

IMMIGRATION LAW OFFICES OF RON KATIRAEI

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F-1 VISA (Academic Students)

F-1 nonimmigrants, are foreign students coming to the United States to pursue a full course of academic study in SEVP-approved schools. These students must enroll in academic programs at a university, college, high school, private elementary school, seminary, conservatory or another academic institution, including an English language program.

SEVP

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) program that administers the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). It ensures that government agencies have essential data related to nonimmigrant students and exchange visitors to preserve national security.

SEVIS

SEVIS is a web-based system for maintaining information on nonimmigrant students and exchange visitors in the United States.

Process

A) Pre-Arrival

- Apply to a Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified school in the United States. Use the School Search tool to find SEVP-certified schools and programs that are eligible to enroll F-1 and M-1 students.
- If you are a student currently enrolled in the equivalent of a kindergarten through grade 12 program, visit the Kindergarten to Grade 12 page on Study in the States.
- Once you are accepted into an SEVP-certified school, your school's designated school official will send you a document called the Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status." The Form I-20 is a paper record of your information in our Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) database.
- After receiving your Form I-20, you must pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee.
- After paying the I-901 SEVIS Fee and getting a receipt, you must apply for a visa at any U.S. Embassy or Consulate before you come to the United States. To receive a Visa, you will have to participate in an in-person interview.

Note: A visa does not guarantee entrance to the United States; it only permits you to arrive and seek permission to enter the country. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at the U.S. port of entry has the final authority to admit entry into the country.

B) Arrival

- Ensure to have your Passport, Visa, Form I-20 and acceptance letter with you
- You have 30 days to enter the country before your official program start date, as listed on your Form I-20. If you do not report to your school by your program start date, your DSO may terminate your SEVIS record.

C) Departure

- Once you have completed your program and fulfilled your purpose for coming to the United States, you may have a number of options. These include changing your status, applying for training, transferring to another SEVP-certified school or leaving the country.
- F-1 students and dependents have 60 days after program end date (or training end date) to depart the United States.