

International Student Services

F-1 Visa: The F-1 Visa (academic student) allows one to enter the U.S. as a full-time student at an accredited college, university, seminary, conservatory, academic high school, elementary school, or other academic institution or in a language training program. The student must be enrolled in a program or course of study that culminates in a degree, diploma, or certificate and the school must be authorized by the U.S. government to accept international students.

I-20 Form: The form I-20 (also known as the Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant [F-1] Student Status) is a [United States Department of Homeland Security](#), specifically Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the [Student and Exchange Visitor Program \(SEVP\)](#), document issued by SEVP-certified schools ([colleges](#), [universities](#), and [vocational schools](#)) that provides supporting information on a student's F-1 status.

Since the introduction of the [Student and Exchange Visitor Information System \(SEVIS\)](#) run by SEVP, the form also includes the student tracking number (SEVIS ID number) and Sofia's school code. Therefore, an initial student applying abroad will need to obtain an Initial I-20 from Sofia University to apply for the F-1 student visa at a Consulate or Embassy outside the U.S. The applicant will also need to present the I-20 form at the U.S. border along with the F-1 visa, and other supporting documents to legally enter the U.S. as an F-1 student.

Complete DS-160 Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application Form: Form DS-160 is submitted electronically to the Department of State website via the Internet. Consular Officers use the information entered on the DS-160 to process the visa application and, combined with a personal interview, determine an applicant's eligibility for an F-1 nonimmigrant visa.

I-901 SEVIS Fee: The SEVIS I-901 fee is required once for each SEVIS record. Payment of this fee is required prior to the issuance of a visa stamp by a U.S. Consulate or Embassy. If the student is renewing a F-1 visa and has maintained the previous SEVIS number, then the student has already paid the SEVIS I-901 fee. Students transferring to Sofia University from another U.S. institution, will have the SEVIS record transferred and are not required to pay another fee.

For answers to frequently asked questions, students should visit: <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq>

I-94 Record: When international students travel to the United States, they receive a Form I-94, "Arrival/Departure Record," at their port of entry. International students who enter the country at an air or seaport are issued an electronic form, while those who enter the country at a land port are issued a paper Form I-94. An electronic history of a student's I-94 can be retrieved online at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>.

For each new entry into the U.S.: Students are reminded to download and print a new I-94 record each time they exit and return to the U.S. They must keep the most current printed I-94 record with their passport for their own records. State and federal government agencies will ask to see the I-94 record (for driver's license, social security number, etc.). The I-94 record is the only evidence that you, a student, has of being in the U.S. legally, so it is important to always keep a printout of the I-94 record with the passport. On certain occasions, students will be required to submit a copy of the I-94 record to the DSO at Sofia University.