

Applying for a Driver’s License or Identification Card

International Students will need to obtain a California Driver’s License if they intend to drive in the United States. A California Driver’s License will most likely be required to purchase a car and obtain auto insurance.

The [California Department of Motor Vehicles \(DMV\)](#) website outlines the process of obtaining a California Driver’s License. The steps include a written and driving skills test administered by the DMV.

The [California Driver’s Handbook](#) is the best resource to help you prepare for these tests. [Samples of written tests](#) are also available online.

DMV Application Process

Take the following documents to the DMV when applying:

1. Valid passport
2. I-94 Arrival/ Departure record. Please wait at least 10 days after arriving in the United States to apply for a driver's license so that your [Form I-94, “Arrival/Departure Record,”](#) information can update in all the government systems.
3. I-20. Ensure that you check with your DSO that your SEVIS record is registered and in “Active” status.
4. Two residency documents (lease, utility bill, etc.)

Additional Guidance for Current Students:

- Students must be enrolled full-time and pay the SEVIS fee to apply for a driver’s license. If not, there will be significant problems and delays with your application.
- The DMV requires that you present the originals of all immigration documents: passport, printout of your I-94 Arrival/Departure record and I-20 . Your passport or I-20 expire less than 60 days from the date of application. If these documents expire in less than 60 days, you cannot apply. Be sure to bring your driver’s license from your home country to present to the officer at the DMV as it may exempt you from the driving test.
- Fill-out and complete an application form at the DMV.
- If you do not have a Social Security Number (SSN) and are not in the process of applying for one, mark on the DMV application that you are not eligible for an SSN. You are only

eligible for a SSN if you have a job offer for authorized paid on-campus or off-campus employment.

- You must wait at least 30 days before calling the DMV office to inquire about your application.
- Most licenses will be issued within two weeks of the appointment. They cannot assist you before the 30-day window ends