



# Obtaining an F-1 or J-1 Student Visa

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Enclosed you will find your Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student, also known as an I-20 Form, or your form DS-2019 for a J-1 visa. You will need this form in order to obtain an F-1 or J-1 visa from the US Consulate. **You need to schedule an appointment at the US Consulate immediately.**

An application for an F-1 or J-1 visa should consist of the following:

- The online form DS-160 Nonimmigrant Visa Application with appropriate fee. See [Nonimmigrant Visa - Instructions Page](#) In certain situations the Consular Officer might also ask you to complete the Form DS-158, Contact Information and Work History for Nonimmigrant Visa Applicant or Form DS-157, Supplemental Nonimmigrant Visa Application.
- SEVIS Fee receipt. See <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901>
- Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility or Form DS-2019
- Evidence of Financial Resources.
- Evidence of your ties to your home country.
- Valid, unexpired passport. (Must be valid at least six months past the date of travel to the US.)
- One passport-type photograph. (2x2 inches full-face photo against a white background with head centered in the frame.)
- See [Photo Requirements](#) for details on the photo requirements

To establish eligibility for a student visa, you must demonstrate that you have been accepted by WPI. Your Form I-20 and the official letter of acceptance from the WPI Admissions Office will be your documentation.

For proficiency in the English language, you should bring your TOEFL or IELTS test results with you when applying for your visa.

In considering your financial resources, the consular officer needs to be satisfied that funds to cover all expenses for the first year of studies are currently available. The consular officer is going to ask you to demonstrate the existence of a residence outside the US which you have no intention of abandoning coupled with your clear intent to depart the US upon completion of your academic program.

Often you will have to rely on family members' community ties. This can be in the form of an affidavit from parents.

Examples of ways to demonstrate your own ties to your community include showing real estate or business ownership, employment offer after completion of studies, or membership of religious or social organizations. The law places this burden of proof on you as the applicant.

The amount of the visa fee, the length of the visa's validity, and the number of entries are all determined based on reciprocity between your country and the US. The basic visa fee for all applicants is \$160. For more information about reciprocity fee for your country go to <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/fees-visa-services.html>

It is advisable to apply for your F-1/J-1 visa as soon as possible after you receive your I-20/DS-2019. However, the earliest you can apply is **120 days prior to your expected day of arrival at WPI**. Applicants from certain countries will experience a 40 to 60-day delay in issuance of the visa due to background check. Please note that you cannot enter the US more than 30 days in advance of the start date on your I-20 form or DS-2019 form.

The US Department of State Visa Application Form is available on line.  
Go to: <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>

The attached article, "Applying for Nonimmigrant Visa 10 Points to Remember", has been prepared by NAFSA, The Association of International Educators.

## **SEVIS FEE**

All initial F-1 visa applicants must pay a \$350 one-time SEVIS fee and J-1 Exchange Visitors pay a \$220 SEVIS fee in addition to the visa fees collected by the US Department of State. The fee must be paid prior to your visa interview at the US Consulate, but you can still schedule your appointment before having paid the fee, as long as you make sure you will have the receipt for the fee in time for your interview. If you request Expedited Delivery, there is an additional \$35 fee.

You have a couple of payment options. For more information go to <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901> and follow the detailed instructions. You can mail the fee to an address in the US with a completed form 901 and a check drawn on a US bank in the exact amount (\$350 or \$220). The fee can be paid by a third party, such as friend or relative in the US as long as you give them the information required to complete the form 901.

