student attends CCSF.

Jill Heffron is the current CCSF International Student Health Insurance Coordinator. Her office is located in Cloud 212. Alternatively, you can phone 415-239-3778 or send emails to jheffron@ccsf.edu.

Employment Authorization for F-1 Students

U.S. immigration regulations for F-1 students contain specific restrictions as well as opportunities pertaining to employment. Students with an F-1 status are required to follow the regulations on employment while in the U.S. Engaging in unauthorized employment is considered a violation of F-1 student status. There are certain circumstances where employment is allowed for full-time, in status F-1 students.

1. On-Campus Employment

F-1 students are eligible to work on-campus by obtaining an authorization to work letter from the Office of International Education in Cloud 212. On-campus employment does not have to be related to the student's program of study and there is no waiting period to qualify. U.S. immigration regulations restrict on-campus employment to part-time (20 hours per week or less) during academic semesters and full-time during vacation or school break periods.

Note: Most CCSF student jobs are limited to 15 hours per week due to institutional policy

In order to receive an on-campus employment letter, the international student is required to:

- Be enrolled in full-time study (minimum 12 units) or have received previous authorization for a reduced course load
- Have a valid or legal F-1 student status
- Be in good academic standing with a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or above (for continuing students). First term students will not have a GPA yet.
- Be a continuing student at City College. On-campus employment eligibility at CCSF ends when the student completes his/her program of study at the college or transfers to another institution.
- Have no holds on current student account

Information on jobs and application procedures for available jobs are available through the Web4 portal for all students or see www.ccsf.edu/SHEP.

2. Employment due to Severe Economic Hardship

F-1 students can apply to USCIS for off-campus work permission based on economic hardship caused by unforeseen circumstances. It is expected that the student had attempted to find employment on-campus before apply for this form of work authorization. Applications are reviewed carefully by USCIS on a case-by-case basis and dependent on your financial circumstances. You will need to provide documentation of the unforeseen circumstances surrounding the economic hardship.

To be eligible, you must be an F-1 student in good standing for at least one academic year. A non-refundable fee of \$380 is required and USCIS can take up to four months to process the application. If approved, the authorization is granted by USCIS in one-year intervals. The work permit allows employment that is unrelated to a student's program of study. Please contact your international student counselor in the MUB to start this process.

3. Special Student Relief

If you are experiencing extreme economic hardship due to a natural disaster, war, or other crisis in your home country, you may be eligible for special work authorization granted by USCIS. Eligibility depends on current rules governing this program as set forth by the State Department of the Federal Government and USCIS. To learn if you are eligible, please speak to a DSO or provide updated and detailed information obtained from your government to a DSO in Cloud 212.

U.S. College/University Educational Information

Helpful Hints:

The first day of class is very important!

Some instructors may drop you from the class if you do not attend your first class. It is the decision of your instructor!

Organize your time.

You will have a lot of assignments for many different classes. Use your time effectively and it might be a good idea to make a study schedule and follow it.

Remember, it's a different education system.

Expect to put aside time outside of the actual class time for homework, group projects, class preparation, and study time for quizzes, midterms, and finals. The unofficial formula is # of unit x 3 is the # of hours you should expect to put aside outside of the classroom for these tasks! The more time you dedicate, the higher chances of maintaining decent academic records!

Read Effectively.

Try and get an idea early in the term of the level of understanding expected for class reading materials. Given the length of reading lists instructors give, it is not possible to memorize all of the materials for the semester or study them in depth. Familiarization with the main points and some supporting details is expected.

Note taking skills.

Learn how to take notes effectively especially from "lecture classes." Since it is not possible to memorize all of the materials from your every class lecture, knowing how to take proper notes to draw down key points of the lesson is very important, this often leads to student success.

Get the most out of class.

Attend class regularly. Read the assignments in advance. Take careful notes of the main points in the lecture and review them afterwards.

Get help if needed.

If following or understanding the materials in a course is difficult, it is best to ask for help sooner rather than later. Take the initiative and let someone know that help is needed. Talk to your instructor if you need any assistance. CCSF has a Learning Assistance Center in the Rosenberg Library which offers **free tutoring** and **other study skills**.

