

APPLYING FOR AN F-1 STUDENT VISA

Required Documentation

Each applicant for a student visa **must** submit these forms and documentation as explained below:

- **I-20 Form** If you are renewing your visa, the I-20 must have a travel signature within the last 12 months.
- **The SEVIS I-901 fee receipt.** For information about the I-901 fee: <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901> To pay the I-901 fee: <https://www.fmjfee.com/>
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- **Online Nonimmigrant Visa Electronic Application, Form DS-160.** Visit the [DS-160 webpage](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/) <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/> to learn more about the DS-160 online process.
- **Nonimmigrant visa application processing fee** - \$160. You will need to provide a receipt showing the visa application processing fee has been paid, when you come for your visa interview.
- **A passport** with a validity date at least six months beyond the applicant's intended period of stay in the United States.
- **One (1) 2x2 photograph.** See the required photo format explained here <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html#nonimmigrant>

All applicants **should be prepared** to provide:

- **Transcripts and diplomas** from previous institutions attended;
- **Scores from standardized tests** required by the educational institution such as the TOEFL, GRE, etc.;
- **Financial evidence** that shows you or your parents who are sponsoring you have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period of your intended study. For example, if you or your sponsor is a salaried employee, please bring income tax documents and original bank books and/or statements. If you or your sponsor own a business, please bring business registration, licenses, etc., and tax documents, as well as original bank books and/or statements.
- **For visa renewals, proof of maintenance of F-1 status;** PAU transcripts, proof of enrollment for the following quarter, student ID, etc.

Preparing for the Interview

- You should expect the interview to be conducted in English and not in your native language. Consular officers must make a decision, for the most part, on those impressions they form during *the first minute or two* of the interview. What you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. **Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point.**
- Do not bring family members with you to the interview, unless they are also applying for F-2 visa(s).
- Maintain a positive attitude. Do not engage the consular officer in an argument.
- If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal and try to get the reason you were denied in writing.

- *Emphasize the focus on your studies, and any strong ties you have to your home country, such as family, friends, and/or future job prospects.*

The U.S. State Department has detailed information on the F-1 Student Visa application process:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html>

Spouses and Children

- Dependents must bring proof of the student's relationship to his/her spouse and/or children (ex: marriage and/or birth certificates)
- It is preferred that families apply for F-1 and F-2 visas at the same time, but if the spouse and children must apply separately at a later time, they should bring a copy of the student visa holder's passport and visa, along with all other required documents.
- F-2 dependents cannot, under any circumstance, be employed in the U.S. If asked, be prepared to tell what your spouse intends to do with his or her time while in the U.S. Volunteer work is permitted. An F-2 spouse or children may ONLY engage in study that is avocational or recreational in nature.

A visa is valid until its expiration date. If you have a valid visa in an expired passport, you may use it along with a new valid passport for travel and admission to the United States.