DISTRICf OFFICE
333 East 8th Street
Oakland, CA 94606
Weekdays
8:30 AM* – 4:45 PM
*open at 11 AM on Wednesdays and Fridays

BERKELEY OFFICE
2000 Center Street
1st Floor, Suite 100
Berkeley, CA 94704
Mondays & Thursdays
8:30 AM – 4:45PM

ALAMEDA OFFICE
555 Ralph Appezzato Parkway
Student Center F-109
Alameda, CA 94501
Tuesdays
To Be Announced

(510) 466-7380
(510) 981-5020

GLOBALED@PERALTA.EDU

@GLOBALED@PERALTA.EDU

WEB.PERALTA.EDU/INTERNATIONAL
WEB.PERALTA.EDU/INTERNATIONAL/THP.PERALTA-COLLEGES/HOURS-OF-OPERATION
Dear Students:

Welcome to the Peralta Community College District (PCCD), which consists of four community colleges -- Berkeley City College, College of Alameda, Laney College and Merritt College.

We are very excited for you and feel honored that you have chosen to further your academic goals at our colleges. The goal of our international office is to provide you with quality services, clear information and be a key resource for you so that you can focus on your education and be successful. At your Peralta College you may find that there are many amazing opportunities available and we hope to help you access these in whatever way we can. You may decide to take classes at any (and all of our colleges). All classes will appear on one transcript. Here is a little more about each of the Peralta Colleges:

**BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE**

Just minutes from U.C. Berkeley in downtown Berkeley, Berkeley City Community College offers its students the excitement of a thriving college community. Berkeley City College has a variety of academic programs including: Biotechnology, Multimedia, American Sign Language and Women's Studies.

**COLLEGE OF ALAMEDA**

College of Alameda is California's only community college located on an island. With its beautiful park-like campus, College of Alameda is an ideal location to study various high-quality programs, including Aviation Maintenance Technology, Apparel Design, Dental Assisting and Computer Information Systems.

**LANEY COLLEGE**

The largest of the Peralta Colleges, Laney College is located in downtown Oakland near beautiful Lake Merritt and Chinatown. Laney College offers Associate degrees and certificate programs in more than thirty vocational, liberal arts and science fields, ranging from Architectural Engineering to Business Administration.

**MERRITT COLLEGE**

Located in the scenic hills of Oakland, Merritt College provides a panoramic view of the San Francisco Bay Area. The campus offers a beautiful and tranquil learning environment where students may pursue studies in many areas, including Administration of Justice, Nursing and Landscape Horticulture.

The Peralta Colleges’ student population mirrors the ethnic diversity of the San Francisco Bay Area. Students come from all over the world and bring with them diverse cultural backgrounds, worldviews, learning and sharing their dreams and aspirations. We are looking forward to seeing your contribution as well.

You have made an important decision in your life to study with us. If you need assistance, please contact the Office of International Education and we’d be happy to help you. I wish you a successful and rewarding stay at the Peralta Colleges.

Welcome to California, the Bay Area and the Peralta Colleges!

Sincerely,

**THOMAS TORRES-GIL, PDSO, MA**

INTERIM DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This handbook has been designed to serve as a reference tool to assist you and provide information on a variety of subjects, including immigration-related issues, academic topics and personal matters such as adjustment, social customs, basic needs and other subjects relevant to international students.

We hope this information will prove to be useful to you and help you in your transition as a new student at the Peralta Colleges.

Publication of this handbook was made possible through information provided by various organizations including the San Francisco/Oakland/Berkeley Visitors and Convention Bureaus and NAFSA: Association of International Educators. We would also like to thank the various staff members and student assistants in our office for all of their hard work in developing the handbook.

We have tried to ensure that the information contained in the handbook is accurate and up-to-date. However, prices, telephone numbers and addresses may have changed since the publication of the handbook.

“Let your dreams be your inspiration! Work hard, play hard, dream hard, and you can make your dreams come true.”
The Office of International Education exists to meet the needs of the Peralta College’s international student population. Student support services provided by our office include:

- Providing international (F-1) student admissions and orientation
- Assisting with immigration and visa issues, including visa extensions, employment, practical training and travel
- Advising and counseling on academic and personal matters
- Acting as liaison to United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE) and United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) [formerly known as Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)]
- Assisting students with practical matters such as health insurance, housing and obtaining a social security card and Driver's License
- Assisting with adjustment to U.S. culture and coordinating social activities and trips

The office has a multi-lingual staff with language fluency in Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, Arabic, and more!

