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Topic: General United States Visa Information

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United States Visa Information

If you are planning to attend college or a university within the United States you will need a student visa. Please read the information on how to apply for the F1 or M1 studentâ€™s visa.

In most countries, first time student visa applicant are required to appear for an in-person interview. However, each embassy and consulate sets its own interview policies and procedures regarding student visas. Students who wish to study in the United States should consult Embassy web sites or call for information the need.

Students should keep in mind that they will need to plan ahead to avoid making repeat trips to the Embassy. You should make sure you have all the proper documents that are required and to bring documents that establish your ties to your local community.

When Do I Need to Apply for My Student Visa?

â€ Students are encouraged to apply for their visa as possible to allow time for processing.

Students may apply for their visa as soon as they are prepared to.

â€ Students should know that Embassies and Consulates are able to issue your student visa 120 days in advance of your college start date.

â€ Students are advised by the Department of Homeland Security regulation which requires all new students enters the U.S. enter 30 days or less in advance to report date at school. You must keep this date in mind when planning your travels as stated on your I-20

All Applicants for a Student Visa Must Provide

â€ Form I-20-B, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) student Status- For Academic and Language Students of Form I-20M-N Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (M-1) Student Status for Vocational Students. You will need to submit a SEVIS generated Form, I-20 which was provided to you by your school. You and your school official must sign the I-20 form. All students and their spouses and dependents must be registered in the Student and Exchange. Your school is responsible for entering your information for the I-20 student visa form into the SEVIS. Any questions should be directed to your school sponsor.

â€ You will have to file a completed application. Nonimmigrant Visa Applicant Form DS-156 together with Form DS-158. Both forms must be completed and signed.

â€ Usually an interview at the embassy consular section is required for almost all visa applicants. The waiting time for an interview can vary, so early visa applications are strongly encouraged. During the visa interview you will be asked to give a fingerprint scan as well as a digital photo. There may be additional screening and you will be notified in this case.

â€ You will have to supply a passport that is valid for at least 6 months after your date of entry into

the United States.

• You will have to supply (1) 2x2 photographs. Meeting specified requirements.

• You will have to submit your MRV fee receipt to show payment of the visa application fee

All Applicants Should Be Prepared to Provide

• You will be required to provide transcripts and diplomas from previous schools attended

• Provide test scores for standardized test which are required by the educational institution such as your TOEFL, SAT, ACT, GRE, GMAT, etc.

• Financial evidence that shows you and your parents who are sponsoring you have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during your intended study in the United States. If you or your sponsor is a salaried employee, you will need to bring the appropriate documents and original bank books and or statements. If you or your sponsor owns a business, please bring the business registration, licenses. Etc as well as bank records and or statements.

Entering the U.S. Port of Entry

Your visa will allow you to come to the United States from abroad, to travel within the United States. Applicants should be aware that a visa does not guarantee entry into the United States. The Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and the Border Protection officials have the authority to permit or deny admission into the United States. If you are allowed into the United States the U.S. official will determine the length of your visit on the Arrival-Departure Record. Your Form I-94 document will show this date. You must keep it with your passport. You should also keep your I-20 with you every time you enter the United States.

How Long Can I Stay On AN F-1 Visa?

When you enter the United States on a student visa, you will usually be admitted for the duration of your student status. That means you may stay as long as you are a full time student, even if the F-1 visa in your passport expires while you are in the United States. Once you have completed your studies shown on your I-20 and any authorized practical training the student is allowed the following additional time in the United States before his or her departure.

• F-1 Students are allowed an additional 60 days to prepare for departure from the United States or to transfer to another school.

• M-1 Students are allowed an additional 30 days to depart the United States. A M-1 student may apply and receive extensions up to 3 years for his or her total program.

Staying Beyond Your Authorized Stay in the United States and Being Out of Status

You should be careful to consider the dates of your authorized stay and make sure you are following the procedures under the U.S. immigration laws. It is important that you depart the U.S. on or before the last day of your authorized stay in the U.S. based on your specified end date on your Arrival-Departure Record Form I-94 failure to leave the U.S. will cause you to be out of status. You can find additional information on the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) website.

Staying beyond the period of time authorized by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and being out of status in the United States is a violation of U.S. immigration laws and may cause you to be ineligible for a visa in the future. You must either maintain your studies to be able to stay.

You may study in the United States even if your visa expires while attending school but if you travel outside the U.S. you will need to obtain another one before you are allowed to return to the United States. A visa can not be issued or renewed within the United States it must be done at an Embassy or Consulate abroad.