

New Student FAQs

I-20s & DS-2019 Questions

How do I get an I-20?

All students will receive an email with detailed instructions after they make their enrollment deposit. Emails are sent out twice per week, so you may receive it a few days after you make your deposit.

There are a lot of details in the instructions, especially about bank statements. There is also another FAQ specifically for the I-20 in the instructions.

Do I really need an I-20?

Yes. You cannot get an F-1 visa without it. Students from Canada or Bermuda are also required to obtain an I-20 even though they are not required to have an F-1 visa.

What if I already got an I-20 for a previous semester, but have never used it to enter the U.S.?

You will need an updated I-20 with a start date for the semester in which you are returning to. Please email uia@pratt.edu if you did not receive instructions on how to update your I-20.

How do I get a DS-2019?

Review the instructions on how to request your DS-2019 Form on the OIA website in the [New Students](#) section. See "Before Arrival."

What is the difference between an I-20 and a DS-2019?

The I-20 Form allows you to apply for the F-1 visa. The DS-2019 Form allows you to apply for the [J-1 visa](#).

Do I have to show the total amount of finances for all years of school or just the first year?

Just for the first year -- financial statements only need to support the cost of the first year at Pratt. Please note that you should be prepared for the total cost of attendance for your program of study.

What if I can't show the total amount of estimated funds in a financial statement? Can I show a Life Insurance Policy, mortgage, salary of sponsor, or investment accounts like stocks?

The only acceptable funds are liquid funds. That means the funds must be available without significant movement in price and with minimum loss of value. Therefore, Life Insurance, a mortgage, proof of salary of sponsor, or investment accounts like stocks and equities are not acceptable.

I am using my own funds to support myself. Do I need to submit an Affidavit of Support?

No.

What is a "Room and Board sponsor"?

Room means a place to live and board means daily food. Some students have a place to live in New York or nearby with a friend or family member, without cost, and are provided with food. These students have a **room and board sponsor** because they are living with the sponsor for free and do not pay any rent.

If you will live with someone in NY or nearby without cost to you, then indicate that you have room and board sponsor on your Source of Funds form. The sponsor will need to provide you with proof of address, like a rental lease or mortgage payment, and sign a room and board affidavit of support and you will upload them.

You can deduct the equivalent amount of money for room and board from the total amount of money needed to show in a financial statement. See the [Estimated Expense](#) page to see the equivalent.

If your financial sponsor is giving you funds for rent but you are not actually living with your sponsor in the U.S., this would not be considered a "room and board sponsor."

Am I finished after I complete the International Student Form?

No. The ISF is Step 1. You have to upload additional required documents through your student Dashboard before OIA can review your request in its entirety. Please check your Pratt email immediately after submitting the ISF which will have a link to the Dashboard and further instructions. The Dashboard is a checklist of other required documents.

How do I access my student Dashboard?

AFTER you have submitted the I-20/DS-2019 Request Form [also called the International Student Form or ISF], you will be able to access your student Dashboard. An email is sent to your Pratt email account directly after you submit the I-20/DS-2019 Request Form (ISF) with a link to access your Dashboard.

How do I use my student Dashboard?

Your student Dashboard (also called the Checklist) tells you the status of your I-20/DS-2019 application. It provides you with the date that you completed the International Student Form and the status of the documents you have uploaded. You can only see your student dashboard after you submit your ISF.

I submitted all the supplemental documents, but the status is still showing pending. Should I upload them again?

The statuses are Received, Pending or Waived. It takes up to 10 business days after you upload a document for it to be listed as Received, so there is no need to complete multiple uploads if your Dashboard is not immediately updated. It is tempting to upload them again, but please do not. That will increase our work and slow the process down. Please trust that when you uploaded it and saw this message on the screen, it was received, "THANK YOU FOR SUBMITTING YOUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FORM."

How long will it take to get my I-20/DS-2019?

When your I-20/DS-2019 request is complete, it takes up to 5 weeks to issue an I-20/DS-2019 and for you to receive it. The best way to ensure that your I-20/DS-2019 is processed quickly, is to follow all of the instructions in I-20 Instructions document, and upload your supporting documents at the same time.

How will I receive my I-20?

As of this writing, I-20's are sent to you by email attachment. Since the pandemic started, ICE has allowed schools to send I-20's electronically. (Please see page 9, #5: <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/coronavirus/covid19faq.pdf>) You will print it on white paper and sign the bottom when you receive it.

How will I receive my DS-2019?

The DS-2019 will be mailed to you in hard copy. It has to be paper with a wet signature from an RO or ARO (a specific OIA staff member). We are not allowed to email you a digital DS-2019 at this time. You will fill out a shipping label from eShip Global to order your shipping label. You will get instructions on how to order when we issue your DS-2019.

The I-20/DS-2019 deadline has already passed. What should I do?

You must submit your I-20/DS-2019 request immediately. I-20's are processed in the order the applications were received. Please plan accordingly.

I am returning after a leave of absence and not sure if I need an updated I-20 or if I should apply for one online. How can I get my I-20 and what else do I have to do?

Please see the information on our website [here](#) for students returning after a leave of absence. Make sure to include your Pratt ID if you email OIA about your situation.

Classes

For the Summer 2021, can I take courses without an I-20 and apply the I-20 for the fall semester and enroll in Fall 2021 in person?

For students entering the U.S. with their I-20 for the first time, you can only take a summer course online. We call this I-20 an Initial I-20, and sometimes call the students Initial students. Unfortunately summer entry to the U.S. is not permitted for initial students.

I am a new student and will study online in the Fall 2021, and intend to arrive in person for the Spring 2022. When should I apply for an I-20?

