VISA APPLICATION PROCESS FOR PROSPECTIVE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT USFQ
VISA Information

New guidelines to obtain a visa in Ecuador finally came into effect on Nov. 20th, 2017 published Nov. 28th and will fully come into effect on Dec. 1st, 2017. Accordingly, we are providing two options for incoming students to enter Ecuador lawfully.

Visa Information for Future Incoming Students, starting on Dec. 1st 2017

Option A: Temporary Residence Visa - Student (obtained at Consulate Abroad):

- This visa is mandatory for students that:
  o Will stay more than 180 days in Ecuador
  o Would like to return to Ecuador as a tourist following their study abroad, within the next year.
  o Have already been in Ecuador as a tourist in the last year and have used up days from their 90 days.
  o Have specific cases that may include playing for an Ecuadorean sports team.
- **GAIAS students must get this visa as they will not be able to get an extension in the Galapagos Islands due to its special regime.**
- If you **FAIL** to obtain a visa abroad, bring all physical documentation to Ecuador in order to process the Temporary resident Visa once you arrive (Option B – see below). If this is the case, you will be allowed into Ecuador as a tourist with a 90-day permit stamp in your passport. The 90-day tourist permit will only be given if you haven’t entered Ecuador as a tourist during the previous year period preceding the day of entry.

Reach out to your nearest Ecuadorian consulate and apply for the Temporary Resident Visa for Students (Visa de Residente Temporal – Estudiante). You will need to follow these steps:

a. Apply through the online application portal (more information visit: [http://www.consuladovirtual.gob.ec/](http://www.consuladovirtual.gob.ec/))

b. Fill and submit the application ([http://www.cancilleria.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Formulario-de-solicitud-de-Residencia-Temporal-RT.pdf](http://www.cancilleria.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Formulario-de-solicitud-de-Residencia-Temporal-RT.pdf))

c. Submit the original valid passport and a color copy.

d. Submit an Apostilled Background check – Students whom are citizens of Federal Nations such as United States, Brazil, Mexico, among others, will need to submit both Federal & State background checks.

e. The final step is to get background checks and the apostille **translated** to Spanish and notarized.
1. For US Citizens only:
   1. To obtain a State background check, you should visit your local police department, for more information click [here](#).
   2. The process to obtain an FBI background check is as follows (find more information about this process [here](#)):
      - WE ask your local Consulate if they are willing to take one background check ONLY and/or NO apostille, and /or no spanish translation. They might do so.

      - FBI background check [form](#)
      - Finger print form (FD-258) – see locations [here](#) Once this is submitted, the process can take up to 5-7 business days
      - The cost of the FBI report is **$40.00 USD** (not including shipping – find out more [here](#))
      - Alternatively, this process can be expedited through a private company for approximately $80.00 USD and can be obtained in 2 days
      - The next step is, the documents has to be apostilled and the cost is an additional **$200.00 USD**.
      - The final step is to get background checks and the apostille translated to Spanish and notarized.

2. For French Citizens only: you could find more information on how to apply for the background click [here](#).

3. For Italian Citizens only: you could find more information on how to apply for the background click [here](#).

f. Bank certificate under the student's name with at least $1,500 USD or its equivalent in other currencies of available funds (any of the following is sufficient). This document **cannot be older than 15 days** prior to obtaining your appointment at the consulate:
   - A letter from the bank stating that they are the account holders (not their parents) and that they have at least $1,500.00 USD of funds available
   - A print out of the online bank statement showing their names as the account holders and a minimum balance of $1,500.00 USD
   - A letter from their credit card company stating that they are the account holders and the maximum credit card limit

g. Admittance letter form USFQ (documents provided by USFQ) – let your coordinator know the date you will be applying.
h. A letter from their international health insurance provider stating the student name, coverage period, and benefits. (THE COPY OF THE INSURANCE CARD IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. IT HAS TO BE A LETTER FROM THE INSURANCE COMPANY OR THE HOME UNIVERSITY).
i. Visa application cost: $150.00 USD (not including federal and state background checks or the cost of having the documents apostilled)
j. Please note that each Ecuadorian consulate may ask for additional/different documents; it is extremely important that the students get in touch with their closest Ecuadorian consulate to confirm what documents they will be required to present and to be in touch with us in case they have questions.

**Visa application costs may vary as they are a percentage of the minimum Ecuadorean wage which is adjusted every year.**

Once you submitted your application, please let your program coordinator know which Ecuadorian Consulate you applied from.

