Obtaining Your F-1 Visa

This information is for people who plan to enter the United States for the first time to study. For information on bringing dependents to the US, returning to continue studies or renewing your visa, or for more details on how to apply for a student visa, refer to the US Department of State website at <http://travel.state.gov/>.

# Procedure

1. Contact your local US Embassy/Consulate to ask about how to get an F-1 student visa. A list of Consulates and Embassies can be found at <http://usembassy.state.gov/>.

1. After you receive your initial I-20 from SOU, follow the US Embassy/Consulate instructions to schedule an interview for your F-1 visa. It is important to apply for your student visa as far in advance as possible. Appointments can generally be made no more than 120 days before the program start date on your I-20.

1. Complete the following forms:

* Form DS-156 (Nonimmigrant Visa Application Form). A separate Form DS-156 is needed for children, even if they are included in a parent's passport.
* Form DS-158 (Contact Information and Work History for Nonimmigrant Visa Applicant)
* If a male between the ages of 16 and 45, DS-157 (Supplemental Nonimmigrant Visa Application).

1. Pay the following fees online:
   * Visa Application Fee ($131 USD)
   * Visa Issuance Fee, if applicable. This fee varies and is determined by your country of origin. Please see [http://travel.state.gov/](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html) for more information.
   * SEVIS Fee ($200 USD)

For information on how to pay these fees, please visit <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/>.

1. Prepare and bring to your visa interview the following:

* + Passport valid for at least six months after program end date
  + Form I-20
  + Original SOU letter of admission
  + Completed visa applications (DS-156, DS-158 and DS-157 if applicable)
  + One 2”x 2” photograph in the prescribed format
  + A receipt for the Visa Application Fee
  + A receipt for the SEVIS Fee, the Visa Application Fee and the Reciprocity Fee (if applicable). If you have not received an official SEVIS receipt in the mail showing payment and you paid the fee electronically, the Consulate will accept the temporary receipt you printed from your computer. If you do not have a receipt, the Consulate may be able to see your payment electronically if your fee payment was processed at least 3 business days before your interview.
  + Financial evidence that shows you have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period you intend to study.
  + Any information that proves that you will return to your home country after finishing your studies in the US. This may include proof of property, family, or other ties to your community.
  + You may also want to bring the following: transcripts and diplomas from previous institutions attended; scores from standardized tests required by the educational institution (e.g., TOEFL, SAT, GRE, GMAT).

Applicants with dependents **must** also provide:

* + Proof of the student’s relationship to his/her spouse and/or children (e.g., marriage certificate, birth certificate). 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.

8. Be on time for your interview. Dress respectably, remain calm and answer all the visa officer’s questions openly and honestly.