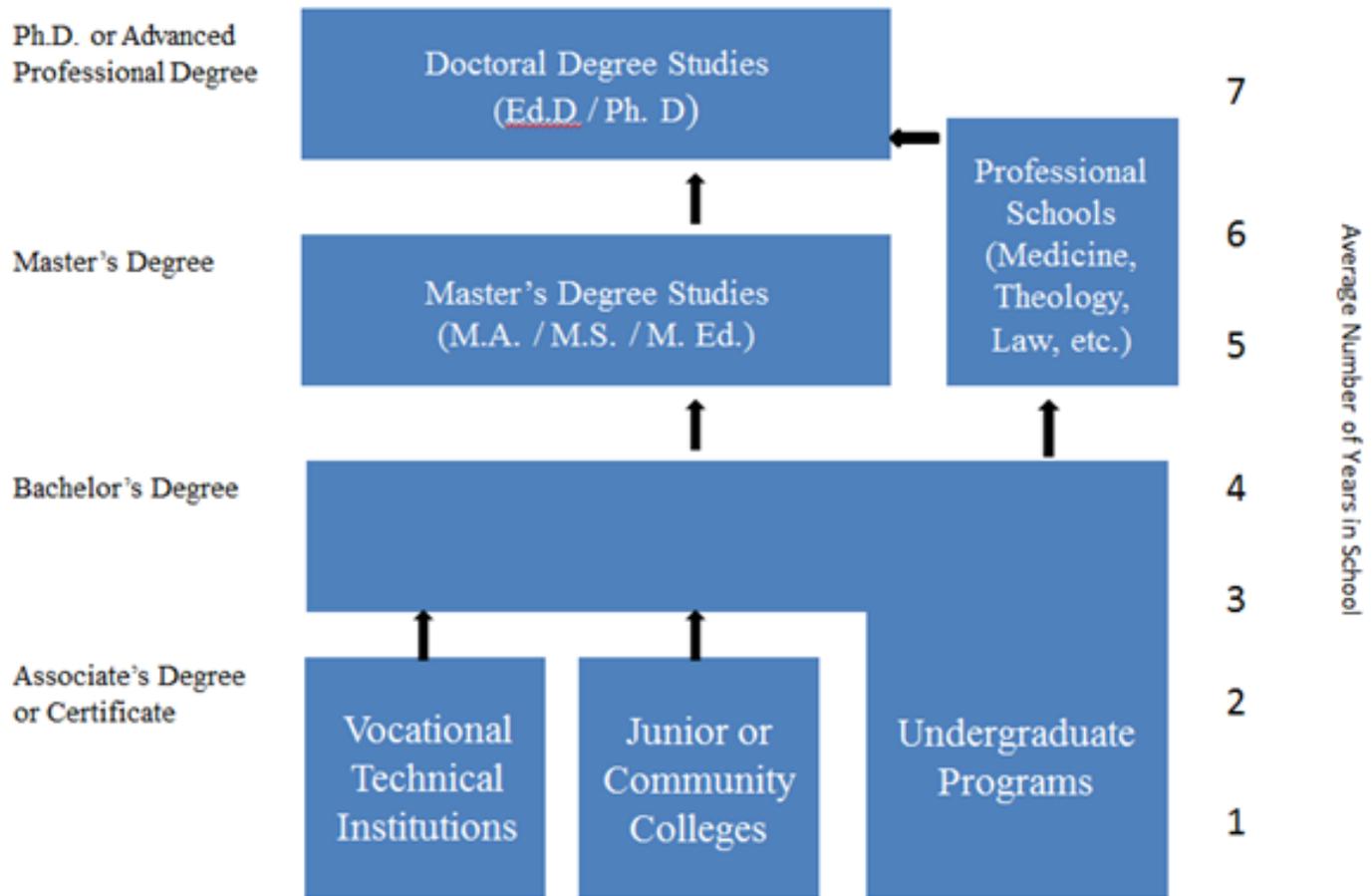
Do not become discouraged.