### STAFF MEMBERS

- **Thomas Torres-Gil**
  - PDSO
  - Interim Director of International Education

- **Drew Gephart**
  - DSO
  - International Services Manager

- **Matthew Jones**
  - DSO
  - International Program Manager

- **Kemisha James**
  - DSO
  - International Program Manager

- **Nha Le**
  - DSO
  - International Admissions Specialist

- **Karla David**
  - DSO
  - International Admissions Specialist

- **Mangling Cho**
  - DSO
  - International Program Specialist

- **Harin Yoon**
  - International Staff Assistant

- **Todd Shima**
  - Academic Counselor

- **Angela Khoo**
  - Academic Counselor

and our team of Peer Advisors!
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SECTION 1

IMMIGRATION & STATUS MATTERS
### Important Documents

**Passport**

Your passport must be valid at all times during your stay in the U.S. The expiration date should always be valid at least 6 months into the future (for example, if your passport expires in December, it should be extended by June of the same year).

To extend your passport, please contact your country’s consulate or embassy in the United States, or come to the Office of International Education.

**Visa**

Your visa is the sticker-like stamp entered on a page of your passport at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your home country. The visa is only necessary to ENTER the United States. The date on the visa shows the latest date you can enter the United States, NOT how long you can stay here.

If it is expired or if you change your visa status while in the United States, you must reapply for a new visa only if you plan to leave the United States and re-enter. **It is not necessary to extend your visa if you are not planning to take a trip outside the United States.**

**I-94**

The I-94 Card, also known as the Arrival/Departure Record, is available online at [WWW.CBP.GOV/I94](http://WWW.CBP.GOV/I94).

For international students, Duration of Status (D/S) is the notation on the I-94. This means that you can legally remain in the United States until you finish your degree program as indicated on your I-20.

**I-20**

The SEVIS I-20 is the document that you received from the Peralta Community College District Office of International Education. It is used to apply for an F-1 visa at a U.S. Consulate or Embassy abroad or to transfer from a previous school or college in the U.S.

This form (or a copy) should be kept with you at all times and NOT given up when you leave the United States as it will be needed to re-enter the United States after a temporary absence.
PASSPORT & VISA

Traveling soon and need to know the difference between a passport and a visa? Before traveling, be sure you know the differences between a passport and a visa because you may need both.

PASSPORT

A passport is issued to a country’s citizens for international travel and identification. It is used to verify one’s country of citizenship. If traveling outside your country, it is used to regain entry into your country of citizenship.

> A passport includes a photo of you, your name, birthdate, gender, and physical characteristics.
> For U.S. citizens, some countries only require a passport for re-entry. Other countries may require a visa before entry. You should confirm if a country-specific visa is required before traveling.
> Diplomats and government officials are granted different passports than what’s given to regular travelers.

VISA

> A visa is an endorsement placed on a passport granting the holder official permission to enter, leave or stay in a country for a specified time period.
> The most common visa types are tourist, student, work and transit visas.
> Depending on where you are traveling, a visa can be valid for single or multiple visits.
> Some visas require an application to be filed prior to entering the country and other visas are granted upon entering the country.
> Certain countries require an interview or medical screening prior to applying for a visa.
**FORM I-94 & I-20**

When international students travel to the United States, they receive a Form I-94, “Arrival/Departure Record,” at their port of entry. International students who enter the country at an air or sea port are issued an electronic form, while those who enter the country at a land port are issued a paper Form I-94.

To obtain your Form I-94 record, go to CBP’s Form I-94 Web page and agree to the terms listed on the page. You will be directed to the Form I-94 information page. Enter your name, date of birth and passport information to retrieve your Form I-94. The Web page gives you the option to “Get Most Recent I-94” or “Get Travel History.”

More information:
[STUDYIN THE STATES.DHS.GOV/2014/05/HOW-TO-ACCESS-YOUR-FORM-I-94-ONLINE](STUDYIN THE STATES.DHS.GOV/2014/05/HOW-TO-ACCESS-YOUR-FORM-I-94-ONLINE)

---

**FORM I-20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEVIS ID: N0012345678</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEVNAME/PRIMARY NAME</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARKER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREFERRED NAME</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Benjamin PARKER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DATE OF BIRTH</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 MAY 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FORM ISSUE REASON</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTINUED ATTENDANCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **SCHOOL NAME** |
| Peralta Community College District Berkeley City College |
| **SCHOOL ADDRESS** |
| Peralta Community College District, International Education, 333 East 8th Street, Oakland, CA 94606 |

| **PROGRAM OF STUDY** |
| **EDUCATION LEVEL** |
| ASSOCIATE |
| **PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY** |
| Required |
| **START OF CLASSES** |
| 22 January 2018 |

| **MAJOR 1** |
| Digital Arts 50.0102 |
| **ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES** |
| Student is proficient |
| **START OF PROGRAM** |
| 12 January 2018 |
| **END OF PROGRAM** |
| 31 July 2020 |

| **MAJOR 2** |
| None 00.0000 |
| **PROGRAM START/END DATE** |
| 13 December 2017 |
MAINTAINING INTERNATIONAL (F-1) STATUS