**Option B: Temporary Residence Visa – Student** (Obtained at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Quito)

- If Option A fails for any reason, you can still obtain a Temporary Residence Visa – Student at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Quito with USFQ support.
- In order to do so, you MUST bring all the physical documentation required for Option A and make sure that you haven’t been in Ecuador as a tourist for more than 90 days in the 1 year period preceding your date of entry.
- If you qualify for Option B, you will be allowed into Ecuador as a tourist with no need to show a visa at the immigration counter at the airport. The immigration officer will provide you a 90-day permit stamp on your passport and USFQ will have 90 days since your entry to Ecuador to help you obtain a Temporary Residence Visa – Student at the Ministry.
- Additional requirements such as fingerprinting and background check in Ecuador are requested.

**Option C: Tourist extension permit** – (Obtained at the Immigration Office in Quito)

- The tourist extension permit is a type of visa introduced by the most recent Immigration Law that allows students to extend their initial 90-day permit for 90 more days (180 total) within the 1-year period from the date of entry.
- This extension permit is to be obtained at the Immigration Office in Quito and will only apply to students who are sure they won’t stay in Ecuador for more than 180 days total in the 1-year period (If you plan to stay in Ecuador for
more than 180 days in the 1-year period or to come back within the 1-year period, you won’t have any more days as tourist to do so and will have to obtain a different type of visa or wait for the next 1-year period before entering Ecuador as a tourist again).

- In order to qualify for the tourist extension, students must use their initial 90-days first and then apply for the extension at the Immigration Office in Quito with USFQ support.
- The cost of the extension is around $130.00 USD - one third of Ecuadorian minimum wage (which can slightly vary every year).

Please consider the following facts that apply under this Option:

1. The initial 90-day permit is given the date of first entry into Ecuador and marks the start of the 1-year period.
2. The count stops every time you leave Ecuador within the 90-day permit. For example, if you entered Ecuador on January 10th, your 90-day permit will allow you to be in the country until April 10th when you should get the extension. However, if you leave Ecuador for 10 days in February, your 90-day permit will be extended until April 20th.
3. The tourist extension permit can only be issued once it’s been verified that you ran out of your initial 90-day permit. If you apply for a tourist extension at day 90, you will be given the extension for 90 more days. If you apply for the extension at day 100, you will be given the extension for 80 more days (never more than 180 total in the 1-year period).
4. When you are under the tourist extension instead of the initial 90-day permit, the count doesn’t stop every time you leave the country. You will be given a final date and you must leave Ecuador before that date to avoid penalties ($ 800,00 USD and not allowed back in Ecuador within 1 year) or get a different type of visa before the expiration date.

If the student follows this option, USFQ will need to know when students come in and out in order to know when their 90 days will be up. Once their 90 days are over, USFQ will need at least 30 days to process the extension permit. Students should not plan to travel outside of Ecuador or to the Galapagos until the extension is granted (if their initial 90-day permit is over).

NOTE: If you obtain the tourist extension permit you will not be able to enter Ecuador again as a Tourist within the 1-year period from the date of entry. For example, if you entered on January 1st, 2018 and obtained the permit in April 2018, you will not be able to enter as a tourist until January 2nd, 2019.
The process is really simple and students will need to present the following documents:

a. Extension permit form
b. Original Passport and a color copy - THE PASSPORT HAS TO BE SIGNED BY STUDENTS.
c. Extension Permit fee: $128.67USD (this may change in time, as the fee is equal to 1/3 of the minimum salary in Ecuador which is adjusted to inflation each year).
d. A letter from their international health insurance provider stating their name, coverage period, and benefits. (THE COPY OF THE INSURANCE CARD IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. IT HAS TO BE A LETTER. IT CAN BE FROM THEIR HOST UNIVERSITIES).

Once again, USFQ recommends that students secure their visas in advance (Option A or Option B) as the Immigration Office can only process a certain amount of extensions each day.

TIPS FOR STUDENTS

1. If you are coming to the Galapagos Semester Program or if you are planning to stay in Ecuador for more than 180 days, you need to get a Temporary Resident Visa. Remember that if you didn’t get the visa in your home country you need to bring all the physical documentation with you to Ecuador. Read carefully the VISA APPLICATION PROCESS FOR PROSPECTIVE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT USFQ Options A and B.

2. If you are not planning to stay more than 180 you could get the Tourist Extension Permit. This permit can be obtained at the Immigration Office in Quito. Please note that if you get this permit you can only be in Ecuador for 180 days in a one-year period from the date of entry. This means that you will be able to enter Ecuador as a tourist. An important fact is that if you travel outside of Ecuador within the first 90 days the count of days will stop. The count will not stop after the first 90 days are over. For more details, read the VISA APPLICATION PROCESS FOR PROSPECTIVE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT USFQ Option C.

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