# *Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa*

## *10 Points to Remember*

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<b>1) TIES TO YOUR HOME COUNTRY</b>	Under U.S. law, all applicants for nonimmigrant visas are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must therefore be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States. "Ties" to your home country are the things that bind you to your hometown, homeland, or current place of residence: job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc. If you are a prospective undergraduate, the interviewing officer may ask about your specific intentions or promise of future employment, family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, long-range plans, and career prospects in your home country. Each person's situation is different, of course, and there is no magic explanation or single document, certificate, or letter, which can guarantee visa issuance.
<b>2) ENGLISH</b>	Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. One suggestion is to practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview. If you are coming to the United States solely to study intensive English, be prepared to explain how English will be useful for you in your home country.
<b>3) SPEAK FOR YOURSELF</b>	Do not bring parents or family members with you to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf. If you are a minor applying for a high school program and need your parents there in case there are questions, for example, about funding, they should wait in the waiting room.
<b>4) KNOW THE PROGRAM AND HOW IT FITS YOUR CAREER PLANS</b>	If you are not able to articulate the reasons you will study in a particular program in the United States, you may not succeed in convincing the consular officer that you are indeed planning to study, rather than to immigrate. You should also be able to explain how studying in the United States relates to your future professional career when you return home.
<b>5) BE CONCISE</b>	Because of the volume of applications received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impressions they form during the first minute or two of the interview. Consequently, what you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point.

<b>6) SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION</b>	It should be clear at a glance to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated. Remember that you will have 2-3 minutes of interview time, if you're lucky.
<b>7) NOT ALL COUNTRIES ARE EQUAL</b>	Applicants from countries suffering economic problems or from countries where many students have remained in the United States as immigrants will have more difficulty getting visas. Statistically, applicants from those countries are more likely to be intending immigrants. They are also more likely to be asked about job opportunities at home after their study in the United States.
<b>8) EMPLOYMENT</b>	Your main purpose of coming to the United States should be to study, not for the chance to work before or after graduation. While many students do work off-campus during their studies, such employment is incidental to their main purpose of completing their U.S. education. You must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your program. If your spouse is also applying for an accompanying F-2 visa, be aware that F-2 dependents cannot, under any circumstances, be employed in the United States. If asked, be prepared to address what your spouse intends to do with his or her time while in the United States. Volunteer work and attending school part-time are permitted activities.
<b>9) DEPENDENTS REMAINING AT HOME</b>	If your spouse and children are remaining behind in your country, be prepared to address how they will support themselves in your absence. This can be an especially tricky area if you are the primary source of income for your family. If the consular officer gains the impression that your family members will need you to remit money from the United States in order to support themselves, your student visa application will almost certainly be denied. If your family does decide to join you at a later time, it is helpful to have them apply at the same post where you applied for your visa.
<b>10) MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE</b>	Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, ask the officer for a list of documents he or she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal, and try to get the reason you were denied in writing.

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© This document was produced by [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#). NAFSA would like to credit Gerald A. Wunsch, Esq., 1997, then a member of the Consular Issues Working Group, and a former U.S. Consular Officer in Mexico, Suriname, and the Netherlands and Martha Wailes of Indiana University for their contributions to this document. NAFSA also appreciates the input of the U.S. Department of State.



# Arriving in the US

## PLAN YOUR ARRIVAL

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You may be refused entry into the United States if you attempt to arrive more than 30 days before the initial program start date listed on your SEVIS I-20 form.

## ALWAYS HAND-CARRY YOUR IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

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**Do not check the following documents in your baggage.** If your baggage is lost or delayed, you will be unable to present the documents at your port of entry. As a result, you may not be able to enter the United States

1. Your passport;
2. SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019 (paper version, not electronic. **Please make sure it is signed**)

In addition, it is strongly recommended that you also hand carry the following documentation:

1. Evidence of financial resources;
2. Evidence of student status, such as your admission letter;
3. Paper receipt for the SEVIS fee, Form I-797, and
4. Name and contact information for your “Designated School Official”, including a 24-hour emergency contact number at the school. At WPI you can contact the Campus Police, who are on duty 24-hours a day, and in emergency situations can get in touch with the advisors in the International House after hours. WPI Campus Police’s telephone number is listed on the next page.

For more information on procedures for arriving in the United States, visit the Customs and Border Protection Agency website: <http://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/know-before-you-go>

## COMPLETE YOUR ENTRY PAPERWORK

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1. **If Arriving By Air:** Flight attendants will distribute Customs Declaration Forms (CF-6059) This form must be completed prior to landing.
2. **If Arriving By Land or Sea:** The CBP Officer at the port of entry will provide the necessary Customs Declaration Forms (CF-6059)

## WHAT TO EXPECT

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Very soon you will be arriving in the US. It is important to think about arrival procedures at your port of entry BEFORE you leave home. On the day of your arrival, you will probably be tired after a long flight. It may be your first day in an English speaking country.