International students, especially new ones, inevitably have some difficulties understanding what is happening in at least some of their classes. The instructor may talk too fast and/or his/her teaching style may not fit with your learning style. Sometimes it might be difficult to understand other students because they are using too much slang. Although the entire situation may be confusing, as time passes and you gain more experience these problems will diminish.

Ask Questions.

Any time it is unclear what is expected in a class or some aspect of the material is unclear, ask the teacher about it. If there is not enough time to ask in class (or if the teacher prefers questions outside of class), ask the teachers during their office hours. When questions are not asked, it will be assumed that everything is understood.

Higher Education Ladder



Vocational Certificate

This is a series of special courses, all related to a particular occupational skill offered by community colleges and or private educational organizations.

Associate Degree

General Education courses as well as major requirements – A minimum of 60 total units is required, which can include elective courses. This degree is typically offered by community colleges and is usually referred to as an Associate of Arts (A.A.) or Associate of Science (A.S) degree.

Bachelor's Degree

Major courses plus general education as well as minor courses or electives. Typically 120 – 132 total units are required. This degree is usually referred to as a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree. Typically a student takes four to five years on average to complete the degree while studying full-time although some majors do take longer. You may complete the lower division at a community college and then transfer to a four-year university or college to complete your upper division course requirements. City College of San Francisco has articulation agreements with many school. This means you can be confident when transferring your units to those schools. Please check with the transfer center or international student counselor for more information.

Graduate Degrees

Masters of Art (M.A.), Masters of Science (M.S.), Masters of Education (M.Ed.) and doctoral degrees in Philosophy (Ph. D.) and Education (Ed. D) are post-graduate degrees. Completion time for these degrees can vary depending on subject, levels, and previous classes completed. Master's degrees can typically be completed within 1 – 3 years, and doctoral degrees can take 2-4 depending on the major of study.

Grades and GPA Calculations

The grading system used by most colleges and universities in the U.S., including City College of San Francisco operates on a four-point scale.

Grade	Points	Meaning
A	4.0	Excellent
B	3.0	Good
C	2.0	Average
D	1.0	Barely Passing
F	0	Failed
WF	0	Failed

Students must earn a **minimum** grade point average (GPA) of a 2.0 to remain in good academic status. To calculate your GPA, you take the grade you received in your class and multiply it by the number of units (or credit hours) the class was worth to find your quality points. For example, if you received an A in a class that was 3 units (or credits) you would multiple $4.0 \times 3 = 12$ quality points. You would do this for each of your classes to get your total quality points. After you have the total quality points, you divide that number by the number of units or credits to find your GPA.

Example:

Term 1			Term 2		
Grade	Units	Quality Points	Grade	Units	Quality Points
A (4)	3 units	12	B (3)	4 units	12
B (3)	3 units	9	C (2)	3 units	6
B (3)	3 units	9	D (1)	4 units	4
C (2)	3 units	6	A (4)	1 units	4

Term 1 Quality Points - 36
 Term 1 Credit Hours - 12 units
 Term 1 GPA - $36/12 = 3.0$ GPA

Term 2 Quality Points - 26
 Term 2 Credit Hours - 12 units
 Term 2 GPA - $26/12 = 2.17$

Cumulative GPA for both terms:
62 quality points / 24 units = 2.58 GPA

Important Items to Keep in Mind

Attendance:

Attendance for your credit classes is mandatory. Student who miss the first day of class are in danger of being **automatically dropped** from the course per instructor discretion. It is imperative that you read the syllabus for your classes carefully. Think of the syllabus as a contract between you (the student) and the teacher or instructor. If you anticipate an absence due to medical or other unforeseen circumstances **contact your instructor immediately**. It is **your responsibility** to inform your instructor if you will be absent and **your responsibility** to complete any missed assignments. **Do not think that you cannot be dropped by your instructor in the middle of the semester**. The instructors have the privilege to drop the students for any academic/behavioral related reasons.

