F-1 Visa Application, Fee payments and Consular Interview

This information is for internationals who plan to enter the United States for the first time to study full-time at a U.S. College or University. For information on bringing family members to the U.S., returning to continue your studies, or renewing your visa, or for more details on how to apply for a student visa, refer to the U.S. Department of State website, at: http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student.html

STEPS

1. **Contact the Office of Visa and Immigration Services (OVIS) at Dartmouth College to request a Form I-20, which you will need to apply for an F-1 student visa at a U.S. Consulate.** (Note regarding Canadian citizens: Canadians do not need to go to a U.S. embassy, or to apply for and receive a U.S. F-1 visa, as they are visa exempt. They do, however, still need the I-20 form, and must pay the SEVIS fee in order to enter the U.S. They should present the form, a letter of admission to the academic program, and financial documents to the immigration officers at the port of entry to the U.S.)

2. **Contact your local U.S. Consulate or Embassy to ask about how to get an F-1 international student visa.** A list of Consulates and Embassies can be found at http://usembassy.state.gov/. The U.S. State Department offers a website on the visa application process as well: http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student.html

3. **After you receive an I-20 form from the school that you want to attend, follow the U.S. Embassy/Consulate’s instructions to schedule an interview for your F-1 student visa.** It is important to apply for your student visa as far in advance as possible. Many consulates recommend that appointments be made no more than 90 days from the intended date of travel, but some can make earlier arrangements for interviews.

4. **Complete the required U.S. visa application Form DS-160, available from the Consulate or Embassy, or online, at:** http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/forms/ds-160--online-nonimmigrant-visa-application.html

5. **Pay the visa application fee.** This is NOT the same as the SEVIS fee – see below. In addition, check to see if you must pay any reciprocity fees by following instructions on your local U.S. embassy or consulate’s web site. See this website for information on possible additional reciprocity fees for citizens of your country: http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/fees/reciprocity-by-country.html

6. **If your I-20 was issued on or after September 1, 2004, and is marked for “initial” attendance (see section 1, Form Issue Reason on your I-20 Form), you will also need to pay the SEVIS fee.** Please refer to the Office of Visa and Immigration Services fee sheet for the appropriate amount to submit. The SEVIS fee should be paid online, unless you cannot do so.

   **To Pay Online**
   
   (a) Go to the online payment website at https://www.fmjfee.com/

   (b) Complete the form online and supply the necessary credit card information. Be sure to write your name exactly as it appears on the I-20 form.

   (c) **Print a copy of the online receipt.** (VERY IMPORTANT)

   (d) Keep a copy of your receipt with your other immigration documents
To Pay the SEVIS fee by mail:

(e) Download the instructions and Form I-901 “Fee Remittance for Certain F, J, and M Non-immigrants” from https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901, OR

(f) You may ask for the form by phone at 1-800-870-3676 (inside the US)

(g) Complete the Form I-901. Be sure to write your name exactly how it appears on your I-20 form

(h) Prepare a check, international money order or foreign draft (drawn on US banks only) in the appropriate amount in USD, made payable to “I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee”

(i) Mail the completed I-901 and payment to the address listed in the instructions for Form I-901

(j) A Form I-797 receipt confirmation letter should be mailed within 3 days of processing the fee. Be sure to make copies of this receipt letter, and keep it with your other important immigration documents

Do NOT pay the SEVIS fee if you are

• transferring schools and will keep the same SEVIS number
• extending your program at the same level or changing levels
• applying for an F-2 dependent visa, or
• have paid this fee and been denied a visa within the last twelve months

7. You should bring the receipt of SEVIS fee payment with you to the interview, and/or if you are Canadian, when you go to the U.S. border or port of entry. If you have lost the receipt, the Officer should be able to view your payment history in his or her database.

8. While you should check with the U.S. consulate to make sure you bring with you all required documents, the following is a list of items that are usually required: [Note: Canadians need to present all of the following items to the port of entry officer except (d) the completed visa applications and (e) two photographs and (f) the receipt for the visa application fee.]

(a) A passport valid for at least six months into the future

(b) Form I-20 (sign your name and put the date on page 1 after reading page 3 of the form, "Instructions to Students")

(c) School admission letter

(d) Completed visa applications (unless completed online – if so please check with the Consulate about whether a printed copy is required as well)

(e) Two 2”x 2” photographs in the prescribed format (see the travel.state.gov website)

(f) A receipt for the visa application fee

(g) A receipt for the SEVIS fee. If you have not received an official 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.

(h) Financial evidence that shows you have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period you intend to study

(i) Any information that proves that you will return to your home country after finishing your studies in the U.S. This may include proof of property, family, or other ties to your community.

9. Be sure to answer all the consular officer’s questions honestly.