

Information for International F-1 Students

Generally, a foreign citizen who wishes to come and study in the United States must first obtain a student visa, or F-1 visa. To do so, s/he must apply as an “F-1 student” and submit all required documents in order to receive a SEVIS Form I-20. The Form I-20 is a certificate of eligibility which serves as proof of acceptance to a U.S. government-certified school.

Apply as an International Graduate if you:

- ✓ Are NOT a U.S. Citizen
- ✓ Are NOT a U.S. Permanent Resident
- ✓ Plan to attend the University of Houston on any type of U.S. Visa
- ✓ Have earned a 4-year baccalaureate degree or higher degree from an accredited college or university, equivalent of a U.S. Bachelor’s degree.

View the UH Graduate Catalog [here](#).



Information for Initial Attendance and Transfer Students

- **Initial Attendance:** A student who is requesting a new SEVIS Form I-20 to apply for an F-1 visa.
- **Transfer:** A student who is transferring his/her SEVIS Form I-20 from another U.S. institution to the University of Houston.

➤ F-1 Application Requirements

The first step is to apply [online](#) and upload all required documents to your application. The documents below are not part of the admission review process and are not required until you are admitted into the program. If you are applying as an F-1 student then you are required to submit the following documents **ONLY AFTER YOU ARE ADMITTED** to request a Form I-20:

1. Copy of current passport (biometric page)
2. Copy of financial documents ([UH Letter of Financial Backing](#) + supporting documents).
3. If claiming any dependents: a copy of the passport and marriage or birth certificate (in English).
4. If you are transferring into UH: a copy of the completed [UH Transfer-in Form](#).

* If you are applying as a J-1, Change of Status or Reinstatement student, please visit the [ISSS website](#) for further assistance.

➤ Next Steps & Visa Interview Info

If you are admitted to the Graduate School as an F-1 student, you will receive a Welcome Packet that will include your Form I-20 and other important information (next steps, paying the SEVIS I-901 fee, etc.). The basic steps are listed below:

1. Receive the Welcome Packet and review the information and Form I-20.
2. Go online to www.fmiffee.com to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee and print the receipt.
This is a \$200 government fee for all students who obtain a new SEVIS Form I-20 record. FAQ's regarding the fee can be found on the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) [website](#).
3. Go online to <http://www.usembassy.gov/> to schedule your visa interview appointment.
Although all U.S. embassies and consulates are listed on this website, not all may accept online scheduling. Once you click on the embassy/consulate in your country, you will see the specific information regarding making an appointment.
4. Go to your visa interview and bring all required documents.
The interview will only last a few minutes; helpful preparatory information may be found on the [NAFSA website](#).
5. Travel to the U.S. and report to UH for studies.
Students may only legally enter the U.S. a maximum of 30 days prior to the program start date listed on the I-20. If you are unable to arrive by the start date on the I-20 you should request “deferred attendance” to the next available term.

➤ Note for Current UH students

If you are a current undergrad student at the University of Houston then you will apply for a change in educational level to obtain your graduate-level Form I-20. The application process is the same and the same documents would be required, but you would keep your current SEVIS ID number. The I-20 would just be updated to reflect your new program.

➤ Other Resources

- <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english.html> (Information on U.S. visas)
- http://www.educationusa.info/5_steps_to_study/ (Information on finding the right U.S. school for you)
- <http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students> (Information on the F-1 process and regulations)