## WHAT HAPPENS ON ARRIVAL

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1. You will present your documentation to the Department of Homeland Security Official and you will be photographed and electronically fingerprinted.
2. You will collect your luggage.
3. You will show your luggage to the Customs official.
4. You will exit into the Arrivals hall, and now you are on your own in the US!

Once your inspection is successfully completed, the inspecting CBP officer might stamp your passport with a stamp indicating date of arrival, port of arrival, status and D/S for duration of status. During orientation, we will have you check your I-94 to ensure your visa admission category was correct. We recommend always checking your I-94 online upon entry to verify your admission category.

## **WHAT TO DO NEXT**

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1. **Change money** – You will need some money for telephone calls, transportation, food, etc. There should be a bank in the airport. Or, you may want to bring some US dollars with you, in case you arrive late at night.
2. **If your onward travel is by plane**, you will clear immigration and customs at your first port of entry in the US. You will then recheck your luggage to your final destination. Some airports have a luggage transfer counter; others will ask you to take it to the new airline counter to check in.
3. **If you need to go into the city to catch a bus or train**, locate the Ground Transportation Desk. Tell the attendant where you want to go; you will be told which companies operate on that route and their costs. A city bus may be cheaper than a taxi. It is important to be sure that you use licensed taxis; the unlicensed one might cheat you.
4. **If you need to stay somewhere overnight**, ask for suggestions in your price range.

## **WHO CAN HELP**

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Americans are used to being asked for help. Do not be afraid to ask, but be mindful of the people you approach. The best people to help you are:

- Travelers Aid Desk – Most airports have a Travelers Aid desk, which is staffed by volunteers who are ready to help travelers.
- Information or Ground Transportation desk.
- Officials in uniform, such as airline personnel and airport police.

## **HOW YOU CAN HELP YOURSELF**

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Come prepared with the necessary information. Write it on a sheet of paper, which you can show to people you ask for help.

Take care of your money, passport and luggage. You will be arriving tired, and you will be an obvious newcomer, so you could be a target for a pickpockets or thieves (yes, we have them in the US, too).

**DO NOT leave your luggage unattended.**

**Keep your money, travel documents, passport, and your ticket in an inside pocket or zippered purse.**

## **WPI TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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WPI Campus Police – EMERGENCY	508-831-5555 (24 hours, 7 days a week)
WPI Campus Police – OFFICE	508-831-5433 (24 hours, 7 days a week)
WPI International House	508-831-6030 (8:30 – 12pm, 1pm – 5pm, Monday through Friday)
WPI General Line	508-831-5000

**In case of an emergency, dial 911 from any US telephone.**



# How to get to WPI

Because international students arrive at different times and transportation to campus is easily accessible, it is not possible for us to meet everyone at the airport or bus station. We hope the following information will be helpful to you in explaining how to reach WPI on your own.



## Transportation to Worcester from New York City

You can take a bus from New York City. There are two bus companies that offer service from the Port Authority Bus Station, 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, ([www.panynj.gov](http://www.panynj.gov)) to Worcester. To do this, there is a shuttle bus that will take you from JFK Airport to the Port Authority Bus Station.

From Port Authority, you can board either Greyhound Bus (<http://www.greyhound.com/>) or Peter Pan Bus Company (<http://www.peterpanbus.com/>) to Worcester. The trip takes about five hours and costs approximately \$33.00 one-way on either bus company. Please note that prices are subject to change

Upon arrival at the Worcester Bus Terminal, we suggest you take a taxi to the WPI campus.

<b>Taxi Service</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Bus Terminal to WPI Cost from Worcester</b>
Red Cab	508-792-9999	\$10.00 (approx.) (plus tip)
Yellow Cab	508-754-3211	\$10.00 (approx.) (plus tip)

The above taxi services are located in Worcester. Please realize that these are estimated prices and costs may vary.