Accommodations:

The American higher education system (including CCSF) is very open when it comes to expressing difficulties that may impact your learning. Don't be ashamed to ask for help if needed. City College of San Francisco is dedicated to providing equal opportunity education for all students. If you have a documented disability, or think you may have a disability, contact your instructor early to discuss appropriate accommodations. If you do not have a documented disability but feel you may be suffering from one, get in contact with the Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) office at 415-452-5481. They will be able to assist you with the process of documenting your disability.

Syllabus:

Every class should have a syllabus which is a contract between you and the teacher/instructor. This document usually contains the course description and expectations from the instructor, attendance policy, grading policy, assignments, required textbooks, class schedule, and the teacher or instructor's contact information. **Be sure to read the syllabus very carefully!** It is your responsibility as a student to understand the rules of your classes and keep up with your assignments.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the act of using words and ideas that are not your own without crediting the source properly, using someone else to write your papers, or having someone rewrite/edit your work for you and claiming it as your own work. Plagiarism is not tolerated at City College of San Francisco or at any other academic institution. Students engaging in plagiarism may receive an "F" for an assignment, dropped from a class, or dismissed from the academic program entirely. If you are dismissed due to plagiarism, you will be out of status. Ignorance is not an excuse when it comes to plagiarism. If you are confused or need assistance on how to cite works properly, seek advice from your instructors, writing tutors, or librarians.

Expectations in the Classroom:

Teaching style and what the teacher expects of you as a student can be very different based on the class, class size, instructor, and subject. Double check the syllabus for a classroom behavior section that may detail these expectations. Generally, classes in the United States can be rather large and intimidating. Some classes are taught in a lecture style where the instructor speaks on certain topics and conversation between student and instructor are limited unless called upon by the instructor. Others are more discussion based where participation is included in your grade. Since all classes are different, be sure to ask your instructor and consult the syllabus if you have any doubts on what is appropriate for each class. Class participation may be crucial in some classes, where you must speak up and raised your hand as a student to earn your points from the class.

Survival Guide to Life in the United States

Section 1 - Social Life in the U.S.

The content included in this section is a generalization. Please be aware that this may not hold true for all people in all situations. Be ready to learn from mistakes and adjust as necessary.

Greetings

Friends and acquaintances often prefer to be called by their first names. As a sign of respect, an older person and professionals (such as doctors or your professors) should be called by their title and last name (Mr./Ms./Mrs. Smith, Doctor Johnson or Professor Jones). Some older people and professionals may prefer to be called by their first name and they may give your permission to do so, especially if they know you are from a culture where elders are never called by their first name.

Common greetings are usually a “hi” (less formal) or “hello,” “good morning,” or “good evening” (a little more formal) are standard greetings. People say, “Hi!” or “How are you?” or slang “How’s it going?” or “What’s up?” and then may not wait for a response. This is often more of a greeting than an actual question. You can respond by simply waving or in-kind with a “hello” or “I’m fine, thanks.”

People usually shake hands when meeting people for the first time; it is not necessary to shake hands with people you already know. If it is inappropriate in your culture to shake hands, do not feel like you are obligated to do so. Just explain. Also be aware that Americans in general do not greet people they do not know with physical contact such as hugs and kisses. This may change as your relationship with individuals grows, but be aware of other people’s personal space.

Invitations

If an acquaintance or someone you are not really close to invites you to get together or “hang out,” they will probably ask you in person, e-mail or text message. If you say yes, they will expect you to come, but will understand if you don’t with proper notice. However, if you have accepted a formal invitation, you are expected to be present on the agreed upon date and time. If you find that you cannot attend, you should notify the person who invited you or the coordinator of the event as quickly as possible. It is considered impolite to call a few hours before the scheduled time to cancel, especially if you do not have a good excuse for doing so. If you have been invited to spend time with someone and you don’t want to, just politely decline. If you would like to visit someone you don’t know very well at their home, it is polite to get in touch with them first. “Dropping in” on people is better for close friends only.





Friendship

Americans generally have a group of really close friends – people they can trust, confide in, and share good and bad times with. Classmates and colleagues are often considered casual friends, or acquaintances. As is probably true in your own culture, how and if a friendship develops is up to you. Initially, you will have to make an effort to meet people. You may find that you have more in common with other international visitors than with Americans, and some of your strongest friendships may be made with other international students.

