



Enrollment Management

Obtaining an F-1 Visa

The Student and Exchange Visitor **SEVIS Fee**

If you are a non-immigrant alien entering the United States under any student status, the U.S. government requires you to pay the SEVIS fee. The current F-1 SEVIS fee is \$200. These fees are subject to change. Citizens of all countries entering the United States as students must pay the SEVIS fee, including citizens of Canada and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda. The SEVIS fee is payable online by credit or debit card, by international money order or by a check drawn on a financial institution in the United States and payable in United States currency. **Be sure to [pay the SEVIS fee](#) before you enter the U.S. or visit a U.S. consulate or embassy to apply for a visa.** You can learn more about the SEVIS fee as well as pay the fee online and print a receipt by going to www.fmjfee.com.

Visa Application Process

After you receive the I-20, go to a U.S. consulate or embassy office in your home country and apply for an F-1 Student visa to enter the United States. The application process varies from country to country and can take from one day to many weeks, so please [plan ahead](#). You must take the following documents with you to the consulate or embassy:

- Signed and dated original Form I-20
- Your letter of acceptance from Iona College
- Valid passport
- Original or certified copies of financial documents (with translations, if necessary)
- Proof of ties to your home country (this is critical for a successful visa application; see below for more information.)
- Proof of SEVIS fee payment

You will be required to present original visa interview documents to a U.S. immigration official when you arrive in the United States. These documents are valuable. Never put these or other travel documents in your checked luggage.

Proving Your Ties to Your Home Country

Ties to your home country are facts that are perceived to give you strong reasons to return from the United States after you have finished your studies. Anyone applying to enter the U.S. to attend school must be able to show strong ties to their home country with official documents. For example

- If your family owns a business, bring letters from the bank describing the business and/or documents showing that the business is registered and truly owned by your family.
- If your family owns property, bring deeds or other documents proving ownership.
- If you and your family have previously visited the U.S., bring your passport—even if it's an old one—to demonstrate that you have been issued visas in the past and visited the U.S. and, after every visit, you returned to your home country.
- If you belong to a professional organization in your home country, bring proof of your membership.
- If you have the prospect of a job in your home country, get a letter from the company stating that you will be considered for a job upon your return or that they often hire workers with the kind of education you are seeking.

Citizens of Canada or the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda

Citizens of Canada and Bermuda do not need a visa to enter the United States, but they do need the Form I-20 or DS-2019 if they are coming here to attend school. They must pay the [SEVIS fee](#) prior to arrival. At the U.S. port of entry, they must present proof of identity and citizenship. Since January 1, 2008, Canadians have been required to have a valid passport to enter the U.S. At the border, you must request a paper I-94 entry card. Please be sure your passport is stamped for entry. Refer to the visa application checklist above to prepare for interviews at the port of entry.

Visa Denial

If you are denied a visa, you will receive a formal notice from the U.S. immigration authorities explaining the reason for denial and offering you the option to apply again with new information. If this happens, please notify Iona College immediately and fax or email a copy of the denial notice so that we can make recommendations about your documentation in case you wish to reapply.

Helpful Websites

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students>

<https://www.fmjfee.com>

<http://usembassy.state.gov/>