



Applying for an F-1/J-1 Visa in your Home Country

Visa Information: International students in the U.S. are generally admitted under the F-1 student visa classification. Under special circumstances, international students may also be admitted on J-1 sponsored student visa. Those who petition for F-1 or J-1 visas are admitted as a non-immigrants, and are granted temporary stays in the U.S. In order to apply for the F-1 visa, the prospective student must receive a SEVIS I-20. Those applying for J-1 visas receive the form DS-2019. All nonimmigrant visas should not be expired at the time of entry/re-entry to U.S. The guideline information on visa application is available at the [U.S. State department services website](#).

An F-1 visa is issued to international students who are attending an academic program or English Language Program at a US college or university. F-1 students must maintain the minimum course load for full-time student status. They can remain in the US up to 60 days beyond the length of time it takes to complete their academic program, unless they have applied and been approved to stay and work for a period of time under the OPT Program

Process to apply for an F-1/J-1 Visa:

STEP 1: Obtain Admission and Immigration Documents

Receive an admission and letter and I-20 (F-1 students) or DS-2019 (J-1 students & scholars) from the University (the Graduate School, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions or the Intensive English Program).

Make sure that all of the information listed on your I-20 or DS-2019 (including major and funding) is accurate before you proceed to Step 2. If any information is incorrect, please email the person who issued your I-20 so that they can reissue it if necessary.

STEP 2: Pay your I-901 Fee (non-refundable)

The [I-901 or FMJ Fee](#) is required for all students and scholars (F-1 and J-1). This fee, paid to the Department of Homeland Security, is necessary to secure your visa appointment.

STEP 3: Complete Form DS-160

Complete the [online visa application](#) (FORM DS-160) and upload a photo that meets the requirements.

STEP 4: Schedule an Interview with the U.S. Embassy in your Home Country

If you are considering applying for a visa in a third country, please review the information [here](#). Make sure to allow enough time to apply for visa. We recommend applying as soon as you pay your I-901 fee to ensure that you have enough time to obtain your visa and enroll for your semester of admission. Visa applications can take up to 3 months. You can search for visa wait times at:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html>.



STEP 5: *Pay the Non-refundable Visa Application Fee and Issuance Fee*

For information on visa fees, go to the website of the [U.S. embassy](#) in your home country.

STEP 6: *Gather required documents to bring to interview:*

- A valid passport (must be valid within 6 months of entry date to U.S.)
- A valid UL Lafayette I-20 (F-1 students) or DS-2019 (J-1 students)
- New students (F-1 or J-1) who are enrolling at UL Lafayette for the first time OR who are enrolling in a new degree program do NOT require a travel authorization (Page 2 of your I-20 should be unsigned).
- Application fee payment receipt
- Photo (if photo cannot be uploaded electronically)
- Admission letter
- Standardized test scores (if applicable)
- Financial information showing proof of necessary funds to cover ALL expenses while in the U.S. This can be either a letter from your department stating the amount of funding you are receiving, a letter from another financial sponsor stating the amount that they are giving you, PLUS supporting financial documents (i.e. bank statements). Please note that most scholarships/assistantships do not cover all expenses, and therefore, it is advisable to provide proof of personal or family funding.
- Since you are applying for a non-immigrant visa, be prepared to explain your intent to depart the U.S. upon your completion of course of study.

While all of this documentation may not be required, it is best to bring as much as possible with you.

STEP 7: *Attend your visa interview*

Before attending your interview, we recommend that you read through some interview tips from our professional organization, NAFSA. To access these tips, click [here](#).

Please visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html> for more information or contact us at ويا@louisiana.edu.

STEP 8: *Finalize your Plans*

If you receive your visa in time to enroll for the semester in which you have been admitted, please make sure that you have completed our online orientation accessed through [Moodle](#). Email ويا@louisiana.edu if you are unable to access Moodle.

If you receive your visa late and need to be deferred to the next semester, please contact the person who issued your I-20 (Graduate School, Office of Undergraduate Admissions, or Intensive English Program).