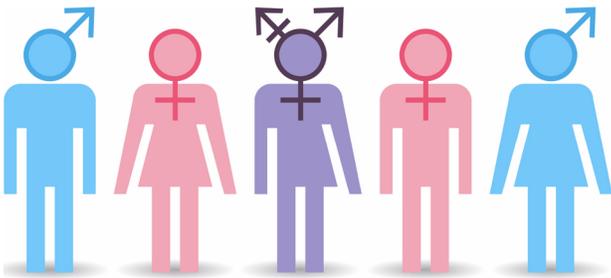
Dating

If you like someone and would like to spend more time with them, it is okay to ask them on a date. If you are from different cultures, try to set some mutually-agreed upon guidelines to avoid potential misunderstandings. Especially remember to talk about these differences so that you can appreciate one another and enjoy your time together. Don't base your perception of relationships on what you see in American movies or on television! These are not accurate portrayals of what dating and relationships are like. Beware of mixing alcohol and dating in a cross-cultural setting. Alcohol impairs judgement and behavioral cues can be misread and confused as a result.



Gender Roles and Gender Expression

Gender roles are not universal even within a particular country. They are based on the local culture and history of the area as well as the country as a whole. In the United States you will see a mix of traditional as well as less-rigid gender expressions.



City College of San Francisco has a pretty comprehensive [non-discrimination policy](#) which includes gender identity and expression. There are many resources on campus and in the surrounding community including [CCSF's Queer Resource Center](#).

Discrimination

It is the policy of the San Francisco Community College District to provide all persons with equal educational opportunities in all of its educational programs and activities regardless of race, color, national origin, ethnic group identification, religion, age, gender, marital status, domestic partner status, sexual orientation, disability or AIDS/HIV status, medical conditions, gender identity, or status as a Vietnam-Era veteran.

To report concerns of discrimination or harassment, please contact our compliance officer:

District Affirmative Action Officer

33 Gough Street

San Francisco, CA 94103

(415) 241-2281

Alcohol, Smoking, and Illegal Drugs

In the United States, it is illegal to purchase or drink alcohol, including beer and wine, until the age of 21. It is also against the law to buy alcohol for someone under the age of 21. It is also illegal to operate a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol and illegal substances.

In the U.S., an individual must be at least 18 years old to purchase tobacco products. However, in California, you must be 21 years old to purchase tobacco products. Most public buildings and spaces prohibit tobacco smoking or vaping within 50 feet of entrances. Most apartments also prohibit smoking inside due to fire and safety concerns.

Practicing Your Religion

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the U.S. constitution. Organized religious groups of many denominations are found throughout the bay area. Americans worship (or choose not to practice any religion at all) based on personal choices. Some people practice and talk about their religion openly; others practice quietly and keep it to themselves. Some individuals may try to convince you that your religion is wrong or try to convert you to their religion. If you feel pushed into a situation that threatens your beliefs, politely but firmly tell them that you are not interested.



U.S. Holidays and Observances

Federal law designates several public holidays for federal employees. Most state and federal government offices are closed on these days or the date the holiday is observed if it falls on a weekend.

Follow [this link for federal holidays](#).

Survival Guide to Life in the United States

Section 2 - Cultural Adjustment

As you settle into life in the United States and the Bay Area, you may find yourself experiencing a series of highs and lows, ups and downs as you adjust to life in a new culture. This experience is normal and can be experienced by anyone who changes environments within and outside the U.S. Culture adjustment can vary depending on your ability to adapt, your knowledge of the host culture, and the degree of difference from your home culture to the host culture.

There are many theories and different perspectives on culture shock and cultural adjustment. It is important to note that one is not inherently more correct than the other. There are just different ways to explain the dynamic process of adjustment.

One of the common models explains culture shock or cultural adjustment happens in four stages. Please note that progression through the stages is not linear and you can go back and forth between stages.

Stage 1 - Honeymoon Stage

- Excitement with new experiences
- Superficial involvement in the host culture (like a tourist)
- Intrigue with both similarities and difference between cultures
- Lots of interest in learning, very motivated
- You feel as if you can handle anything.