Since we have seen students be able to make visa appointments in China in September, you can apply now for the I-20 with a start date for the Spring 2022 semester. You will not be able to make a visa appointment without your new I-20.

That way you can get a SEVIS number now so you can make your visa appointment in the fall. Visas are issued up to 120 days before the I-20 start date. The I-20 start date will be Jan. 13, 2022. One hundred twenty days before then is Sept. 15, 2021.

While a visa appointment can be made before Sept. 15, please know the visa could not be issued before Sept. 15th. The actual visa would need to be issued after Sept. 15th, 2021.

Keep your eye on [travel ban](#) updates.

Visa

What visa do I need?

If you have received the I-20 you will apply for an F-1 visa. This is the student visa. If you have received the Form DS-2019, you will apply for the J-1 visa.

Where should I get my F-1 visa?

You must go to the nearest U.S. Consulate or Embassy or one that is issuing visas. You should make an appointment for the visa interview. You cannot apply for your F-1 visa until you have received your I-20. Usually, you will need your SEVIS ID number to make the appointment. You can find your SEVIS ID number on your I-20.

Citizens of Canada or Bermuda do not need an F-1 visa. However, they do need a new I-20 with a new SEVIS number and have to pay the SEVIS fee.

Where should I get my J-1 visa?

You must go to the nearest U.S. Consulate or Embassy or one that is issuing visas. You should make an appointment for the visa interview. You cannot apply for your J-1 visa until you have received your DS-2019. You will need your SEVIS ID number to make the appointment. You can find your SEVIS ID number on your DS-2019.

Citizens of Canada or Bermuda do not need an F-1 visa. However, they do need a new I-20 with a new SEVIS number and have to pay the SEVIS fee.

Can I get a visa in the U.S.?

No. A visa is only issued abroad at a U.S. Consulate or Embassy.

I am an F-1 transfer student from another U.S. school and have a visa from my previous school in the US. Do I need a new visa?

No. You do not need a new visa if the original F-1 visa is still valid, even though it has the first school's name on it.

I am returning after a leave of absence. I have a valid F-1 visa. Do I need a new one?

If you have an F-1 visa that will be valid for entry to the U.S., you may use it to enter the United States along with your new I-20. You can use it to enter the U.S. up until midnight of the day it expires. You may use your [old visa to return](#) if it will still be valid (not expired) regardless if you have been out of the country for more than five (5) months, or if the SEVIS number is different.

The [Study in the States website](#), an Official website of the Department of Homeland Security, explains how you can use your valid F1 visa to enter the United States. You can print [this](#) out when traveling to carry along with your I-20.

If your visa will be expired or you never received an F-1 visa, you will need to apply for an F-1 visa at a [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](#).

To request a [transcript of grades](#) for your F-1 visa appointment, send an email to reg@pratt.edu. Include your name, Pratt ID number and mention you need the transcript to get a new visa after returning from a leave of absence.

Citizens of Canada or Bermuda do not need an F-1 visa. However, they do need a new I-20 with a new SEVIS number and have to pay the SEVIS fee.

When should I book my flight?

It is highly recommended that you not book your flight until you have received your F-1 or J-1 visa.

I booked my flight, but do not have an I-20 or visa. What happens if I enter the country without an F-1 visa?

Students in B-1/B-2 or visa waivers (ESTA) cannot study in the U.S.. You will not be allowed to attend Pratt.

How can I change my immigration status to F-1 if I am in another status now?

You have 2 choices. Either you can apply to change your status in the U.S., or you can travel and acquire a new visa at a U.S. Consulate or Embassy. Changing your status in the U.S. can take up to 1 year, so it is recommended to get your F-1 visa abroad because it is faster. OIA issues I-20s for change of status applications, but does not do change of status applications.

[Money, Scholarships & Tuition Bill](#)

Does Pratt give scholarships to international students?

Pratt awards a limited number of merit scholarships to new international undergraduate students at the time of admission. Graduate departments also award scholarships to graduate students. Financial Aid is not available to international students and international students should not fill out a FAFSA form.

When do I pay my bill?

You can check the due date on the [Academic Calendar](#). A late fee is charged if the bill is paid after the bill due date.

How can I pay?

Please see the information on the [Student Financial Services Website](#).

What if I can't pay my full bill?

Pratt offers a monthly tuition payment plan for your convenience. You can apply at www.afford.com/pratt. Please contact the Office of [Student Financial Services](#) if you have questions about this plan at sfs@pratt.edu or 718-636-3539.

How can I transfer money?

Pratt uses Flywire. Please read about the details on the [Student Financial Services](#) webpage.

How much money should I bring with me?

You should bring about \$300-500 USD. This is more than enough to pay for a taxi from the airport and food and transportation when you first get here. You can also order a ride hailing service from the airport like UBER or pay for a taxi by credit card, so you really do not need to carry a lot of cash.

You can withdraw money from ATM machines and should research the foreign transaction fees to be aware. Like most countries, the U.S. is using digital wallets like Papal, Venmo, Zelle and others to pay for some services.

It is not advisable to bring a lot of cash. Quantities of more than USD \$10,000 [must be declared upon entry](#) to the U.S. For information on paying tuition fees, please see the information above and [online](#).

How can I open a U.S. bank account?

There are many banks around the Pratt Brooklyn and Manhattan campuses. You will bring your passport and SEVIS I-20 to the bank. You can also bring a letter of enrollment from the Registrar's Office to prove your enrollment status.

How can I get a credit card?

Many international students find it difficult to get a credit card in the U.S. You are advised to get one in your home country before you arrive.