

FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS **who currently reside outside of Qatar**

Congratulations on your offer of admission to Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar! My colleagues and I look forward to working with you and helping you achieve your personal, academic and professional goals during your time at VCUarts Qatar. As the Manager of International Education & Student Programming and HBKU Housing Liaison, I serve as your main contact in the Office of Student Affairs. Feel free to contact me should you need additional information or clarifications about the information below, and as you prepare for your enrollment at VCUarts Qatar.

LaKisha Tillman
Manager International Education and Student Programming
HBKU Housing Liaison
Office of Student Affairs
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Important Dates – First Semester

- **April 19 - May 31:**
 - Submit your Housing Interest Form (if you plan to reside on campus)
 - Submit your official online HBKU Housing Application (if you plan to reside on campus)
 - Submit the required documents for your Entry Visa to Qatar.
 - Submit evidence of health insurance coverage.
 - Submit Immunization form.
- **August 22:**
 - First day of access to HBKU Residence Halls.
- **August 24:**
 - Arrive in Qatar.
- **August 23-24, 26:**
 - Eid al Adha (All offices closed! Eid dates subject to change)
- **August 28-31**
 - VCUarts Qatar New Student Orientation Program;
 - Begin Processes for Resident Permit (RP) – for international students
- **September 2, 2018**
 - Fall classes begin
- **December 6, 2018**
 - Last day of classes
- **December 9-13, 2018:**
 - Final Examinations
- **December 18, 2018:**
 - Qatar National Day
- **December 20:**
 - Last day to check out of HBKU Housing (date is subject to change)
- **December 13, 2018 – January 7, 2019:**
 - Semester break

VCUarts Qatar New Student Orientation Program (August 28-31)

- The objective of the New Student Orientation Program is to help you to settle into your new life in Qatar and set you up for success at VCUarts Qatar.
- The orientation program also provides you an opportunity to get to know your fellow students, as well as your staff and faculty, and to learn about VCUarts Qatar, about Education City, and about Doha.

Entry Visa to Qatar

- The State of Qatar requires students who come to Qatar for the purpose of academic study to hold a Student Visa.
- You are required to have an entry-visa document in hand upon entry into Qatar.
- After you have accepted your admission and paid your enrollment deposit (through the Office of Admissions), VCUarts Qatar will request that the government of Qatar issues a Student Visa.
- VCUarts Qatar requires the following documents from you, by **May 31, 2018**, to request issuance of the student visa. Please submit the items listed below to LaKisha Tillman at the Office of Student Affairs (ldtillman@vcu.edu):
 - Color copy of the identification page(s) your passport in PFD or JPEG format
 - Make sure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months beyond the day you plan to travel to Qatar.
 - 6 Passport-sized photos, in color, against white background, in PDF or JPEG format.
 - Official documentation which provides evidence of your blood type.
 - For example, a certified birth certificate or an official physician's statement (with signature/stamp)
 - Copy of your birth certificate
 - Copy of your letter of admission to VCUarts Qatar
- It generally takes 3-5 weeks for the government of Qatar to issue a Student Visa.
- After VCUarts Qatar has received evidence of your health insurance coverage (see Section: Health Insurance below), the Office of Student Affairs will email you a copy of your Qatar Student Visa.
- **It is pertinent that you print a copy of your visa, and carry it with you in your carry-on baggage when you travel to Qatar. You will need to present the copy of your visa to the Immigration Officials upon entry into Qatar.**

Immigration – Resident Permit

- To study and reside in Qatar, a residency permit is required for all students. The issuance of the residency permit is contingent on passing the **medical clearance** process as well as **finger printing**. The process for obtaining a Resident Permit (RP) will begin as soon as possible after you arrive in Qatar. The Office of Student Affairs will guide you through these various steps, which may well take up to 5 weeks or more to complete.
 - Medical Clearance:
 - Qatar Immigration laws require that individuals seeking residency in Qatar be screened for tuberculosis, HIV, and Hepatitis B and C. Therefore, the following tests will be administered:

- Chest-x-ray
- HIV antibodies
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- **Positive** findings to any of these tests will result in **immediate repatriation from Qatar**.
- If you wish to be sure that you do **not** have any of the above-mentioned medical conditions, we recommend that you have the tests listed above done in your home country **prior to your arrival in Qatar**.
 - Fingerprinting at a government faculty
- Students who fail to keep RP-related appointments or are late in submitting requisite documentation are at risk of having their visa expire and/or not having their RP issued in time. Such students will be held responsible for all costs associated with the visa and/or RP re-application processes. Therefore, should you know in advance that you are unable to stay in Qatar for at least 2 months after your initial arrival, please notify LaKisha Tillman at the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible.

On-Campus Housing

- Please refer to the separate insert titled “ON-CAMPUS HOUSING - HOUSING INTEREST PROCESS AND FORM” for the processes and steps you must complete as it concerns living in the Education City Residence Halls.
- More information about HBKU Housing is available at:
<http://www.hbku.edu.qa/en/life-hbku/hbku-student-housing>
- **August 22, 2018** is the earliest day students may move in to the HBKU Residence Halls.

Health Insurance

- International students (including exchange students) at VCUarts Qatar are required to hold personal health insurance coverage for the full duration of their enrollment at VCUarts Qatar.
- Students must provide evidence of holding health insurance **prior** to their arrival at VCUarts Qatar. Students may wish to consider purchasing health insurance coverage through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI Insurance).
 - The cost of CISI Insurance is currently \$36.95 (135 QAR) per month.
 - To purchase CISI Insurance:
 - Go to: <https://www.mycisi.com/CISIPortalWeb/default.aspx>.
 - See the “Self-Enrollment Overview”-section, and click on “Apply Online Now”, and follow the instructions.
 - Section: Selection Sponsor:
 - Sponsor Code: VCU-Q
 - Coverage Start Date: Your arrival date in Qatar.
 - Coverage End Date: April 2019. You will be charged per academic year, i.e. August-April.
 - Destination Country: Qatar
 - City: Doha

- Section Personal Data
 - Program Name: Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar
 - Participant ID: V# (This is a 9-digit VCU number which generally starts with V00.....). If you do not know your V#, please check with LaKisha Tillman at ldtillman@vcu.edu.
- Upon successful self-enrollment, CISI Enrollments will email your personalized ID card and consulate letter.
- Please email a copy of your personalized CISI ID card to LaKisha Tillman at ldtillman@vcu.edu as proof of health insurance coverage. Proof of health insurance coverage is required before your Student Visa copy can be released to you.
- Students are also encouraged to apply for a **Hamad Medical Card**, a benefit extended to all students whose student visas are sponsored by the Qatar Foundation (QF) and who hold a valid Resident Permit.
 - Services at Hamad Medical Centers are generally free of charge.
 - You may apply for a Hamad Medical Card after your Resident Permit has been issued to you.
 - For more information on how to apply for a Hamad Medical Card, please see LaKisha Tillman at the Office of Student Affairs.

Additional Information

The following information may also be helpful to you as you prepare for your arrival and stay at VCUarts Qatar.

- <http://www.qatar.vcu.edu/studentaffairs>
This link provides information specific to VCUarts Qatar, including:
 - Your “Journey”
 - New Student Orientation Program
 - Student Government Association
 - International Opportunities
 - Policies
 - Health and Wellness
 - <http://www.hbku.edu.qa/en/life-hbku>
This link provides information about:
 - Living on Campus in Education City
 - The Student Center and its myriad facilities
 - Dining options
 - Education City wide programs and activities
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