

What is the difference between a passport and a visa?

Your passport is an official document issued by your home country's government to certify your identity and citizenship. Your passport allows you to travel under your home country's protection to and from foreign countries. A visa is an endorsement of a passport indicating that you are allowed to enter, leave or stay for a specific period of time in a country that is not your own. Because you are not a citizen of South Africa, their government requires students to obtain a visa for their stay. Essentially your passport is your international ID and your visa is your ticket into the country.

Below are visa guidelines that contain important information regarding your application for a student visa for South Africa. Please read through this carefully, as visas can be complicated.

As a student visa is a foreign government issued document, CISabroad cannot tell you how to answer questions on your application, however we can make recommendations and give tips.

IMPORTANT: CISabroad can only advise students on visa procedures for travel requirements for your CISabroad program. CISabroad is not responsible for advising students on visa issues if you plan to travel internationally before or after the program.

These instructions are intended for US passport holders. International students must also be aware of additional documentation and/or processing time needed for their visas. Please contact your Program Coordinator to discuss your visa.

WHO ISSUES MY STUDENT VISA: *Contact Information*

The South African Mission in the United States will issue your South African Study Permit. This temporary residence permit, which is considered a study visa, allows you to study overseas in South Africa. You will need to apply for this visa in-person at your assigned [South African consulate](#)

TIMELINE : *When you need to take action*

The processing time for the South African Study Visa is 3-4 weeks. To be safe, you should apply for your visa **at least 6 weeks** before departure. It is not required to make an appointment before visiting the consulate, however, you should check your consulate's website to see if making an appointment beforehand is a better option for you.



REQUIRED DOCUMENTS: *What you'll need*

Now that it's time for you to visit your assigned consulate, you will want to use the list below with numbered bullet points (1-18) to discover exactly what you need in order to apply for your visa. Please bring anything on this list, and make a copy of everything (scanned AND paper copy).

Tips:

- ★ This list might seem a bit lengthy, but hang in there! If you have questions, contact your consulate or your Program Coordinator. We will get you the help you might need!
- ★ Any of the forms required are hyperlinked in the appropriate spots.
- ★ PLEASE CHECK YOUR [CONSULATE WEBSITE](#) as the requirements might change from one consulate to the next!

Please bring the following documents with you to the consulate when you apply for your visa:

1. The signed [application form DHA-1738](#)
2. Your passport
 - a. You will need to have at least two blank pages
 - b. Your passport must be valid for 30 days after your return from South Africa
3. Two passport photos with white or light background
4. Proof of itinerary/flight reservation
 - a. The consulate recommends that you do not purchase air tickets until you obtain your visa
5. Notarized copy of your birth certificate
 - a. You are going to make a copy of your birth certificate, and then have that copy notarized by a notary!
6. Notarized copy of the identity page of your passport
 - a. You are going to make a copy of the identity page of your passport, and then have that copy notarized by a notary!
7. Completed [medical report](#) from your primary physician
 - a. This will require you to receive a physical and bringing this form with you for your primary physician to complete
 - b. This physical and form need to be completed within 6 months of submitting your visa application
8. Completed [radiological report](#)
 - a. This requires you to receive a chest x-ray
 - b. This form is not required for pregnant women
 - c. This physical and form need to be completed within 6 months of submitting your visa application
9. You will need a yellow fever vaccination IF you are coming from, or traveling from, one of the countries [on this list](#)
 - a. If you are not, you do not have to worry about this step



10. Original FBI certificate (full criminal background check report) and police clearance certificate from any countries you have lived in for 12 months or longer
 - a. This certificate should not be older than 6 months at the time you apply for your visa application
 - b. The current processing time at the FBI for a background check is 14-16 weeks! As a result, we recommend using an **FBI approved channeler**, such as **NationalBackgroundCheck.com**, which is typically faster.
 - c. The current processing time at National Background Check is approximately 1 week after the application and fingerprints are received (additional fee applies).
11. Medical insurance to cover applicant during stay in South Africa.
 - a. This letter verifies that you are enrolled in international medical and accident insurance by a South African health insurance provider.
 - b. CISabroad will enroll you in South African health insurance following your acceptance onto the program.
 - c. **You will then be responsible for reaching out to the health insurance provider to request your Proof of Coverage document.**
12. Acceptance letter from the university in South Africa
 - a. This will be sent by Stellenbosch University, about 4-6 weeks after receiving your application
 - b. Your Program Coordinator at CISabroad will then send it to you
13. Insurance and Verification of Acceptance Letter from CISabroad
 - a. This letter verifies that you are enrolled in CISI International medical and accident insurance. Please ask your Program Coordinator about this, they will be sending it to you
14. An official letter of provisional enrolment from the institution of learning in the United States.
 - a. This letter is provided by your home university in the United States confirming your enrollment on the program.
15. Proof of financial means
 - a. You need to submit proof that you are financially stable enough to live in South Africa for the duration of your program
 - b. This will need to be submitted in the form of three (3) recent bank statements, stamped by your bank
 - c. You will also need to submit a notarized letter from your parents or your guardian, stating the financial responsibility
16. \$36 non-refundable fee in the form of a money order
17. If applicable: In case of a minor, a notarized letter of consent from the parent is required.
18. If applicable: Certified copies of proof of adoption/legal guardianship/birth certificate where applicable
19. Proof of address/lodging in South Africa from overseas housing

Attention New York Applicants: The South African Consulate General in New York will no longer accept prepaid envelope/labels from FedEx and UPS with immediate effect. **Applicants are welcome to enclose only US Postal Service self-addressed, pre-paid courier envelope for this office to facilitate return services.**

Attention Washington, DC Applicants: With immediate effect, the South African Embassy in Washington, DC will no longer accept a \$16.00 fee to facilitate return services, but will accept a prepaid envelope with a tracking number from either FedEx or US Postal Service.



OCTOBER 1, 2020: *Read ID Requirement for Domestic Travel*

Please note: beginning October 1, 2020, adults traveling by plane within the US will need a REAL ID-compliant driver's license, state-issued enhanced driver's license, or another acceptable form of ID to fly within the United States. Most REAL ID's are marked with a star at the top of the ID card. If you are not sure whether you have a REAL ID, or want to see about obtaining one, please visit the [DHS REAL ID website](#). "

You will need a Real ID in place of your passport:

- If you plan on flying to the consulate to apply for your visa
- If you plan on traveling by plane in the US while your visa is in processing at the consulate

I'VE RECEIVED MY VISA: *What does it look like? Now what?*

The visa will be sent back to you via mail, but you will need to provide a pre-paid envelope when your application is submitted

The visa will actually be inside of your passport, on a blank page, and looks like a full-page sticker.

ALWAYS keep your passport (with visa) and other important travel documentation in your carry-on bag, NOT your checked bag. You want that with you at all times while traveling!

