

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING FOR F-1 VISA

If you are seeking admission into the United States on an F-1 visa for the purpose of beginning a full course of study, you must have in your possession the SEVIS Form I-20 issued by the school which you plan to attend and signed by the Designated School Official. Unless you are visa exempt (Canadian citizens), you must apply at the United States Consulate or Embassy having jurisdiction over your place of residence. To find the consulate nearest you, please visit: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>. You can also find out the wait time for a visa interview at the various consulate locations by visiting: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html.

The consulate will also require you to present a Form DS-160. **This form must be filled out online before the visa interview for most consulates.** Details about the form and if your consulates require online completion can be found at: http://travel.state.gov/visa/forms/forms_4230.html. If you complete the DS-160 form online, you may print the receipt and bring it with you to your visa interview. Without the receipt for this form, your interview will likely not be able to take place as scheduled. You will also have to provide one 2 inch by 2 inch photograph. This photograph will go on your entry visa, if it is approved. Details regarding required documentation can be found at: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1267.html#7. **Although you have met all the requirements for admission to a school, it is the consular official who makes the final decision as to whether you will be granted an F-1 student visa.**

Effective October 27, 2008, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) rule which requires F-1 visa applicants to pay a one time SEVIS I-901 fee was increased to \$200 to supplement the cost of the SEVIS system. This fee must be paid and a receipt received prior to making application for your entry visa or applying for entry at the border if visa exempt! The fee may be paid online at <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/>. You should enter your name and other information *exactly* as it appears on your I-20 (assuming that the information on your I-20 is correct) and **print** a receipt. You may also complete the form I-901 and send your payment by mail. The fee is considered paid when processed, if not paid online. **Effective July 31, 2013, a receipt will NOT be mailed to you if you do not print a receipt in the online system.** We recommend that you ensure the fee is processed at least 3 business days before your scheduled visa interview if you do not pay online. **For frequently asked questions and information on how to pay this fee, please visit <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq.htm>**

As the applicant, you must sign the certification in item 11 on page 1 of the form I-20 issued to you, as well as any form I-20 issued to any dependent who is a minor, attesting that you understand and will abide by the various conditions stipulated by F-1 status. The consular official may or may not require a personal interview. You should, however, be prepared to present proof of English language proficiency and verification of financial support to establish that all the requirements for non-immigrant student status are met. Although it is infrequent, some students are required to deposit a determined amount of money as security which will not be returned until the student departs from the United States after completing the specific educational objective. You must also be able to demonstrate that you have residence in your country to which you plan to return upon the completion of your program.

We estimate that in addition to tuition charges, special fees, books and health insurance, you should be prepared to pay approximately \$23,772 in living expenses each year. In addition, you will need at least \$3,500 for **each dependent**. This would include housing, food, clothing, local travel,
Revised 02/2014

recreation, toiletries and other miscellaneous expenses. You are strongly advised to bring personal funds of \$1,500 in the form of travelers' checks with you to cover expenses during transit and the first few days in the U.S. This will be helpful also in the event that transfers of dollars from your home country to your U.S. bank account or the initial payments of stipends promised by your graduate school are delayed.

When the consular official is satisfied that you have met all the requirements, a visa will be issued. Prospective students from certain countries may experience delays, particularly if applying in a third world country (other than your home country), while security checks are completed.

When the visa application is approved, a visa stamp is placed in your passport, noting the period of time for which it is valid, the number of entries allowed and the school named on the Form I-20. The Form I-20 is then returned for your use in applying for admission to the United States.

Upon Arrival at the United States port of entry, present your passport (or travel document), visa, evidence of financial support, and Form I-20 to the immigration official.

When you are admitted to the United States, the immigration officer issues an I-94 card (arrival/departure record), which shows the date and place of admission, your status as an F-1 student, and a special 11 digit admission number. This 11-digit number assigned to you will be used in tracking all future arrivals and departures, programs of study, transfers to different schools, practical training and other events relevant to your F-1 status. At this time, the official returns the Form I-20 to you.

As an F-1 student, you will be admitted to the United States for "duration of status", meaning the period required to complete the program(s) of study plus any authorized period of post-completion of studies practical training with sixty additional days to prepare for departure from the United States. "D/S" will be written/indicated on your form I-94/electronic I-94 record.

If the immigration officer is not satisfied that the I-20 is properly completed but considers the F-1 visa to be valid, he may grant admission for a temporary period of 30 days with the issuance of Form 515 instructing you to submit the I-20 and I-94 to the Immigration Officer where you plan to study or work. An I-515A indicates a SEVIS related problem with admission. An I-515A should be returned to Washington, D.C. along with other required documentation **within 30 days**. **Should this occur, please notify the International Services Office immediately upon arrival on campus so we can assist you with submitting the proper documentation and converting your status to D/S.**

If your spouse or unmarried children (under the age of twenty-one) wish to accompany you to the United States, they may obtain their visas and admission to the U.S. on the basis of a SEVIS Form I-20 issued in their name. Using calculations from our Student Financial Aid Office, we have established that **each dependent** will increase your living expenses by an additional \$3,500. Therefore, your program coordinator at LSU Health Sciences Center will be asked to evaluate and assure that your responsibility for them will not interfere with your studies and that your financial support is sufficient to support the family member(s) or other arrangements have been made to provide for their expenses. We emphasize the importance of sufficient financial support for the entire period of your program of study for you and your accompanying dependents because dependents in F-2 status may not accept employment or engage in business under any circumstances. Likewise, the consular officer and the immigration officer at the port of entry must be satisfied that they have sufficient funds.

If the dependents follow at a later date, you should request assistance from the Designated School Official to be advised of the procedure and documents required for them.

Upon arrival at LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans, it is important that you contact the International Services Office to schedule an appointment for an orientation and a thorough review of your documents. The office telephone number is (504) 568-4802. This introduction will allow us to answer any questions you may have and immediately correct any errors which occurred during the entry process.

IMPORTANT: If you are unable to arrive to begin your studies as scheduled (by the first day of classes), please inform the International Services Office and your school as soon as possible. Important corrections to your SEVIS record, such as registering your record and deferring attendance to the next semester, must be done within strict time frames!