

International Student Life Cycle (F-1/M-1)



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

1 Apply to a Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-Certified School

Student applies and is accepted to an SEVP-certified school.



2 Receive a Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status"

A student's Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) record is created and the student is then issued a Form I-20 by the designated school official (DSO) at the SEVP-certified school they have chosen to attend.



3 Pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee

Student must pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee at FMJFee.com.



6 Maintain Status During Program Study

Student must take a full course of study, not work without prior authorization and speak with their DSO if they cannot finish classes before their program end date, or have any other concerns about maintaining lawful status.



5 Arrive in the United States

Student arrives no more than 30 days before their program start date and presents their Form I-20 and valid student visa to U.S. Customs and Border Protection at the port of entry.



4 Apply for Student Visa

Student brings their Form I-20 and other required documents to apply for a student visa from the U.S. Department of State.



7 Explore Post-Graduation Opportunities

A student has the option to transfer schools, change education levels (e.g., undergraduate to graduate), or if eligible, apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) opportunities.



8 Depart the United States

An F-1 student has 60 days to depart the United States after completion of their program of study or OPT. An M-1 student has 30 days after completion of their program of study to depart.

Work Requirements(F-1 Students Only)

An F-1 student may work only when authorized, including:

- On campus
- Off campus, if financially needed and with authorization from USCIS
- Curricular practical training integral to their program of study
- OPT-related to the student's major and with authorization by USCIS.