

## **OBTAINING THE F-1 VISA AT A U.S. CONSULAR OFFICE**

This handout should only be used as a reference tool to guide you a bit during the F-1 visa request. **You should always follow the guidelines given to you by the American Consulate**, since they have jurisdiction over the entire process described below. If you have any questions regarding any of the information described below, please contact the American Consulate having jurisdiction over your visa application. To locate the nearest American consulate or embassy near you visit:  
<http://usembassy.state.gov/>

In order to obtain the F-1 visa you must submit the required documents or evidence as listed below:

- I-20 form issued and signed by the University of Rhode Island
- Proof of paid SEVIS fee
- Evidence of financial ability to meet your academic expenses. See the estimated expenses at: [http://www.uri.edu/iss/forms/Estimated Expenses.pdf](http://www.uri.edu/iss/forms/Estimated%20Expenses.pdf)
- Evidence of intent to depart the U.S. after the completion of studies
- Evidence of having met the English proficiency ability established by the university
- Proof of a valid passport (valid for at least 6 months into the future)
- Form DS-156, “Nonimmigrant Visa Application” to download, <http://travel.state.gov/pdf/DS-0156.pdf>
- Form DS-157, if applicable, to download, <http://travel.state.gov/pdf/DS-0157.pdf>
- Form DS-158, to download, <http://travel.state.gov/pdf/DS-0158.pdf>
- Adequate photograph, for info, [http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors\\_info\\_photo.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/tempvisitors_info_photo.html)
- Machine Readable Visa (MRV) surcharge fee of \$100.00 (fee subject to change)
- Visa reciprocity fee (if applicable) <http://travel.state.gov/visa/reciprocity/index.htm>

### **Where can you apply for the F-1 Visa?**

1. You may apply for a visa at the country of home residence. Normally, you should apply for a visa “at a consular office having jurisdiction over the alien’s place of residence.”
2. In some instances you may apply for a visa at any other consular office located in a country different from your place of residence, but only if that particular consular office permits it and has agreed to process the “third country nationals” (TCNs) visa. You must inquire about this option prior to applying for it. The majority of consular offices will accept visa applications, however, this types of application may be more difficult or time consuming.

### **When can you apply for the F-1 visa?**

You can apply for the F-1 visa at any time before the program start date (listed on the I-20 form). However, the visa stamp will not be issued until 90 days before the program start date (listed on the I-20 form).

### **After the visa has been issued, when can you enter the United States?**

Even if your visa stamp is issued 90 days before the program start date (listed on the I-20 form), you will only be allowed to enter the country 30 days before the program start date (listed on the I-20 form), therefore you must plan accordingly.

We wish you the best of luck in your visa application!

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