

What is the Form I-20?

To study as an F or M student in the United States you need a Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for **Nonimmigrant** Student Status." Do you know what it is and why it is important? After officials notify you of acceptance to a [Student and Exchange Visitor Program \(SEVP\)-certified school](#), a designated school official (DSO) at that school will give you one of two different types of this form:

- **F Students:** If you receive acceptance into an academic or language school and will attend school in F-1 status, you will receive the Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for **Nonimmigrant** (F-1) Student Status – For Academic and Language Students."
- **M Students:** If you receive acceptance into a vocational school and will attend school in M-1 status, you will receive the Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (M-1) Student Status – For Vocational Students. (Note: the Archdiocese of Hartford does not issue Form I-20's to M-1 status students.)"

You will need the Form I-20 for any of the following:

- **Paying your [I-901 SEVIS Fee](#):** You will receive a Form I-20 from a DSO from every school that accepts you. Use the Form I-20 from the school you decide to attend to pay the **I-901 SEVIS Fee**.
- **[Applying for your nonimmigrant visa](#) at your U.S. **Embassy or Consulate**:** Read the [embassy or consulate's website](#) for more specific instructions. You need to apply 120 days before the date listed on your Form I-20. Make sure the type of visa you receive matches the I-20 type you have (F or M).
- **[Entering the United States](#):** Bring your Form I-20 with you when you enter the United States. You will present it to [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#) officers at the port of entry when you arrive. You may arrive up to 30 days before the start date listed on your Form I-20.
- **Applying for a [driver's license](#) or [Social Security number](#):** If you need to apply for a driver's license or **Social Security number**, you may need to bring the Form I-20 with you to prove you are legally enrolled in a program of study.

If you have any questions about the Form I-20, speak with the DSO at your school. Remember that only DSOs at [SEVP-certified schools](#) can issue a Form I-20 to an F or M student.