

F-1 Students: How to apply for an F-1 visa

1. Contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate to begin applying for an F-1 student visa, after you receive an acceptance letter and Form I-20. To find information on the visa application process, visit <http://www.usembassy.gov/>. Visa procedures can vary between embassies and consulates, depending on location. In most countries, though, an appointment is required and can be made by telephone, mail, over the internet, or in person. Additional information on visas can be found at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#overview>.
2. Apply for an F-1 student visa within 365 days of the program start date identified on your Form I-20.
3. Review visa wait times at embassies and consulates by visiting <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>.
4. Complete Form I-901 and pay the required \$350 application fee. The I-901 can be completed online at <http://www.fmjfee.com> and for payment a credit card or Western Union Quick Express are accepted. Use the SEVIS ID number on the top left of the Form I-20's first page. All SEVIS ID numbers start with the letter "N". The "school code" is also identified on the I-20.
5. Complete the DS-160 Online Nonimmigrant Visa Electronic Application available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/forms/ds-160-online-nonimmigrant-visa-application.html>.
6. Take the following with you on the day of your visa interview:
 - A government-issued passport with a validity date at least 6 months beyond your intended arrival date in the U.S. (unless exempt by country-specific agreements).
 - A copy of the DS-160 Online Application confirmation page.
 - One 5 cm x 5 cm photograph taken within 6 months.
 - Receipt of MRV payment or the equivalent in your home currency.
 - A copy of the Form I-797 Receipt of SEVIS Fee or Confirmation of I-901 SEVIS payment.
 - The Form I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status issued by Pacific.
 - Supporting financial documentation issued by a banking official within 6 months.
 - Any additional evidence illustrating that you (a) have a permanent residence abroad, (b) maintain strong family, social or economic ties to your home country (e.g., employment or property), and/or (c) plan to depart the United States upon successful completion of your program of study.

F-1 students: What to expect at U.S. port of entry

Upon arrival at a U.S. international airport, seaport or land border crossing, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer will determine whether you can enter the U.S. CPB is an agency within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) whose mission is to prevent terrorists, high-risk individuals and improperly documented travelers from entering the U.S. while facilitating the entry of legitimate travelers and trade. To enhance security without slowing legitimate travel, CBP instituted the following U.S. entry and exit procedures. Careful planning and preparation can ensure that any delay based on these procedures is minimal.

1. Plan Arrival Dates: F-1 students are prohibited from entering the United States more than 30 days in advance of the program start date identified on the Form I-20.
2. Complete Entry Paperwork: Flight attendants distribute Customs Declaration Forms (CF-6059) which should be completed prior to landing.
3. Navigate Inspection: Proceed to the terminal area for arriving passengers and be prepared to present the below documents to the CBP officer.
 - a. A government-issued passport with a validity date at least 6 months beyond your intended arrival date in the U.S. (unless exempt by country-specific agreements);
 - b. A valid F-1 visa stamp placed inside the passport by a U.S. consulate or embassy;
 - c. The Form I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status issued by Pacific; and,
 - d. The Customs Declaration Form (CF-6059).

Do not place the above documents in your checked baggage as you may be denied entry to the United States and sent home. Additionally, it is strongly recommended that students also hand-carry the following documents:

- a. Letter of acceptance,
- b. Evidence of financial resources, and
- c. A copy of the Form I-797 Receipt of SEVIS Fee or Confirmation of I-901 SEVIS payment.

Prepare to answer the CBP officer's questions, for example:

- a. What is the purpose of your visit to the U.S.?
- b. How you will be financially supported?
- c. How long you plan to visit?
- d. Where you will stay?

For greater detail on procedures for traveling and arriving in the United States, visit <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/getting-to-the-united-states>.

Secondary Inspection

If the CBP officer at the port of entry cannot initially verify your information or if you do not have the required documentation, you may be directed to an interview area known as “secondary inspection”. Secondary inspection allows officers to conduct additional research without causing delays for other arriving passengers.

Under certain circumstances, the CBP officer may issue Form I-515A: Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor, which authorizes temporary admission into the United States. If you receive a Form I-515, you must work with International Programs and Services to submit the proper documentation without delay. Additional information about the Form I-515 can be found at <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/what-is-a-form-i-515a>.

Admission Stamp

Once the inspection is successfully completed, the officer stamps your passport (usually on the same page as your visa) identifying the date and port of entry. The officer should then handwrite “F-1” on this admission stamp reflecting the recorded entry status. The admission stamp should also note “D/S” which stands for “Duration of Status”. Duration of Status (D/S) indicates admission into the U.S. in F-1 status for the duration of the program length which is stated on page 1 of the Form I-20. It is very important that this entry is recorded correctly. If you are not provided a “D/S” on entry, ask the CBP officer for clarification. This entry information is then included on your I-94 arrival/departure record.



Canadian students: **Do not** pursue admission as a visitor/tourist or use the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA).

Electronic I-94

When entering the country, an electronic record of admission, known as the I-94, is also created. This record can be retrieved from CBP’s website, <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>. Please print your I-94 immediately after arriving in the U.S. A new I-94 record is generated **each time** you enter the U.S. Pacific recommends students print this record each time they enter and keep all I-94 copies to document entry dates and status.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection Securing America's Borders	
Admission (I-94) Number Retrieval	
Admission (I-94) Record Number: 68314040 400	
Admit Until Date (MM/DD/YYYY): D/S	
Details provided on Admission (I-94) form:	
Family Name:	Mouse
First (Given) Name:	Mickey
Birth Date (MM/DD/YYYY):	05/09/1954
Passport Number:	BD4726352
Passport Country of Issuance:	England
Most Recent Date of Entry (MM/DD/YYYY):	06/01/2013
Class of Admission:	F-1

Customs

In addition to preparing documents, it is recommended that you prepare your luggage and electronic devices for inspection. Be aware that it is unlawful to bring some items, such as certain foods, into the U.S. Learn more about customs declarations and restricted items at <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/know-before-you-visit>.

Following Admission into the United States

Plan to attend the mandatory International Student Orientation on the date identified in your admission letter and meet Pacific’s Designated School Officials (DSO) to check-in and complete the required immigration session, where you can learn more about practices and procedures.