Applying for Your Student Visa: A Step by Step Guide

STEP ONE: Make visa appointment early
After you receive your I-20 or DS-2019, follow the U.S. Embassy/Consulate instructions to schedule an your visa interview appointment. Apply as far in advance as possible.

STEP TWO: Pay SEVIS fee
F-1 and J-1 visa applicants entering the U.S. for the first time must complete the SEVIS Form I-901 and pay the SEVIS fee before their visa appointment.
- Fill in your name exactly as it appears on your I-20 or DS-2019.
- For F-1 applicants, Purdue’s “School Code” is: CHI 214F10460 000. For J-1 applicants, Purdue’s “Program Number” is: P 1 00622.
- After paying, print a copy of the online receipt.

STEP THREE: Pay visa application fee
Follow the instructions found on the U.S. Embassy/Consulate website.

STEP FOUR: Complete visa form
Form DS-160*: Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application
*Make sure the U.S. Embassy/Consulate you will attend has transitioned to this online form. If not, follow the instructions on the U.S. Embassy/Consulate’s website.

STEP FIVE: Gather documents for visa interview
- A passport valid for at least six months into the future
- I-20 or DS-2019 (Be sure to sign the bottom of the form)
- Purdue admission letter
- SEVIS fee receipt
- Visa application fee receipt
- Confirmation page from your DS-160 visa application
- Two 2”x 2” photographs in the prescribed format on website
- Original bank statements or Purdue funding letter showing sufficient funds to cover your expenses as listed on I-20 or DS-2019
- Documents that prove you will return to your home country after finishing your studies in the U.S. These may include proof of property, family, or other ties to your community.
- Any additional documents that might be requested, such as transcripts or test scores
- Confirm with appropriate U.S. Embassy/Consulate that you have prepared all required documents.

STEP SIX: Prepare for visa interview
- Interview generally lasts only 2-3 minutes.
- Under U.S. law, all nonimmigrant visa applicants are viewed as intending immigrants unless they convince the Consular Officer otherwise. You must show your reasons for returning to your home country following your studies.
- Be prepared to use English and speak for yourself.
- Answer all of the Officer’s questions concisely and honestly.
- Be able to explain how studying in the U.S. relates to your future career plans.
- Know that lengthy supplemental documents cannot be quickly read or evaluated.
- People from certain countries and those studying certain technology majors may experience processing delays due to security background checks.
- Remember that the purpose of a student visa is to study and return home, not to work in the U.S.
- Be prepared to address how your dependents, if any, will support themselves in your absence.
- Keep a positive attitude. If denied, understand the reason why and what to do the next time.

Exceptions
1. Special situations such as transferring between U.S. schools or applying for a dependent visa may not require paying the SEVIS fee. Check with the U.S. Department of State for details.
2. F-1 and J-1 students who are not required to obtain a visa to enter the U.S. must still pay the SEVIS fee. An example of this is a Canadian citizen.
3. For additional information on bringing dependents to the U.S., returning to the U.S. to continue previous studies, or renewing your visa, refer to the U.S. Department of State website.

Purdue University
Office of International Students and Scholars
Schleman Hall, Room 136
475 Stadium Mall Drive
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907-2050
USA
Phone: 765-494-5770
Fax: 765-494-6859
E-mail: iss@purdue.edu
An equal access/equal opportunity university.