Stage 3 - Rejection

- Reject things around you
- Become overly negative
- Feelings that people are against you and want your failure

Stage 2 - “Culture Shock”

- What once was exciting now becomes frustrating
- Feelings of isolation and depression
- Stereotypes and prejudices surface: you feel as if the host nationals are cold, unhelpful, or snobbish.
- You are homesick. You miss your friends and family back home.

Stage 4 - Adjustment

- You gain a new appreciation for the differences experienced
- You are no longer affected by things in a negative way like before

Symptoms of Culture Shock

- Sadness or loneliness
- Aches, pains, or allergies
- Obsessions over cleanliness
- Changes in mood and depression
- Loss of identity
- Longing for family
- Preoccupation with health
- insomnia or excessive sleep
- Feelings of being lost or overlooked
- Anger, irritability, resentment
- Lack of confidence

If you find the you are experiencing the symptoms mentioned above, here are some tips to help ease your transition:

- Remind yourself that everything you’re feeling is perfectly normal
- Keep in touch with your friends and family back home via email, text, or telephone
- Surround yourself with familiar items, such as photos or ornaments
- Eat a healthy and balanced diet; try to find familiar food
- Maintain contact with your ethnic group as well as with local students
- Look for activities that will put you in contact with other students who share your interests
- Maintain your confidence in yourself; follow your ambitions and continue your plans for the future

If you feel that you need one-on-one assistance, please make an appointment with:

Student Health Services
50 Phelan Avenue HC 100
415-239-3110

Bay Area Consulates

Australia

575 Market Street
Suite 1800 (18th Floor),
San Francisco, CA 94105-2815
tel: (415) 644-3620
fax: (415) 536-1982
<http://www.usa.embassy.gov.au/whwh/SanFranCG.html>

Austria (by appointment only)

580 California Street, Suite 1500
San Francisco, CA 94104
tel: (415) 765-9576
email: office@austrianconsulatesf.org
<http://www.austrianconsulatesf.org/>

Barbados

442 Post St., Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94102
tel: (415) 421-8789
Email: mentor@well.com
<http://bridgetown.usembassy.gov/>

Belgium

555 California St., Suite 4925
San Francisco, CA 94104
tel: (415) 439-3852 (only by appointment)
fax: (415) 358-4422
Email: nathalie@belgianconsulsf.com
http://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/services/travel_to_belgium/studying_in_belgium/

Bhutan

No longer has an embassy in the Bay Area.

Brazil

300 Montgomery St., Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94104
tel: (415) 981-8170
fax: (415) 986-4625
<http://saofrancisco.itamaraty.gov.br/en-us/>

Britain

1 Sansome St., Suite 850
San Francisco, CA 94104
tel: (415) 617-1300 / (415) 981-8170
fax: (415) 434-2018
<http://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-consulate-general-san-francisco>

Canada

580 California St., 14th floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
tel: (415) 834-3180
fax: (415) 834-3189
<http://www.can-am.gc.ca/san-francisco/>

Chile

Flood Building, 870 Market St., Suite 1058
San Francisco, CA 94102
tel: (415) 982-7662
fax: (415) 982-2384
email: sanfrancisco@consulado.go.cl
<http://chile.gob.cl/san-francisco/en/>

China, People's Republic of

1450 Laguna St.
San Francisco, CA 94115
tel: (415) 852-5900
fax: (415) 852-5940
<http://www.chinaconsulatesf.org>

Colombia

595 Market Street #1190
San Francisco, Ca 94105
tel: (415) 493-7195
<http://sanfrancisco.consulado.gov.co/>

Costa Rica

P.O. Box 7643
Fremont, CA 94537
tel: (510) 790-0785
fax: (510) 792-5249
email: consulsfo@hotmail.com
<http://www.costarica-embassy.org/>

Cote D'Ivoire

1945 Washington St., Suite 606
San Francisco, CA 94109
tel: (415) 310-0812
fax: (415) 440-0153
http://abidjan.usembassy.gov/art_of_scam.html

