GUIDE FOR NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:
IMMIGRATION, TRAVEL, CROSS-CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

SPRING 2018
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QUICK CHECKLIST

- Understand different visa options and know what you need to enter Turkey legally
- Have a current passport that is valid at least 2 months longer than your intended study period
- Enter Turkey with a passport since it will be required for Residence application
- Check your residence permit documents, complete any missing items before your trip, ask questions when you are not certain
- Make a record of the expiration date of your residence permit when you have it; DO NOT OVERSTAY
- Speak with an ICO advisor before traveling abroad
- Know what you need to do before returning home, consult with an ICO advisor when you have any doubts
- Submit a copy of your health insurance policy (English) to your program advisor upon your arrival or when you have it
- Decide if you need a Tax ID and obtain one if necessary
- Submit your public transit pass (Istanbul Kart) application on time if you want ICO to get one for you
- Sign Up for KOLT Conversation Circles if you are a native English speaker and would like to become a paid tutor
- Sign Up for KOLT Conversation Circles to become a paid tutor for Arabic, French, Italian, Spanish, German or any other language you may propose to teach
- Sign Up for free KOLT Conversation Circles to learn and practice Turkish
- Sign Up for Local Friends Program to have a true local experience and intercultural exchange
- Join International Student Club and meet other international students, get involved
- Sign Up for Host Family Program to meet a Turkish family and engage with them in various ways
Welcome to KU

Dear Students,

Congratulations on being admitted to Koç University (KU). We are looking forward to meeting you in Istanbul soon!

As the International Community Office of KU, we advise incoming students & scholars on immigration, health and safety, cultural adjustment, and refer them to appropriate resources while they are transitioning to a new place.

We are part of the Office of International Programs (OIP), and work closely with your specific program advisors to supplement their efforts in designing an exquisite learning experience for you. Our contact information, advising hours and more can be found on our website.

This document is prepared for you to refer to as a go-to resource for student visas, traveling while in Turkey, residence in Turkey and to familiarize you with intercultural opportunities that are available for you, so you can plan ahead on how to get involved in the new community you will be joining.

Please contact us if you have any questions about any information contained herein. We are here to help and we hope you have a pleasant experience at KU.

Sincerely,
International Community Office Team
S T U D E N T  V I S A

Depending on nationality and bi-national agreements there is more than one visa or entry option available for exchange/international students. These are traditional consular visa, e-visa, passport, national ID, airport visa entries. Once you have a clear understanding of how you will enter Turkey and what is most convenient for you, you will be able to make your choice.

See below for a step by step guide for deciding how you will proceed:

STEP 1 Visit http://www.mfa.gov.tr/visa-information-for-foreigners.en.mfa. This is the official website of Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Find your country in the A-Z list for visa information.

STEP 2 Understand the visa/passport terminology. As such, ORDINARY refers to TOURISTIC; OFFICIAL refers to SERVICE or DIPLOMATIC. If a visa is necessary, students MUST look at rules associated with ORDINARY (regular) passport unless they hold diplomatic passports.

STEP 3 Depending on the situations given below, we have written the corresponding action you must take. Please go to your country of citizenship in the list and follow these actions:
**IF THE VISA RULE READS** “Ordinary and official passport holders are exempted from visa for their travels up to 90 days.” ➔ ENTER TURKEY WITH YOUR VALID PASSPORT. NO VISA REQUIRED.

**IF THE VISA RULE READS** “Ordinary, Special and Service passport holders are required to have visa to enter Turkey. These passport holders with a valid Schengen members or USA, UK, Ireland visa or residence permit may get their single entry e-Visas valid for one month e-Visas via the website www.evisa.gov.tr, provided that they meet certain conditions.” ➔ UNLESS YOU MEET THE REQUIREMENT MENTIONED IN THE 2ND SENTENCE, VISIT www.visa.gov.tr and MAKE YOUR VISA APPLICATION APPOINTMENT AND GO TO THE NEAREST CONSULATE FOR AN IN-PERSON VISA INTERVIEW TO OBTAIN YOUR VISA FOR TURKEY.

**IF THE VISA RULE READS** “Ordinary passport holders are required to have visa to enter Turkey. They can obtain three month multiple entry e-Visas via the website www.evisa.gov.tr.” ➔ VISIT www.evisa.gov.tr and OBTAIN YOUR TOURISTIC VISA, PAY ONLINE, PRINT IT AND TRAVEL TO TURKEY. (STUDENTS CAN ALSO PURCHASE A TOURISTIC VISA UPON ARRIVAL TO TURKEY AT AIRPORTS WHENEVER E-VISA OPTION IS AVAILABLE FOR THEM. HOWEVER, BUYING THE VISA ONLINE WILL COST LESS.)

