

F-1 Student Visa Instructions



After reviewing your I-20 Certificate of Eligibility form, complete the following steps to obtain a student visa for entry to the United States. You will apply for an F-1 Nonimmigrant Visa.

STEP 1 – Sign your I-20

- At the bottom of the first page under the “Student Attestation” section

STEP 2 – Pay the SEVIS fee (I-901 fee)

- Go to: <https://fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html>
- \$350 USD
- Saint Mary's College of California SEVIS School Code: SFR214F00633000
- Print the SEVIS fee receipt
- You will need the receipt for your visa interview and upon arrival to the U.S.
- For other methods of payment: <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/wu-instructions>
- F-2 dependents are not required to pay the SEVIS fee

Citizens of Canada and Bermuda do NOT complete steps 3 – 6

Canadian and Bermudian citizens are not required to have an F-1 visa in their passport to enter the U.S. in F-1 status. Be sure to pack the following documents in your carry-on luggage for entry to the U.S.:

- Valid Canadian or Bermudian passport
- I-20
- SEVIS fee receipt
- Supporting financial information
 - Bring all the financial documents that you submitted with the Certificate of Finances
- Saint Mary's acceptance letter

STEP 3 – Complete the DS-160 visa application

- Go to: <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>
- \$185 USD visa application fee (MRV fee)
- Print the confirmation page
- You will need the confirmation page for your visa interview
- If you are bringing F-2 dependents, you can create a family application

STEP 4 – Schedule an interview appointment at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate

- You must schedule the visa appointment in your country of citizenship or residence
- Refer to the website of the U.S. embassy or consulate where you plan to interview for specific instructions on how to schedule the appointment and pay the application fee (MRV fee)
- Check visa interview wait times: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/global-visa-wait-times.html>

- If you are a citizen or resident of a country where the U.S. embassy or consulate does not offer visa services, you must schedule the interview appointment at a designated location
- For a list of designated locations: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/adjudicating-nonimmigrant-visa-applicants-in-their-country-of-residence-sep-6-2025.html>

STEP 5 – Attend your visa interview

- Bring these required documents to your visa interview:
 - Valid passport
 - Valid I-20
 - SEVIS fee receipt
 - DS-160 confirmation page
 - Supporting financial information
 - Bring all the financial documents that you submitted with the Certificate of Finances
 - Proof of residency (if interviewing outside of your country of citizenship)
 - Saint Mary's acceptance letter
- Each dependent who is 13 years old or older will need to be interviewed to receive an F-2 visa. Bring these required documents for each of your dependents:
 - Valid passport
 - Valid I-20
 - DS-160 confirmation page
 - Supporting financial information
 - Marriage certificate (if bringing a spouse)
 - Birth certificate (if bringing children)
 - Proof of residency (if interviewing outside of their country of citizenship)

STEP 6 – Receive your passport back with the F-1 student visa

- Instructions on how to receive your passport back will be provided when scheduling the interview
- Email a photo of your F-1 visa to the Center for International Programs

STEP 7 – Entry to the U.S.

When you arrive to the U.S., be prepared to show visa and financial documentation to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer. Be sure to pack the following documents in your carry-on luggage:

- Valid passport
- F-1 visa
- I-20
- SEVIS fee receipt
- Financial documentation
- Saint Mary's acceptance letter

Reciprocity Fees

Students from certain countries may be required to pay a visa issuance fee after their F-1 visa application is approved.

- Go to: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/Visa-Reciprocity-and-Civil-Documents-by-Country.html>
- Find your country of citizenship from the left menu
- Select the "F" visa classification to see if there is a reciprocity fee for your country of citizenship