## Ride Share

<b>Uber Lyft</b>	<b>App can be downloaded Via Wi-Fi</b>	<b>Cost: \$80 (depending on traffic and timing) (Boston -&gt; Worcester)</b>
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**\*Although Ride Share apps are generally safe, please use caution when accepting a ride particularly at night or when traveling alone**



## Transportation to Worcester from Boston

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An easy way to get from Logan International Airport in Boston to the WPI campus is by using a limousine/shared van service. The price quote listed below is for one adult and two pieces of luggage.

Service	Telephone	Cost to Worcester
Knights Airport Service <a href="http://www.knightslimo.com">www.knightslimo.com</a> 390 Hartford Turnpike Shrewsbury, MA 01545	508-839-6252 800-822-5456	\$79.00 student rate (indicate you are a WPI student when making reservation)

## Commuter Rail to Worcester from Boston

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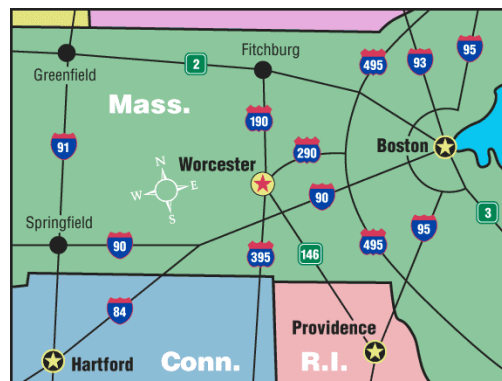
The MBTA offers commuter train service from Boston, South Station to downtown Worcester at Union Station. It will take about an hour and 15 minutes. A one way ticket from Boston to Worcester is \$12.75. You can view the [timetable for the train](#) here. Weekend fares are [\\$10 for the commuter rail only](#). From Union Station to WPI, it is approximately eight minutes by car or 30 minutes by walking. Please note that prices are subject to change.

## Driving to WPI

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### From the north and east:

Take I-495 to I-290 west to Exit 18/Rte. 9, Leicester. At bottom of ramp, stay in right lane; take next right onto Concord St. Proceed in center lane through traffic light onto Salisbury St., through two more lights. At the WPI sign, turn left onto Boynton Street, then right onto Institute Road, then right onto West Street. Pass under footbridge and enter parking lot on left. Visitors park in the first two rows.



### From the south and west:

Take Mass. Turnpike I-90 to Exit 10/Auburn; proceed east on I-290 to Exit 17/Rte. 9. At end of ramp, turn left, proceed straight through Lincoln Square onto Highland Street at third traffic light, turn right onto West Street and continue through intersection, under footbridge. Enter parking lot on left. Visitors park in first two rows.







# Student Visas

## Fact Sheet for Indian Students Traveling to the United States

Please use the information below as a guide to help you successfully apply for your student visa. The information is provided by the Consular (Visa) Section of the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi but do note that policies and procedures are subject to change. For information on the U.S. Embassy and Consulates' latest operating status, please visit: <https://in.usembassy.gov/visas/>

### Steps to Apply for the Student Visa

#### Step 1: SEVIS FEE

After you finalize your institution and receive your I-20, your first step is to pay the SEVIS Fee.

Pay the SEVIS Fee online at: [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)

#### Step 2: CREATE ACCOUNT AND FILL OUT DS-160

Visit <http://www.ustraveldocs.com/in/en>

Select the region and country and then create a user account.

Complete the DS-160 (visa application) form at: <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>

Find guidelines for completing the form at: <https://www.ustraveldocs.com/in/en/step-2>

#### Step 3: PAY VISA APPLICATION FEE

Pay the application fees - via National Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT) or mobile phone or in cash at DRUK (For Bhutanese Nationals), Axis, and Citibank

For instructions refer to: <https://www.ustraveldocs.com/in/en/step-3>

#### Step 4: SCHEDULE YOUR VISA APPOINTMENT

Schedule your first appointment for biometrics collection at the Visa Application Center (VAC) and your second appointment for the visa interview at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. For more information about scheduling both of these appointments click: <https://www.ustraveldocs.com/in/en/step-4>

For the latest appointment wait times see: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html>

**Remember:** You should arrive at the Embassy/Consulate or Visa Assistance Center (VAC) no earlier than 15 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment.

