



Cleveland Institute of Art

HOW TO OBTAIN YOUR F-1 STUDENT VISA

To attend CIA you will need to enter the United States with an F-1 student visa. Your I-20 document, which you will use to apply for your student visa, is enclosed.

You must complete the following steps to apply for a visa at a US Consulate. You can only receive an F-1 student visa while you are outside the US.

1. Pay the SEVIS fee of \$200. Payment can be made in the following ways:
 - a. The fastest method is to pay online with a credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express) or a debit card with the Visa or MasterCard logo. See <https://fmjfee.com/#>. You will complete and electronic form I-901 and print the receipt as confirmation of payment. The information on the Form I-901 must match the I-20 exactly.
 - b. Pay the SEVIS fee with a check, money order, or foreign draft drawn on a US bank in US currency. Make checks and money orders payable to "I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee." Form I-901 can be downloaded at <https://fmjfee.com/#> and must accompany the payment which is mailed directly to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS):

I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee
PO Box 970020
St. Louis, MO 63197-0020
USA

The information on the Form I-901 must match the I-20 exactly. DHS will mail you a paper receipt at the address on the Form I-901. Receipts are mailed via surface mail, or at an additional charge with express delivery.

- c. You may pay the I-901 fee using the Western Union Quick Pay service, which is available in more than 130 countries. This method permits the fee to be paid in local currency rather than US dollars. Western Union transmits both the payment and the I-901 data to the US Department of Homeland Security. For more information on this method of payment, go to www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/wu_instr.htm.

NOTE: A third party such as a friend, family member or other person can pay the I-901 fee for you through any of the three methods described above.

2. Where and when do you use the SEVIS fee receipt?

Once you pay the fee, you will receive a receipt. This receipt is needed in the following circumstances:

- Present the SEVIS fee receipt at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate with the F-1 visa application form (you will apply for the F-1 visa for students on the DS-160 form) available at <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv> and supporting documents. Embassies and consulates will be able to verify SEVIS fee payment electronically, but it is strongly recommended to have the paper receipt when applying for a visa.
- Present the SEVIS fee receipt at the U.S. port of entry when entering the U.S. (if exempt from the visa requirement, i.e. Canadian citizens) or making a new entry to the U.S.
- Include a copy of the SEVIS fee receipt with an application to DHS to change status to F-1.

3. When is the best time to pay the SEVIS fee?

The length of time it takes to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee and get a receipt depends on how long it takes for:

- 1) the Form I-901 information and payment to get to DHS;
- 2) the payment to be processed; and
- 3) the receipt to reach the F-1 applicant at the address provided on Form I-901.

Once DHS receives and processes the payment, it takes approximately three working days for the transaction to be posted to SEVIS and the State Department. The on-line method of payment is fastest. Applicants outside of the US choosing the mail or Western Union method of payment should take mailing times in their home countries into consideration when deciding when to pay the SEVIS fee.

4. If the SEVIS fee is paid with one school's I-20 can it be transferred to another?

Yes, the SEVIS fee is transferable to another I-20 or DS-2019. To do this transfer, you must bring both I-20s to the embassy or consulate when applying for the visa as well as the SEVIS fee receipt. Do not enter the US with another college's I-20 and then enroll at CIA.

5. Is the SEVIS fee refundable?

The SEVIS fee cannot be refunded if the F-1 visa is denied, but it is valid for 12 months if choose to make another visa application for the same kind of program.

6. Where can you get more information?

For more information regarding the SEVIS fee visit: <https://www.fmjfee.com> or <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901>.

Once you receive the I-20, contact the US Consulate closest to your home to make an appointment for your visa application. Realize that you may need to wait for an appointment. Several standard documents are required for the visa interview:

- A current, valid passport (not required of Canadian citizens) valid for at least 6 months beyond your arrival date at CIA
- An I-20 form from CIA
- Your letter of admission to CIA
- If you have received a scholarship, your scholarship letter from CIA

- Evidence of financial support for the period of time and amount indicated on the I-20, which must be originals of the same financial documents you submitted to CIA
- Proof that you have a permanent residence outside the United States
- One or more passport-type photographs
- A non-immigrant F-1 visa application

Additional application materials may be requested by the visa officer to prove your eligibility for a student visa. These may include: evidence of English proficiency, school records to verify academic preparation, additional evidence of strong ties to your home country that show that you do not intend to emigrate to the US, and evidence of your ability to support yourself while in the United States. An additional application fee and a short interview may be required.

IMPORTANT: Do not enter the US on a B-1/B-2 tourist visa unless “prospective student” is noted AND do not enter on a visa waiver or you will be refused at the US port of entry. If you have a dependent (in F-2 status), each dependent must have a separate I-20 document from CIA.