

# Obtaining an I-20 from Sofia University

The International Office requires the following Visa-related documents:

- Copy of passport identification page (*passport should be valid for at least six months after the date of entry to the U.S.*)
- Official financial documents or certified bank letters (*please read our requirements for financial documents*)
- Financial affidavit of support (*if applicable*)
- Sofia initial I-20 request form
- [I-94 record](#)

Additional documents for transfer students include:

- Most recent I-20
- Current F-1 Visa
- SEVIS Transfer Form
- Employment Authorization Document (EAD) if applicable
- [Latest I-94](#) record
- I-797 Notice of Action (if applicable) for students who have a pending application or petition with USCIS

## Proof of Financial Support:

Federal regulations require incoming international students to provide proof of financial support for one academic year before issuance of the I-20 form for entry into the U.S. Proof of financial support must be a bank record or a certified bank letter showing readily accessible funds.

This official document may represent personal funds, family funds, an approved educational loan, and another type of sponsorship.

- When requesting an I-20 for a Sofia program of study, applicants must show all sources of financial support and ensure that the sum equals or exceeds the estimated expenses for the student and any dependents. Dependents are \$10,000 for spouse, and subsequently, \$5,000 per child.
- Bank statements/letters must be official and clearly state the name of the account holder, name of financial institution, and currency (which does not need to be U.S. Dollars) and must show proof of available balance.
- Documents must be issued within the last **three months and** must be in English or accompanied by an official English translation. Funds must be liquid (readily accessible without penalty).

*Financial sources must be readily available liquid assets such as:*

- Checking or savings account
- Certificates, term deposit, fixed deposits (with maturity dates no later than the program start date)
- Educational loans (a loan application or pre-approval is not sufficient)
- Current Accounts

*The following documents/funds are NOT acceptable:*

- Paystubs or statements verifying employment and/or salary
- Insurance premiums or policies
- Property or personal assets such as automobiles, land, buildings, jewelry, etc.

- Non-liquid assets such as stocks, bonds, equities, retirement accounts, or deposit accounts that have NOT met their maturity date, etc.
- Income tax returns
- Non-educational loans
- Funds that are not described in English and not accompanied by an official translation

Students should refer to Sofia's Initial I-20 request form for amounts required for each program and specify sources of funding. Upon completion of this form, the DSO will then provide students with the initial I-20 with a SEVIS number. This will automatically enable applicants to pay the [I-901 SEVIS fee](#).

## Spouses and Dependents:

The spouse and unmarried minor children (under age 21) of the F-1 student may be admitted into the U.S. in F-2 classification, if each dependent presents a SEVIS Form I-20 issued in their own name and an F-2 visa.

### **Documents Needed to Apply for an F-2 Visa:**

- Valid passport
- Photographs
- F-2 dependent SEVIS Form I-20
- Visa application fee
- DS-160 Application
- Supporting documentation including copies of the F-1 student's immigration documents, proof of student status, and financial documentation and documents that establish the relationship with the F-1 student such as a marriage certificate for spouses or birth certificate for children.

*Important Information about F-2 Status:* Once the F-1 student has completed their studies and has left the U.S. the F-2 dependents must leave as well.

Dependent children over age 21 are no longer eligible to F-2 status and will need to change to another status such as F-1 (for full-time students) if they wish to stay in the U.S. At the end of the F-1 program, there is a 60-day grace period during which the F-1/F-2 individuals may stay in the U.S. However, once the F-1 primary leaves the U.S., the F-2 dependents must leave as well.

*Employment:* The F-2 spouse, and children of an F-1 student may not accept employment in the U.S. However, they may do volunteer work as long as there is no compensation of any kind, and the F-2 dependent is doing a job usually done by volunteers.

*Study:* F-2 dependents of F-1 students in the United States may study part-time at the postsecondary level in any certified program at an SEVP-certified school, as long as the study does not amount to what regulations define as full-time for an F-1 student.

F-2 dependents may also study full-time in vocational or recreational studies such as hobbies.

F-2 minor children must comply with compulsory education requirements in attending kindergarten through 12th grade.

However, an F-2 dependent who wants to enroll full-time in a course of postsecondary academic or vocational study must apply for and obtain approval to change nonimmigrant status to F-1, J-1, or M-1 before beginning their full-time study.

A student's spouse and dependent children are allowed to enter the U.S. under an F-2 visa while the student is enrolled as a full-time student in an on-campus program. Applicants should specify in the Initial I-20 Request Form if they will be bringing dependents into the United States with them. They must also complete supplemental A701 Request for I-20 so that each person entering the U.S. may be issued a document.