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**Important Notes**

- Even though the visa website mentioned above states “Please note that e-visa is only valid when the purpose of travel is tourism or commerce. For other purposes, such as work and study, visas are given by Turkish Embassies or Consulates” international students admitted to a higher education program are officially eligible for touristic visa or passport entry if either of these options are available for their country.

- STUDENTS ARE RECOMMENDED TO TRAVEL TO TURKEY WITH A TOURISTIC e-VISA or VISA EXEMPT VALID PASSPORT if these options are available to them. Student Visa obtained at a consulate is NOT RECOMMENDED unless there is no other option available for a student. A student visa is a single entry visa, therefore restricts traveling until a student has a residence permit in Turkey. Most touristic visas are valid for 90 days and allow for multiple entries.

- Since each incoming international student is required to apply for residence permit in Turkey, they must travel with a VALID PASSPORT. Immigration Authorities do not accept any other travel document for residence permit application.

- Passports must be valid at least 60 days longer than the duration of the study period. The longer, the better.

- Students with Turkish citizenship or holding a Blue Card are not required to seek visa or residence permit to Turkey. Entry with a valid passport is recommended, yet valid Turkish ID’s are also accepted. Students with dual citizenships are advised to carry both passports they possess.

For more information about passport and visa rules, visit [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/visa-information-for-foreigners.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/visa-information-for-foreigners.en.mfa) and you can email ico@ku.edu.tr for your questions. We have answers for all your visa/immigration related questions, you do not need to seek this information elsewhere and any other information you might rely on might be misleading.
RESIDENCE PERMIT

WHAT IS IT? Student Residence Permit is an official document in the form of an ID card that each international student must acquire if he/she is going to study in Turkey for more than 3 months or beyond their visa expiration dates. A student who fails to apply for and acquire a residence permit will have violated the Foreigners’ Protection Laws and will be subject to penalties.

WHAT IS IT FOR? When a student has a residence permit he/she can stay in Turkey legally and travel internationally for multiple times without a visa. Having a residence permit allows a student to open a bank account, register him/herself with the social security office, perform several processes online on Turkish e-government platform, register their mobile phones from overseas, apply for a driver’s license and more.

APPLICATION Applications for Turkish residence permits consist of two parts: Online Appointment via https://e-ikamet.goc.gov.tr/ and Interview in person. However, since universities in Istanbul are authorized to organize all applications and documents for students and submit them on their behalf, you will not need to go to an interview, but prepare the required documents and submit them in your first week (we will provide further guidelines for this).
For making the online appointment you DO NOT need to take any action for now. We will contact you again with further instructions and information about this later. This process will take place after your arrival to KU and we will guide you along the way.

**DOCUMENTS**

- Passport photocopy (ID page that includes your photo, birth year etc., page that includes your last entry stamp)
- Visa Photocopy (if you entered with a visa; e-visa photocopy or sticker visa photocopy on your passport)
- 5 BIOMETRIC PHOTOS: Full face, front view with a plain white background; taken within last 6 months
- Attestation Documents to be signed after arrival. (We will provide these documents)
- Student Enrolment Certificate in Turkish. (We will provide this document)

**FEES** Students only pay the card fee which is currently 63TL. New fees for 2018 will be released in January 2018 and will be around 65TL. We will share the exact fees before your arrival.

**RESIDENCE PERMIT EXPIRATION** Each residence permit has an issuance and expiry date written on its back. It is very important to note the expiration date of a residence permit from the moment you have your card and remind it to yourself. Late renewals or overstaying in Turkey are subject to penalties.

**10 DAY EXTRA TIME TO LEAVE TURKEY WITHOUT PENALTIES** The extra time allowed for foreigners to leave Turkey after the expiration date is 10 days. However, we advise students to make plans to leave Turkey before the expiration date of their residence permits.
TRAVELING WHILE STUDYING IN TURKEY

Domestic Traveling There is no restriction on domestic traveling within Turkey. You can travel anywhere with your university ID and passport or any form of official picture ID.

International Traveling However, there are certain things you need to be aware of before taking any trip outside Turkey. Learn more about traveling outside Turkey on our website. We also strongly encourage each student to check with us before traveling abroad especially without a residence permit.
International students are required to have a health insurance that is valid in Turkey and covering the complete duration of a certain academic program. Each student must share a copy of the insurance policy in English or Turkish (if obtained in Turkey) to their program advisor upon arrival to campus. Students who fail to do so will be deregistered from their program as health insurance is not only for your own safety and it is a legal obligation for foreign residents in Turkey.

