

## Obtaining a U.S. Student (F-1) Visa

To obtain a student visa (F-1) you should apply at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad, usually in your home country or the country in which you live. Although you may apply at any U.S. consular office abroad, it may be more difficult to qualify for the visa outside your country of permanent residence.

Information on U.S. consulate policies, procedures, and requirements can be obtained through the U.S. State Department web site at <http://travel.state.gov>

NOTE: You will be required to pay a \$130 (U.S.) SEVIS fee before you are issued a student visa. The fee can be paid by credit card on the internet or with a check by mail. For information, contact your U.S. embassy or consulate, or visit <http://www.fmjfee.com> for further information and to pay on-line.

***Important: you cannot enroll in ALP on a B visa (B-1 visitors for business and B-2 visitors for pleasure).***

### Required Documentation

- Form I-20 (all pages, signed by the designated school official and the student). If your spouse or children will accompany you, you will need a separate I-20 form for each.
- An application Form DS-156, completed and signed. Blank forms are available without charge at all U.S. consular offices or at [http://travel.state.gov/visa\\_services.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa_services.html). If you plan to bring your spouse or children with you, each member of the family must have a separate DS-156 (even if the children are included on a parent's passport).
- A passport valid for at least six months after the scheduled date of entry into the United States.
- One photograph 2 inches square (50 x 50 mm) for each applicant, showing full face, without head covering, against a light background.
- A receipt that shows payment of the \$130 (U.S.) SEVIS fee. You do not need to pay a separate fee for an accompanying spouse or child.
- Evidence of sufficient funds. You must prove that you have adequate funds to pay for tuition, room and board, and all other living expenses while in the United States (private sponsor's affidavit of support and bank statement, or letter from sponsoring agency).

F-2 dependents may not be enrolled in full-time study leading to an academic degree; they must instead apply for a change of status to F-1. F-2 students may enroll in English classes if the classes are considered '**recreational**' and are not a part of an overall program leading to an academic degree.

## Other Documentation

*Evidence to show proof of ties to the home country:* It is very important to convince the consular officer that you plan to return to your home country after your course of study in the U.S. Because it is difficult or impossible to prove ties (present or future) to the home country through documentation, consular officers often rely heavily on what you say in the interview. The officers look for evidence that you have a well-thought-out plan for your course of study and how it relates to a future career in your home country.

## Interviews

*Scheduling the interview:* You should call your local U.S. consulate to find out the scheduling requirements or find information on their website through <http://usembassy.state.gov>. In a few countries, you may face long waits for appointments. Therefore, it is important to schedule the appointment early in the process. You should not schedule an appointment for earlier than 120 days before the report date printed on your I-20.

*The Interview:* You should dress appropriately, as you would for a job interview. You should not try to present an “Americanized” image. You should display a respectful, businesslike attitude. Under no circumstances should you become argumentative. Remember that it is important to have a clear plan for coming to the U.S. to study and then to return home. If the officer asks why you have decided to study at Ohio State, focus on your educational goals. You should not say that you chose Columbus because you have friends or relatives here.

If the visa is denied, you have the right to ask for the reason in writing. Once a decision has been made, it does not help to argue or try to negotiate. However, you can ask politely for the reason(s) for the denial and ask what is needed for an approval upon reapplication.