

F-1 VISA GUIDE

The F-1 Visa Application Process and Preparing for the Visa Interview

Congratulations on receiving your Pratt I-20! If you have never had an F-1 Visa or your F-1 Visa has expired, you will need to apply for one now in order to enter the U.S.

Step 1: Pay SEVIS Fee (After Receiving Pratt I-20)

Step 2: Apply for F-1 Visa (Complete Form DS-160 and Schedule Visa Appointment)

Step 3: Attend Visa Interview

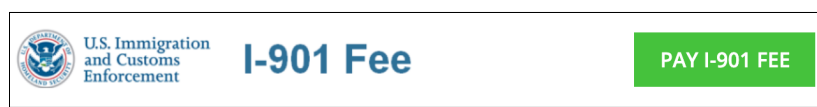
Step 4: Receive Visa and Travel to the U.S.

Step 1: Pay SEVIS I-901 Fee

The SEVIS Fee must be paid online at www.fmjfee.com. Make sure to print your receipt and keep it with your immigration documents.

To confirm whether your SEVIS fee has been paid, or to view or print the payment confirmation/receipt, you can do so on [the website](#).

What is this fee? The I-901 SEVIS Fee (SEVIS Fee) is a required fee used to support the automated system that keeps track of students and exchange visitors and ensures that they maintain their status while in the U.S. Each student issued an initial Form I-20 is responsible for paying this fee. In other words, this fee is for your student record in the government database (SEVIS), which is a requirement of being an international student in the U.S.



Step 2: Apply for F-1 Visa (Complete Form DS-160 and Schedule Visa Appointment)

***Citizens of Canada and Bermuda, please see special note below.

Complete Form DS-160

Complete the visa application online, called the [DS-160: Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application](#).

The DS-160 is a fully integrated online application form that is used to collect the necessary application information from a person seeking a nonimmigrant visa for temporary travel to the

U.S. Form DS-160 is submitted electronically to the U.S. Department of State and Consular Officers use the information entered on the DS-160 to process the visa application and, combined with a personal interview, determine an applicant's eligibility for a nonimmigrant visa.



After you have completed the DS-160, you should print and save the DS-160 barcode page. Then you will schedule your visa interview appointment and pay the visa application processing fee. (This is an additional fee. It is different from the SEVIS I-901 Fee.)

→ Review the [DS-160 Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Schedule Your Visa Appointment

Visit the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate website](#) where you will apply for additional country-specific instructions on booking your appointment. When possible, you should try to schedule an appointment for your visa interview at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the country where you live. You may schedule your interview at another U.S. Embassy or Consulate, but be aware that it may be more difficult to qualify for the visa outside of the country where you live or take much longer.

Wait times for interview appointments vary by location, season, and visa category, so you should apply for your visa early. The earliest you can interview for your visa is 120 days before your I-20 start date.

- [Student visa section](#) on the U.S. Department of State website
- [Check visa appointment wait times](#)

Every U.S. Embassy or Consulate works from the same set of regulations and laws but will have different procedures for its particular country or location. This is why it is very important to check the individual embassy or consulate website at which you plan to apply for accurate information, particularly which documents to bring to your appointment!

You will likely need to bring, at a minimum, the following documents with you to your visa interview:

1. Valid passport (expiration date must be at least 6 months into the future)
2. I-20 from Pratt (original)
3. SEVIS Fee Payment receipt (I-901)
4. DS-160 confirmation (barcode page)
5. Your Pratt acceptance letter or email (printed out)
6. Recent financial statements/evidence of liquid funds that will be used to support your study and living expenses in the U.S.
7. Any other documents listed on embassy/consulate website

***Special Note for Citizens of Canada and Bermuda:

Canadians and citizens of Bermuda do not need visas to enter the U.S. You should show the SEVIS I-20, passport, and SEVIS Fee receipt at the Port of Entry. Residents (Permanent Residents) of Canada are required to have the F-1 visa to enter the U.S. from Canada. You should consult the local U.S. Consulate or Embassy for current requirements.

Step 3: Attend Visa Interview

When you apply for a visa at an American Embassy or Consulate, a Consular Officer will interview you. The interview usually lasts only two or three minutes and is conducted in English. It's important to be familiar with the nonimmigrant visa type for which you are applying (F-1

student) and to be able to explain honestly, directly and concisely your intentions for study in the U.S., at Pratt Institute, and in your particular degree program.

- Please review these [visa interview tips](#) in preparation for your interview from our colleagues at NAFSA (The Association of International Educators).

What if the F-1 visa application is denied?

Please [inform Pratt's Office of International Affairs \(OIA\)](#) if you receive notification that you are denied a visa, and include any documentation that you were provided. (Email example: Visa Denied, Name, Pratt ID 1234567, 07/01/2021, Shanghai)

Most visa denials are based on students not being able to convince the Consular Officer that they have sufficiently compelling ties to their home country that will encourage them to return home after completing their studies, known as 214(b) denials. In order to reapply for the visa and try again, you must be able to present NEW or ADDITIONAL evidence to overcome the objection. Again, if you are visa denied, please inform OIA with as much detail as possible about what happened, and we will do our best to assist you. Additional visa denial information can be found [here](#).

Step 4: Receive Visa and Travel to the U.S.

Congratulations! Now that you have received your F-1 Visa in your passport, you are able to travel to the U.S. Pratt OIA recommends not making any nonrefundable travel plans (airfare, hotels, etc.) until you have received your F-1 Visa.



You will arrive at the Port of Entry and go through U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Similar to the visa interview, you will want to be prepared to answer in English why you are entering the U.S. You will present your immigration documents (passport with F-1 visa inside, Form I-20, and SEVIS fee receipt). You may also want to have a copy of your acceptance letter and/or printed class schedule handy to show, only if asked by the officer. It is extremely important that your entry to the U.S. is recorded properly by the officer (F-1) and not as a tourist or another visa type, especially if it is

your first time arriving as an F-1 student. Before you leave the desk, make sure your documents are returned to you. Welcome to the U.S.!

- Verify [your I-94 record online](#) after your arrival. As an F-1 student, it is your responsibility to check that your U.S. entry was recorded properly by the customs officer, *each time you enter the U.S.* If it does not have “F-1” and “D/S,” you must [contact OIA](#).

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Securing America's Borders

Most Recent I-94

Admission (I-94) Record Number : 51415565885
Most Recent Date of Entry: 2017 July 25
Class of Admission : F1
Admit Until Date : D/S
Details provided on the I-94 Information form:

Last/Surname : [REDACTED]
First (Given) Name : [REDACTED]
Birth Date : [REDACTED]
Passport Number : [REDACTED]
Country of Issuance : China

Additional information

Q: 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?

A: 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.

Q: I am returning to Pratt after a leave of absence. I have a valid F-1 visa. Do I need a new visa?

A: 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 F-1 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 again.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this document is for general information purposes to help you in completing your visa application but should not be considered legal advice. Pratt OIA may make changes to this document at any time without prior notice. The U.S. Department of State ultimately provides the decision on your visa application.