

## STEP 4: APPLY FOR YOUR STUDENT VISA

Congratulations on getting accepted into a U.S. college or university! The next step is to apply for your student visa.

### Types of Student Visas

The United States supports international education and welcomes foreign students and exchange visitors. Before applying for a visa, students and exchange visitors must be accepted by their schools or program sponsors.

1. **Student Visas:** Your course of study and type of school you plan to attend will determine whether you need an F or M visa. If you plan to enter the U.S. to attend a university or college, a conservatory, or any other academic institution (including a language training program), you need an **F visa**. If you plan to attend a vocational or other recognized academic institution, you need an **M visa**.
2. **Exchange Visitor Visa: J visas** are nonimmigrant visas for individuals approved to participate in exchange visitor programs in the United States. Exchange visitor categories include internships, short-term scholarships, training, short-term college and university student programs, and more.
3. **Visitor Visa:** For short periods of recreational study (non-credit) as part of a tourist visit, a **B visa** may be appropriate.

### Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)

You will only be allowed to apply for a student visa if the school you were accepted into is a SEVP-approved school in the U.S. Once you are admitted, you will be registered for the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and must pay the SEVIS I-901 fee. The school will then issue you an I-20 form, which you will need to present to the consular officer at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate during your visa interview.

Learn more about SEVP and SEVIS here: <https://www.ice.gov/sevis>. To search for SEVP-approved schools, visit <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/school-search>.

**TIP # 1:** Even when an institution is SEVP-certified and able to issue forms needed in visa applications, it may not hold national or regional accreditation. The U.S. Department of Education (<https://ope.ed.gov/dapip/#/home>) and Council for Higher Education Accreditation (<https://www.chea.org/search>) databases list accreditation status for all U.S. institutions.





# Fact Sheet

## Student Visa Application Process

1. Determine the type of visa you need to apply for.
2. Pay the non-refundable visa application fee.
3. Complete the online nonimmigrant visa application (Form DS-160). You will need your DS-160 number to book your appointment.
4. Schedule your visa appointment.
5. Visit the U.S. Embassy or Consulate on your selected interview schedule. Be sure to bring all necessary documents.

Visit <https://www.ustraveldocs.com/ph/ph-niv-visaapply.asp> for more information on applying for a U.S. visa in the Philippines.

**TIP # 2:** Student (F and M) visas for new students can be issued up to 120 days in advance of the start date for a course of study. However, you will not be allowed to enter the United States on your student visa more than 30 days before the start date. Continuing students, on the other hand, may be issued student visas at any time, as long as the student is currently enrolled at a SEVP-approved school or institution and in SEVIS. Continuing students may enter the United States at any time before classes start.

To learn more about **Applying for Your Student Visa**, visit <https://educationusa.state.gov/your-5-steps-us-study/apply-your-student-visa>.