It is very important that you maintain your F-1 international student status or you will be considered to be out of status. “Out of status” means that you have not followed the rules for being an international (F-1) student. Falling out of status is a very serious issue: If you fall out of status, you will need to apply for reinstatement and may be required to leave the U.S.

You must do the following in order to maintain your international (F-1) student status:

- Please note content may change with US law.

ENROLL & REMAIN IN AT LEAST 12 UNITS

In order to maintain your full-time student status, you must enroll in at least 12 units by the last day to add classes and complete all 12 units each semester.

Classes do not count toward your full-time student status if you enroll in classes and drop/withdraw from them later in the semester. However, F's, CREDIT and NO CREDIT grades do count toward your 12-unit minimum.

- You do not need to take summer classes unless the summer is your first term.
- You may enroll in no more than one online class (or 3 units).
- You may enroll in as many hybrid classes as you want since those are considered as in-person classes.
- You may enroll in more than 12 units to complete your program sooner.

In addition, you must also maintain a grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.0.

Note • AUTHORIZATION FOR REDUCED COURSELOAD

This petition is subject to approval

Students may only be authorized to enroll in fewer than 12 units, but no less than 6 units for the following reasons in accordance with immigration law:

1. unfamiliarity with American teaching methods.*
2. improper course level placement.*
3. initial difficulty with reading requirements.*
4. initial difficulty with the English language.*
5. to complete course of study in current term.
6. Illness or medical condition (below 6 units may be approved).

* A petition for academic reasons may only be approved once per academic level (reasons 1-4) per USCIS rules.

If you believe that you are eligible for a reduced course load based on one of these reasons, you must complete a Petition for Exemption of FullTime International Student Enrollment ("Under 12" Request) form with an International Student Counselor at the Office of International Education before the end of the semester.
**KEEP OUR OFFICE INFORMED OF CHANGES TO YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION**

You may **change of your home address** (as well as **phone number** or **email address**) in your Student Center. Please do this within 10 days of moving or updating this.

You must also report any changes in your **major** or **intention to transfer** to a Peralta College other than the one listed on your I-20 to the Office of International Education.

**MAKE ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

You must show you are willing to **make academic progress by building a Student Education Plan (SEP)** which outlines the specific courses you should enroll in each semester in order to meet your educational goal. Your goal may to complete an AA/AS program or transfer (AA-T or AS-T) to a university (or both). An SEP details exactly what you need to do.

More information: [WEB.PERALTA.EDU/INTERNATIONAL/849-2/COUNSELING/STUDENT-EDUCATION-PLAN-SEP](WEB.PERALTA.EDU/INTERNATIONAL/849-2/COUNSELING/STUDENT-EDUCATION-PLAN-SEP)

**REPORT INTENTION TO TRANSFER OR LEAVE THE U.S.**

You must submit a completed **Departure/Transfer Out form** to the Office of International Education before the end of your last semester at your college.

This form is required so that we can transfer you to another school or terminate your SEVIS record in the correct manner if you have completed your studies in the U.S.
TRAVELING OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES

Whenever you plan to leave the U.S. temporarily and return to continue your studies at the Peralta Community College District, you must first obtain the necessary documents to permit your entry into another country as well as to permit your re-entry into the U.S.

You must have a Designated School Official (DSO) at the Office of International Education validate your status by signing the second page of your SEVIS I-20.

You must carry your endorsed I-20 with you when you travel outside the United States if you plan to return. Otherwise, you may not be allowed to re-enter the United States.

Bring your I-20 to our office at least three weeks before you plan to travel.

You are encouraged to register and pay for classes for the next semester, in which case you should take the receipt and printout of your class schedule with you when you travel as proof that you are still in school.

**HAVE YOUR I-20 SIGNED BEFORE TRAVELING**

You must have the second page of your SEVIS I-20 signed by a DSO* before you travel outside of the United States.

Please bring your I-20 to the Office of International Education several weeks before you travel. This page needs to be signed when entering the same school.