Denmark

One Capital Mall, Suite 670
Sacramento, CA 95814
tel: (916) 448-9688
fax: (916) 448-9084
<http://usa.um.dk/en/travel-and-residence/>

El Salvador

507 Polk St., Suite 280
San Francisco, CA 94102
tel: (415) 771-8524
fax: (415) 771-8522
<http://www.elsalvador.org>

Finland

101 University Ave, Suite 320
Palo Alto, CA 94301
tel: (408) 406-6995
fax: (415) 563-8376
<http://www.finland.org/en>

France

88 Kearny St.
San Francisco, CA 94111
tel: (415) 397-4330
fax: (415) 397-7843
email: info@amb-wash.fr
<http://www.consulfrance-sanfrancisco.org>

Germany

1960 Jackson St.
San Francisco, CA 94109
tel: (415) 775-1061
fax: (415) 775-0187
<http://www.germany.info>

Greece

2441 Gough St.
San Francisco, CA 94123
tel: (415) 775-2102
fax: (415) 776-6815
<http://www.mfa.gr/usa/en/>

Guatemala

544 Golden Gate Ave, Suite 100
San Francisco, CA 94102
tel: (415) 563-8319
<http://guatemala.usembassy.gov/>

Honduras

Flood Building, 870 Market St., Suite 875
San Francisco, CA 94102
tel: (415) 392-0076
fax: (415) 392-6726
<http://www.hondurasemb.org/>

Hungary

2000 Alameda de las Pulgas, Suite 250
205 De Anza Blvd, P.M.B. 157,
San Mateo, CA 94402
tel: (650) 573-7351
fax: (650) 573-7355
<http://hungary.honoraryconsulate.info/sanfrancisco/>

Iceland

222 Front Street, 5th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94111
tel: (415) 433-3103
fax: (415) 906-2753
<http://www.cartwrightlaw.com/attorneys/iceland/>

India

540 Arguello Blvd.
San Francisco, CA 94118
tel: (415) 668-0662/ (415) 668-0682
fax: (415) 668-7968
<http://www.indolink.com/consulate/sfoCons1.html>

Indonesia

1111 Columbus Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94133
tel: (415) 474-9571
fax: (415) 441-4320
<http://www.kemlu.go.id/sanfrancisco/Pages/default.aspx?l=en>

Ireland

100 Pine St., Suite 3350
San Francisco, CA 94111
tel: (415) 392-4214
<https://www.dfa.ie/irish-consulate/sanfrancisco/>

Israel

456 Montgomery St., Suite 2100
San Francisco, CA 94104
tel: (415) 844-7500
fax: (415) 844-7555
email: Consulardep@SanFrancisco.mfa.gov.il
<http://www.israeliconsulate.org>

Italy

2590 Webster St.
San Francisco, CA 94115
tel: (415) 292-9200
fax: (415) 931-7205
email: it.sanfrancisco@esteri.it
<http://www.conssanfrancisco.esteri.it>

Japan

275 Battery St., Suite 2100
San Francisco, CA 94111
tel: (415) 780-6000
fax: (415) 767-4200
<http://www.sf.us.emb-japan.go.jp>

Jordan

972 Mission St. 4th floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
tel: (415) 546-1155
fax: (415) 546-4041
<http://www.jordanembassyus.org/>

Korea

3500 Clay St.
San Francisco, CA 94118
tel: (415) 921-2251
fax: (415) 921-5946
e-mail: consularsf@mofa.go.kr
<http://usa-sanfrancisco.mofat.go.kr/eng/index.jsp>

Liberia

1101 Embarcadero
West Oakland, CA 94607
tel: (510) 444-3919
fax: (510) 444-3370

Lithuania

1 Maritime Plaza, Suite 2525
San Francisco, CA 94111
tel: (415) 982-5822
fax: (415) 788-5302
<http://usa.mfa.lt/index.php?115071134>

Luxembourg

1 Sansome St., Suite 830
San Francisco, CA 94104
tel: (415) 788-0816
fax: (415) 788-0985
email: sanfrancisco.cg@mae.etat.lu
<http://sanfrancisco.mae.lu>