**ACCEPTED HEALTH INSURANCE OPTIONS**

- **International Health Insurance valid in Turkey** Any insurance from anywhere that offers coverage for you in Turkey.

- **Private Student Health Insurance in Turkey** If you do not arrive Turkey with an insurance you can use this option and purchase an insurance by emailing travel.tr@gulfsigorta.com.tr. They offer service in English and they can arrange for your insurance fairly quickly without a Tax ID (most companies need a tax ID). Please note, we do not provide assistance or assume any responsibility with health insurance. You must contact the agencies, follow through all transactions, and make sure you understand your policy coverage very well.

- **Home Country Social Security (based on eligibility)** If you are coming from a European country and your country might have a Social Security agreement with Turkey, you can use this option. More information about this option and other options is available on https://oip.ku.edu.tr/?q=health-insurance
Anyone with a valid passport can obtain a Tax ID at any official tax office in Turkey. A Tax ID number might be necessary for certain situations until you have a residence permit. Namely, opening a bank account, obtaining a health insurance, receiving your scholarship money (if any), etc.

**NEED A TAX ID?** If you would like to obtain a Tax ID, you can use our [DIRECTIONS GUIDE DOCUMENT](#) which includes location and transportation information along with a message to the tax office personnel in Turkish to ease your communication.
WHAT IS ISTANBUL CARD? Istanbul Card is Istanbul’s one-for-all (entire transit system; subways, metrobus, bus, ferries, streetcars) chipped card in the shape of a plastic ID. It is a refill card and refill is available through automated multi lingual machines or authorized kiosks around the city. There’s one refill machine on campus right outside of Yapi Kredi Bank.

HOW CAN I HAVE ONE? You can ordinarily apply online or buy at sales points in the city yourself. However, for new international students, every semester we open up a shared google sheet to collect your information for card application and make your card ready before your arrival. If you would like us to arrange for your student transit pass before your arrival, fill out the shared excel sheet via this link and email your picture to ico@ku.edu.tr by December 31st 2017. Please read the instructions below before filling out the google sheet.

Card Fee
The card fee of 10 TL will be collected during orientation.

APPLY FOR STUDENT TRANSIT PASS

ABOUT THE APPLICATION DEADLINE As noted above, the shared form will be closed on the last day of 2017, and late application requests will not be honored.
Important Note about filling out the Istanbul Card sheet. While filling out the excel sheet you must pay attention to the instructions given in column headings. Please do not change/delete any information other than yours. Please remember, when you generate your ID number (TC KIMLIK NO) with your passport number, the new number must also be the name of your headshot picture that you will send as an email attachment.

The ID Number must be 11 digits for each entry. This ID number will be created with your passport number without letters and adding as many 0’s (zero) as needed. All 0’s must go in front of numbers. **Example:** Your passport number is AAW1234. So, your ID number for application will be: 00000001234

**EMAILING THE RIGHT PICTURE** For your student transit pass, we will need your electronic pictures in a separate email to ico@ku.edu.tr by the same deadline. The picture can be same as the picture you sent to KU for your exchange semester enrollment or another headshot that was recently taken. The name of the attachment must match the ID number you just generated for the form. Both numbers must be identical.

**LOSS AND REPLACEMENT OF A STUDENT ISTANBUL KART** If you lose your card for some reason you can do a replacement. Replacement denotes cancelling/blocking the lost card, obtaining your YOKSIS id number from the registrar’s (higher education system number for you) and visiting an Istanbul Card branch to get your new card. So, here is what you will have to do when you need a replacement: Notify your mentor >> use his/her help to call 153 to cancel/block your card so no one else can use it and any balance it might have. While doing this you need to use the number you generated with your passport number, so save that number just in case >> visit the registrar’s at KU and request your YOKSIS number. They will assist you >> Visit an application branch for replacement. Closest ones are Gayrettepe or Taksim metro station. A full list of branches and their hours of operations is available here. If you had money balance in your card, balance transfer is only available at Karakoy or Kadikoy Application Centers (your mentor will assist you throughout the process) >> Pay 10 tl replacement fee and submit 1 picture.

**FURTHER HELP IF YOU ARE ALONE** If you go for replacement alone, here is what you need to tell or show in Turkish to the staff at replacement branch:

> "Burada ogrenciyim. Ogrenci Akbilim'i kaybettim. Yenisini cikarmak istiyorum. Yardiminizi rica edecektim."

