

# F1 Visa Information & Requirements

## Steps for international students

If your SIT program requires or allows travel to the US, please review the information below and follow the steps outlined to obtain an F1 visa.

### **F-1 Visa Application and Information**

#### **WHAT IS AN F-1 VISA?**

An F-1 visa is a non-immigrant student visa. An F1 visa is issued to international students who are attending an academic program at a U.S. college or university.

#### **WHAT IS SEVIS?**

The Student Exchange and Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is the online system that the U.S. government established to maintain correct and current information on non-immigrant students, exchange visitors, scholars and their dependents. The system helps the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ensure that non-immigrant international students and scholars are in the U.S. legally and are studying in the school that has accepted them.

#### **WHAT IS THE FORM I-20 AND WHY DO I NEED IT?**

The I-20 is a government form issued by schools to certify that a student is eligible to receive an F-1 visa. In order to receive an I-20 from a school, a student must be admitted and must provide evidence that she/he possesses funds sufficient to cover the cost of attendance.

#### **DEADLINES FOR RECEIPT OF I-20 DOCUMENTS**

Due to Department of Homeland Security requirements for processing I-20 and international student visas, we need to receive all documents related to your I-20 well in advance of your program start date. For information concerning US citizenship and immigration regulations and advice about obtaining a student visa, please contact Joyce Howland in SIT International Student Services: [joyce.howland@sit.edu](mailto:joyce.howland@sit.edu).

In order to obtain an F-1 visa, a student must:

**Step 1:**

- Be admitted to SIT.

**Step 2:**

- Give evidence of sufficient funds to attend SIT through the [Certification of Finances](#).
  - Uploaded with supplemental documents in the Confirmation Portal.

**Step 3:**

- Pay the enrollment deposit through the Confirmation Portal.

**Step 4:**

- Upload a copy of your passport to the Confirmation Portal.
- Obtain a Form I-20 from SIT.
- Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee \$350: (\$350 SEVIS fee) on-line at <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html>. This fee is required by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for all international students applying for a student visa. You will be required to pay this \$350 fee for each summer residency period.
- Apply for a visa (Form DS-160) and pay the visa application fee. You should apply online at <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>.
  - Fill out your DS-160 form to schedule a visa appointment as soon as you have received your I-20. In areas where extra administrative processing is at times required, you should apply as early as possible. Administrative processing can take many months.

**Step 5:**

- Make an appointment at your local U.S. consulate. Please note that the time required to obtain a visa interview can range from days to months depending on the country and region, so give yourself sufficient time to obtain the visa. Current wait times may be found at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html>.
  - To find a US consulate or embassy near you, visit [www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov).

**Step 6:**

- Go to your visa appointment and bring the following documents:
  - Your Form I-20 (be sure to sign it in the appropriate space)
  - Your SEVIS fee receipt
  - A valid passport (note: the passport must be good for at least six months after your program end date)
  - Two 2x2-inch passport photographs
  - Your completed, signed visa application forms
  - Your receipt for the visa application fee
  - Copies of your financial documents, including original bank statement that shows you have sufficient funds to study at SIT
  - Your SIT Acceptance Letter
  - Your SIT Award Letter

## HOW TO PAY YOUR DEPOSIT (OPTIONS)

- Credit card via Confirmation Portal
- Wire Transfer Payment
  - You may also make your payment by wire transfer. This is a secure method of payment, but it can take up to four weeks for your student account to be credited. Please consider this option carefully if time is limited.
  - Once your Certification of Finances has been reviewed, your admissions counselor or the Financial Aid Office can provide you with the details of the wire transfer process.