

Obtaining an F-1 Student Visa

After you have been accepted to The English Language Institute and receive your acceptance letter and I-20, it is time to apply for your F-1 student visa.

Information and tips on F-1 Student Visa application:

- **Apply for your F-1 Visa early.** The waiting period can be lengthy because of security procedures.
- **Pay the \$200 non-refundable SEVIS fee. The fee must be paid at least 24 hours before your visa interview.** You will need to take the SEVIS receipt with you to your visa appointment. The fee can be paid through:
 - The Internet at www.FMJfee.com by using a credit card and completing the online Form I-901. If you pay online, you can print a paper receipt immediately.

OR

- The Mail by submitting a completed paper Form I-901 (a copy of this form is included for your use) and a Check or International Money Order drawn on a U.S. bank and payable in U.S. currency. You will get a paper receipt in the mail. Mail form and payment to:

I-901 Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee
P.O. Box 970020
St. Louis, MO 63197-0020
United States of America

If you are paying by mail, write your SEVIS ID Number and name (exactly as they appear on Form I-20 or DS-2019) on your check or money order and attach the form before you send it. Your SEVIS ID Number starts with the letter N and is located on the top right hand corner of the first page of your I-20.

- **Make an appointment** at the embassy or consulate if required. To find the U.S. embassy or consulate nearest you visit: <http://usembassy.state.gov/>
- **Take all required documents to the embassy or consulate**
 - I-20 and acceptance letter from the English Language Institute
 - SEVIS payment receipt
 - Financial documents
 - DS-156 form (Use your name as it appears on your passport)

- DS-157 form (Males only, ages 16-45)
- DS-158 (check to see if this is required at the embassy in your country)

- **Consider the interview a formal event.** Business clothes are appropriate.
- **The F-1 Visa is a non-immigrant visa and is only issued to applicants who plan to return home after their study.** You will need to prove to the visa officer that you plan to return to your country.
- Visit the [U.S. State Department website](#) for further help on the visa process:

Entering the U.S. once you have your F-1 Visa:

- **After receiving your student visa, make sure all the information is correct** (spelling of name and date of birth).
- **When you travel, always carry your immigration documents with you!** Never put them in your luggage. You will need to show these documents many times while you travel. Make sure you always have your PASSPORT and I-20.
- **If you are flying, the flight attendant will give you a Customs Declaration Form.** You will fill this out and give them to the immigration officer when you arrive. Ask for help if you don't understand the form.
- **Once you arrive, go to the area for entry inspection by Homeland Security (immigration).** Have your passport, I-20, and Customs Declaration Form ready.
- **When asked the reason why you are entering the U.S., make sure you tell them you will be a student.**

**We look forward to welcoming you to The English Language Institute.
Please contact us if you have any other questions!**