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](http://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/](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 following website for further help on the visa process: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/index.htm

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 and an I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Form. You will fill these out and give them to the immigration officer when you arrive. Ask for help if you don’t understand the forms.
- Once you arrive, go to the area for entry inspection by Homeland Security (Immigration). Have your passport, I-20, I-94 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!