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"INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OFFICE"

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Please pay attention to the following items before leaving Turkey after your program ends:

- Make sure your passport is valid
- Make sure your residence permit or grace period of 10 days are not expired
- Do not seek advice from a friend, ask ICO if you are unsure
- Check your library loans and return all checked out items
- Complete any outstanding paperwork concerning the university, like with Registrar’s Office
- Make sure you have copies of necessary paperwork and academic transcripts, as well as reference letters if you asked for them.
- Update your mailing address and contact details with the University before you depart.
- Make arrangements for travelling to the airport. You can use the directions here to help.
- Inform people at home of your departure and arrival details.
- Close bank account(s) shortly before your departure.
Check for any outstanding fees you need to pay.
Finalise any medical insurance claims.
Follow check-out procedures when you are ready to leave your dormitory.
If you live in off-campus accommodations, give notice to your landlord in advance, finalise any payments, close your utilities accounts and pay any outstanding fees, get your deposit refund, and return your keys.
Close any other accounts, like telephones.
Organize your belongings and decide what you will take and what you won’t. Donate or sell what you won’t be taking with you. Some student clubs will accept donations.
If you have excess baggage, you can explore shipping options. There is the Turkish Postal Service (PTT) as well as several private companies. Check prices with airline fees and decide what is best for you.
Don’t forget any of your belongings when leaving the dormitories, including anything you might have placed in storage.
Make sure you say goodbye and exchange contact information with people before you leave.

KOLT CONVERSATION CIRCLES KU Office of Learning & Teaching offers a unique opportunity for local and international students to practice languages in circles led by native speaker moderators. You can become a moderator or practice one of the languages available in circles. One of the best aspects of this program is it is free for participants, it is engaging and fun and Turkish is one of the languages you can practice. If you become a moderator you are paid. To sign up as a moderator or participant and learn more about conversation circles e-mail kolt@ku.edu.tr or visit KOLT Circles’ website.

LOCAL FRIENDS PROGRAM Local Friends Program is a peer to peer cultural learning program run by International Office. Applications are open year round and online. One international student is matched with one local student and they mutually agree to meet regularly as “new friends” and do “local things” while practicing spoken Turkish. Sometimes partners may practice other languages as well but the goal of the program is to introduce international students to the local language and world outside the campus. It is a very popular program and both partners learn a lot from their experience. If you would like to participate you
can simply submit this online form and wait to be matched with the appropriate partner. For more information about the program, rules, and for any questions you can contact Mr. Mert Sanivar at msanivar@ku.edu.tr

**TURKISH HOST FAMILY PROGRAM** Would you like to share your culture with a Turkish family and give yourself an opportunity to experience Turkish culture and Turkish language? There are wide varieties of opportunities from visiting a Turkish family for a family meal, to staying with them during a semester or academic year. A few opportunities include:

- Visiting a Turkish family for an evening, a few days or a week
- Staying with them for a semester
- Having dinner with a Turkish family
- Visiting a Turkish family to teach a foreign language (or your own language) to their children or family members
- Meeting them out for dinner
- Meeting a Turkish family regularly to learn Turkish and possibly give them help in their academic work, office work or language exchange in return on a volunteer basis
- Doing some odd jobs with small compensations such as babysitting, musical instrument lessons etc
- Spending time with a Turkish family on the weekend or during a holiday

If you are interested, you can consult your OIP advisor for further information.

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COMMUNITY CLUB (ISC)**
With a diverse body of members including Turkish students who are passionate about tolerance, respect, multiculturalism and community involvement, ISC is the only registered international student club within Clubs and Volunteer Activities Office. They organize intercultural activities year round and act as a resource and reference point for new international students. Connect with them and make new friends from all over the world. Here is how:

- **FACEBOOK PAGE** [facebook.com/koc.isc](https://facebook.com/koc.isc)
- **FACEBOOK CLOSED GROUP ONLY KU STUDENTS** [https://www.facebook.com/groups/1422476334489030/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1422476334489030/)
- **INSTAGRAM** [instagram.com/koc.isc](https://instagram.com/koc.isc)

**OTHER VOLUNTEER INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GROUPS** There are other volunteer cultural groups at KU. To connect with them you can email us at ico@ku.edu.tr. These are Pakistani Student Association, Network of Asian Students and Iranian Student Association.

If you have any questions about this guide, please contact Mr. Mert Şanıvar msanivar@ku.edu.tr at OIP.