* DSO’s work in the International Education Office and can sign your I-20 for travel

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department of Homeland Security</th>
<th>1-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement</td>
<td>OMB NO. 1653-0038</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>SEVIS ID: N0012345678 (F-1)</th>
<th>NAME: Peter Benjamin PARKER</th>
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<tr>
<th>EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS</th>
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<tr>
<th>CHANGE OF STATUS/CAP-GAP EXTENSION</th>
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<tr>
<th>AUTHORIZED REDUCED COURSE LOAD</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>CURRENT SESSION DATES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CURRENT SESSION START DATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 JANUARY 2018</td>
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<tr>
<th>TRAVEL ENDORSEMENT</th>
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This page, when properly endorsed, may be used for re-entry of the student to attend the same school after a temporary absence from the United States. Each endorsement is valid for one year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designated School Official</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>SIGNATURE</th>
<th>DATE ISSUED</th>
<th>PLACE ISSUED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kate Kane</td>
<td>DSO</td>
<td></td>
<td>05/31/2018</td>
<td>Berkeley, CA</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**I-20 IS EXPIRING**

You must make sure that your SEVIS I-20 does not “expire”.

Section 5 on your I-20 indicates both your start date and end date, which is the date by which you must complete your studies.

If you need additional time to complete your studies or before you can transfer to another school, you must make an appointment with an International Student Counselor at least one month before your I-20 expires in order to complete a program extension.

If you allow your I-20 to expire, you will be out of status.

Contact a Designated School Official (DSO*) at the Office of International Education.

Please note content may change with US law.

**POST-COMPLETION OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)**

Want to work for 12 months full-time and gain experience (and get paid!!)? Post-Completion OPT is for students who complete an AA/AS or CA/CP. In your last semester, petition to graduate and contact the office to apply for Post-Completion OPT.

**TRANSFERRING SCHOOLS OR RETURNING HOME**

Come to our office and complete the Departure/Transfer Out Process. Students transferring to a different school must bring an acceptance letter to the new school.
ON-CAMPUS

International (F-1) students may accept “on-campus” employment at any of the four Peralta Colleges without prior approval from Citizenship and Immigration Services if I-20 specifies other than Language Training. However, you are not permitted to accept employment off-campus without prior authorization.

On campus employment is limited to 20 hours per week when school is in session (full-time during the summer, winter and spring vacation periods).

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) & OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

CPT
> Must enroll in a class that requires working off-site (must be on SEP)
> Student may work only 20 hours per week
> Student must report employment to their DSO
> Student must maintain F-1 status and go towards a degree

PRE-COMPLETION OPT
> Can be requested for no more than 1 year
> If approved, student may work only 20 hours per week
> Student must report employment to their DSO
> Student must maintain F-1 status and go towards a degree

POST-COMPLETION OPT
> Can be requested for no more than 1 year
> If approved, student must work more than 20 hours per week
> Student must report employment to their DSO
> Student must submit petition to graduate

ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

If other employment opportunities are not available (on-campus employment), eligible F-1 students may apply for off-campus work authorization caused by unforeseen and severe circumstances beyond the students’ control.

You may apply for off-campus work authorization if you:
- are in good status,
- demonstrate financial hardship
- have supporting documentation
- have attended at least a Spring and Fall semesters at Peralta Colleges

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

Social Security is a retirement and medical benefits program administered by the United States Government. The SSA is taking steps to make it harder for someone to get or use Social Security Numbers due to problems related to identity fraud. Effective March 1, 2002, the SSA no longer assigns numbers for issuance of a driver license.

Social Security numbers are now assigned for work purposes only. If you believe you are eligible to apply for a social security card, contact the Office of International and Global Education.
Prospective and current F or M students can use information on this page to learn about the process and rules for studying in the United States as an international student:

- Studying in the U.S.
- Maintaining F-1 status
- Paying the I-901 SEVIS fee
- Preparing arrival in the U.S.
- Knowing about the student benefits

This web site is full of great information, including links to U.S. consulate and embassy web sites, visa services information, instructions and forms, and travel warnings/consular info sheets.

An official source of information about U.S. visa policy and procedures.

Foreign Consulates and Embassies in U.S.:

An official source of information about U.S. visa policy and procedures.

Schedule your Appointment with INFOPASS | +1 (800) 375-5283

InfoPass is an Internet-based system that allows you to make an appointment to see an Immigration Information Officer. If you have a complex immigration issue that is best handled in person by a trained information officer, InfoPass is for you.

Student & Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP):

Student & Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) | WWW.ICE.GOV/SEVIS/INDEX.HTM

USCIS Case Status Online:

USCIS Case Status Online | EGOV.USCIS.GOV/CRIS/JSPS/INDEX.JSP