



This guide assists new F-1 students with the next steps of their process, after being issued the I-20.

## STEP 1: CHECK FOR ERRORS

Verify all information listed on your I-20 is accurate, this includes your name, program of study, program start and end dates, country of birth and citizenship, date of birth and financial information. If any discrepancies are found, notify [ISS](#) immediately, so the I-20 can be revised and reissued.

## STEP 2: SIGN YOUR I-20

Sign and date the **Student Attestation** section on the first page and keep it safe for your record and future use. You will be required to present this document during your visa interview, when traveling to the United States (US), checking in at Florida Poly when school commences, for employment purposes, and other important processes. You should always keep your original I-20 and only provide copies when it is requested.

## STEP 3: PAY THE SEVIS I-901 FEE

All F-1 students must pay the **US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS)** [SEVIS I-901 fee](#).

### What is SEVP & SEVIS?

The **Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)** is designed to help the **US Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** and **US Department of State (DOS)** monitor school and exchange visitor programs (F, M & J visas)

SEVP uses Web-based technology known as the **Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)**, to track and monitor schools and programs, students, exchange visitors and their dependents. It collects, maintains, and uses the information to ensure only legitimate foreign students or exchange visitors gain entry to the US, and shares information with DOS, USCIS, **US Customs and Border Protection (CBP)**, and **US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)**.

## STEP 4: THE F-1 VISA APPLICATION PROCESS

All non-immigrants coming to the US for the purpose of studying must obtain an F-1 student visa necessary for travel to the US. You must apply at the [US Embassy or Consulate](#) in your home country.

**EXCEPTION:** **Citizens of Canada and Bermuda** that meet all requirements, do not have to apply for the F-1 visa – please visit the [US Department of State – Bureau of Cultural Affairs](#) for information on this process.

### Visa Wait Times

Visa interview appointment wait times vary by location and season; you should apply for the F-1 visa early. To review wait times for the location you intend to apply at, please visit the [DOS Government Travel Website](#).

### Complete the Online Visa Application

You must complete the [DS-160 Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application](#), print the application and confirmation page, and bring to the visa interview.

### Schedule Visa Interview

Schedule an appointment for visa interview at the [US Embassy or Consulate](#) in the country where you live. Interviews may be scheduled at another embassy or consulate if accepted; you should be aware that it may be more difficult to qualify for a visa outside of the country where you live.



## Emergency Appointments

Under certain circumstances, a visa applicant may request an emergency or expedited appointment with their embassy or consulate, which will list the exceptions in which emergency appointments may be requested. You must visit the embassy/consulate website for more information. **Emergency appointment reasons normally include:**

- Participation in a scheduled exchange program (SEVP or EVP)
- Medical Emergency
- Family Emergency (funeral / death)
- ESTA refusal
- Urgent Business Trip

**IMPORTANT:** Florida Poly does not provide additional documentation for emergency appointments, the I-20 is evidence of acceptance and the need for the appointment to participate in a schedule exchange program (SEVP).

## Required Documentation for Visa Appointment

You should have the following documents **prior** to the visa interview:

1. Form I-20
2. SEVIS Fee payment receipt
3. DS-160 Visa application confirmation page
4. US Passport – valid for no less than 6 months beyond your period of stay in the US
5. Photo – Must upload photo when completing the online Form DS-160

## Additional Documentation That May Be Required

Additional documents may be requested to establish your qualification. Be prepared to present the following documents at your visa interview.

- Transcripts, diplomas, degrees, or certificates from schools you attended
- Scores from tests required for admission, such as the TOEFL
- Standardized test scores required by your US school
- Your intent to depart the US upon completion of the course of study
- How you will pay all educational, living and travel costs

## Attend Your Visa Interview

A consular officer will interview you to determine if you are qualified for the F-1 visa. After your visa interview, the consular officer may determine that your application requires further administrative processing

The visa interview is a conversation, not a document review session. As the applicant, it is **recommended to clearly articulate the following during your appointment.** You should practice and be comfortable with these questions prior to your visa interview. Also important, as for any first conversation, is to dress nicely and smile.

- Why do you want to go to Florida Polytechnic University and what do you plan to study?
- Who will sponsor your education?
- How do you plan to use your education when you return?
- What are your plans after finishing the degree?



## STEP 5: ENTERING THE UNITED STATES

**A visa does not guarantee entry into the US** it only allows a foreign citizen to travel to a US port-of-entry (generally an airport) and **request permission to enter the US**.

DHS Security and CBP officials at the port-of-entry have **authority to permit or deny admission** to the US. Your travel ability is based on the type of I-20 issued to you. **Please review specific requirements for your I-20 type:**

- **Initial Status I-20:** Students with initial status can enter the US no more than 30 days prior to the program start date indicated on your I-20.
- **Transfer Pending, I-20:** Students who are pending a transfer from another US SEVP-certified can travel within and enter the US with **no limitation prior to your program start date** listed on your I-20.
- **Change of Educational Level I-20:** Students with a change of education level pending I-20 can travel within and enter the US with **no limitation prior to their program start date** listed on **the I-20**.

**When students arrive in the US, they must have the following documents in their possession:**

1. Valid passport
2. Valid F-1 Visa
3. Original Form I-20
4. Florida Poly Letter of Acceptance (**recommended**)
5. Documentary Evidence of Financial Support (**recommended**)

## STEP 6: COMPLETING SEVIS REGISTRATION AT NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION SESSION

You will be required to complete SEVIS Registration at the International Student Session during the New Student Orientation at Florida Poly. The following documentation must be presented during this session if not already submitted via email to ISS:

1. Color Copy of current F-1 Visa
2. Color Copy of valid passport
3. Most Recent I-94 Arrival / Departure [printout](#)
4. Completed SEVIS Registration [form](#)

## STEP 7: REGISTER FOR A FULL COURSE OF STUDY AND MAINTAIN VALID STATUS

**While studying in the US, it is your responsibility to maintain valid status, this includes:**

- Fulfill the purpose for why the DOS issued your student visa and following immigration regulations
- Report academic changes, required check-ins, employment authorizations, and other required updates to DSO
- Complete the SEVIS Registration at the beginning of every semester
- Attend the school listed on your Form I-20 and be enrolled full-time
- Abide by rules requiring disclosure of information and prohibition on criminal active
- Keep your passport valid at all times
- Report a change of personal contact information (or any other changes) **within 10 days of the change**