*\* F, M, and academic J visa applicants who have previously been issued any type of U.S. visa, may now apply for the F1 using the interview waiver (or “dropbox”) process. You may book a dropbox appointment at: <https://www.ustraveldocs.com/in/en>.*

#### What is the interview waiver process?

It is the process of applying for a U.S. visa without a visa interview. Visa applicants who were previously issued a U.S. visa and who fulfill certain eligibility criteria, or who meet certain age requirements, may be eligible to schedule an interview waiver appointment.

You may apply for an interview waiver appointment at:

<https://www.ustraveldocs.com/in/en/renew-visa>



**Documents:** Bring the following mandatory documents for your visa appointments:

For your VAC visit:

- A valid passport
- DS-160 confirmation page
- Appointment confirmation page

For your visa interview:

- Your passport
- A printed copy of your appointment confirmation letter
- Your DS-160 confirmation page stamped at VAC
- SEVIS fee receipt.
- The Form I-20 (for F and M applicants) or the DS-2019 (for J applicants) issued by the U.S. institution or program sponsor

**Type of Student Visa:**

- F1: For students in an academic or language training program. (This is the most common visa type for those who wish to pursue education in the United States.)
- J1: For Exchange Visitor Program participants
- M1: For vocational students or other non-academic students

For more information on student visa categories please visit:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study.html> and  
<https://www.ustraveldocs.com/in/en/student-visa>

**SEVIS and SEVIS Fee**

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is an internet-based system that maintains data on foreign students and exchange visitors, as well as family members, before and during your stay in the US. It is a key part of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) administered by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

If you apply for a student or exchange visitor visa (F-1, M-1, and J-1 visas), in most cases you must pay the SEVIS fee (SEVIS I-901 fee). Payments and inquiries are handled by the SEVP and administered by ICE. For information about the fee and the payment processes and options, visit the ICE websites

<https://www.ice.gov/sevis> and <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901>

Points to remember on SEVIS Fee Payment:

- Do not pay the SEVIS fee before you have your Form I-20 or DS-2019
- Pay the SEVIS fee before your visa interview appointment and well in advance
- Take the SEVIS fee payment receipt to your visa interview
- The SEVIS fee is non-refundable



### **Important**

If you have a spouse or child traveling with you, they must apply for an F-2/M-2/J-2 dependent visa – either at the time of your application or after you receive your visa. They are not required to pay a separate SEVIS fee. You can apply for an F-1 visa up to 365 days or 12 months before the start of your program (as specified on your I-20), though you can travel to the U.S. no more than 30 days before the start of your program.

### **Vaccination Requirement**

All foreign national air travelers to the United States are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and to provide proof of vaccination status prior to boarding an airplane to fly to the United States, with only limited exceptions. Accepted vaccines include those with FDA authorization or WHO. Emergency Use Listing – both COVAXIN and Covishield are accepted. Individuals are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving the second dose of a two-dose series, or two weeks after receiving a one-dose series. Students are subject to this requirement, and you should plan in advance to receive your vaccination in time for your intended travel. For more information on the vaccination requirement see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/proof-of-vaccination.html>

### **Contact Us**

EducationUSA at the United States-India Educational Foundation, New Delhi (USIEF)  
Fulbright House, 12 Hailey Road, New Delhi 110 001  
Tel: +91 11 42090909/78/79/80/83/84/97 | WhatsApp: 7428932225  
Email: [educationusaindia@usief.org.in](mailto:educationusaindia@usief.org.in) | Toll free: 18001031231 (M-F, 10am to 5pm)  
Website: [educationusa.state.gov](http://educationusa.state.gov) | <http://www.usief.org.in>

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for updates