Malta

P.O. Box 34-7001
San Francisco, CA 94134
tel: (650)-631-8200
email: maltaconsul.sanfrancisco@gov.mt
<http://malta.usembassy.gov/index.html>

Mexico

532 Folsom St.
San Francisco, CA 94105
tel: (415) 354-1700
<https://consulmex2.sre.gob.mx/sanfrancisco/>

Monaco

10 Miller Place, #2001
San Francisco, CA 94108
tel: (415) 627-0729
fax: (415) 627-0729
<http://www.monaco-consulate.com>

Nepal

909 Montgomery St., Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94133
tel: (415) 434-1111
fax: (415) 434-3130
E-mail: skelly@blumcapital.com
<http://www.nepalembassyusa.org/>

Netherlands

120 Kearny St., #3100
San Francisco, CA 94104
tel: (415) 291-2033
fax: (415) 291-2049
sfn@minbuza.nl
<http://sanfrancisco.the-netherlands.org/>

Nicaragua

870 Market St., Suite 518
San Francisco, CA 94102
tel: (415) 765-6821
fax: (415) 765-6826
<http://www.consuladonicasanfrancisco.com/>

Norway

575 Market St., Suite 3950
San Francisco, CA 94105
tel: (415) 882-2000
fax: (415) 882-2001
<http://www.norway.org/Embassy/sanfrancisco/>

Panama

870 Market St., Suite 551
San Francisco, CA 94102
tel: (415) 391-4268
<http://www.panamanianconsulate.com/index.lasso>

Peru

Flood Building, 870 Market St., Suite 1075
San Francisco, CA 94102
tel: (415) 362-5185
fax: (415) 362-2836
email: consuladoperusanfrancisco@gmail.com
<http://www.consuladoperu.com/consulados/index.php?consulado=SAN%20FRANCISCO>

Philippines

447 Sutter St., 6th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94106
tel: (415) 433-6666
fax: (415) 421-2641
<http://www.philippinessanfrancisco.org/>

Portugal

3298 Washington St.
San Francisco, CA 94115
tel: (415) 346-3400
http://www.embassyportugal-us.org/Embassy_of_Portugal/Home.html

Romania

44 Montgomery St., Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94104
tel: (415) 743-2210
fax: (415) 989-0932
<http://www.romanianconsulate.org/>

Russia

2790 Green St.
San Francisco, CA 94123
tel: (415) 928-6878
Fax: (415) 929-0306
email: consulsf@ix.netcom.com
<http://www.consulrussia.org/>

Singapore

595 Market St., Suite 2450
San Francisco, CA 94105
tel: (415) 543-4775
fax: (415) 543-4788
<http://www.mfa.gov.sg/sanfrancisco/>

Spain

1405 Sutter St.
San Francisco, CA 94109-5417
tel: (415) 922-2995/ (415) 922-2996
fax: (415) 931-9706
e-mail: Cog.sanfrancisco@maec.es
<http://www.maec.es/>

Sweden

505 Sansome St. Suite 1010
San Francisco, CA 94111
tel: (415) 788-2631
fax: (415) 788-0141
email: sf@consulateofsweden.org
<http://www.swedenabroad.com/en-GB/Embassies/San-Francisco/>

Switzerland

456 Montgomery St., Suite 1500
San Francisco, CA 94104
tel: (415) 788-2272
fax: (415) 788-1402
<http://www.eda.admin.ch/sf>

Uruguay

351 California St., Suite 150
San Francisco, CA 94104
tel: (415) 986-5222 <http://www.conurula.org/>

Venezuela

1161 Mission St., Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94103
tel: (415) 294-2252
fax: (415) 296-6479
email: ven.sanfrancisco@gmail.com
http://www.embavenez-us.org/_sanfrancisco/

Vietnam

1700 California St., Suite 580
San Francisco, CA 94109
tel: (415) 922-1577/ (415) 922-1707
fax: (415) 922-1848/ (415) 922-1757
email: info@vietnamconsulate-ca.org
<http://www.vietnamconsulate-sf.org/>