



F-1 Visa Procedures/Information

Students planning to apply for a F-1 U.S. visa should carefully review the information provided on the U.S. Department of State (DOS) [website](#) before beginning the application process. It is strongly recommended that students apply for their visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in their home country, following the [DOS guidelines](#) and [checking current visa interview appointment wait times](#).

Please note U.S. visa stamps cannot be obtained from within the United States.

Required Documentations for F-1 visa application and interview

Students applying for an initial F-1 visa must prepare the following documents and follow the outlined guidelines:

- **Valid Passport:** Your passport must be valid for at least six (6) months beyond your intended stay in the U.S., unless exempt under a country-specific agreement.
- **Nonimmigrant Visa Application (Form DS-160) Confirmation Page:** Helpful guidance on completing the DS-160 form can be found on the [U.S. Department of State's Frequently Asked Questions page](#). An example of the DS-160 is also available online.
- **DS-160 Application Fee Receipt:** This non-refundable fee must be paid prior to your visa interview. Be sure to keep a copy of the receipt.
- **I-901 SEVIS Fee Receipt:** Students applying for an initial F-1 or J-1 visa must [pay the SEVIS I-901 fee](#) and print the receipt as proof of payment. This must be brought to the visa appointment.
- **Photograph:** A digital photo must be uploaded when submitting the DS-160 online. If the upload fails, bring printed passport-style photos that meet the U.S. Department of State's photo requirements.
- **Howard University-Issued "Certificate of Eligibility":**
 - **Form I-20** for F-1 Students

After receiving your Form I-20 from Howard University:

- Carefully review the document for accuracy. Report any errors to the Office of International Student Services immediately for correction and reissuance.
- Print the document, sign it by hand, and date it. U.S. immigration regulations do not allow electronic signatures on these documents.



- **Financial Documentation:** The financial documents submitted during your visa application should match those submitted to Howard University for the issuance of your Form I-20 or DS-2019.

If you have received a fellowship, assistantship, or scholarship, obtain a formal description of the award from your Howard University department, and include your official appointment or award letter in your visa application.

- **Letter of Admission:** Howard University Letter of Admission.

** The Office of International Student Services at Howard University strongly recommends that students prepare a comprehensive set of documents (as outlined above) before their U.S. visa interview. Being well-prepared can significantly strengthen your application. You should also be ready to provide additional information about your field of study or research, if requested.

At the interview, only present the documents specifically requested by the U.S. consular officer. Keep your responses clear, brief, and to the point. Avoid offering extra details unless asked. **

Required Documents when entering to the United States for First Time

1. **Valid Passport**
 - Must be valid for **at least six (6) months** beyond your intended date of entry into the U.S.
2. **Valid U.S. F-1 or J-1 Visa Stamp**
 - Must be **unexpired** and issued by a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.
 - **Canadian citizens** are exempt from this requirement.
3. **Howard University “Certificate of Eligibility”**
 - The most recently issued and signed **Form I-20** (for F-1 students) or **Form DS-2019** (for J-1 students).
4. **SEVIS I-901 Fee Payment Receipt**
 - A printed copy of your **I-901 SEVIS fee receipt** as proof of payment.
5. **Letter of Admission to Howard University**
 - Your official **Howard University admission letter** confirming your student status.
6. **Financial Support Documentation**
 - Proof of financial support that matches the funding sources listed on your I-20 or DS-2019.
 - This may include bank statements, scholarship/fellowship letters, or financial guarantee letters.

IMPORTANT: Per U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations, new F-1 and J-1 students (and their F-2/J-2 dependents) may enter the U.S. no earlier than **30 days before the program start date** listed on their **Howard University Form I-20 or DS-2019**. This 30-day entry rule applies to all students entering the U.S. from abroad using a new Certificate of Eligibility.



HOWARD
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Office of the International Student & Immigration Services

SEVIS Check-in

New and Transfer International Students must confirm their arrival in the U.S. by checking in with the **Office of International Student Services within 30 days** of the program start date listed on their **Form I-20 or DS-2019**. The Office of International Student Services recommend students to report to the office as soon as possible once they arrive in the country. Failure to check in may result in the loss of valid immigration status.

To activate your SEVIS record, all international students are required to report to OISS and submit the following information:

- (1) Passport
- (2) Visa
- (3) [Most recent I-94](#)
- (4) I-20
- (5) U.S Local Address