



## OBTAINING an F-1 STUDENT VISA

Your SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System) Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility," is necessary to obtain an F-1 student visa. This visa permits you to enter the United States for the purpose of studying at Bryant University. Although citizens of many countries are eligible for the Visa Waiver Pilot Program and therefore may travel to the U.S. on a tourist visa or without a visa, students must have a student visa to study at Bryant University. If you enter the U.S. on a tourist visa or without a visa, you will be required to leave the U.S. in order to enter on a proper student visa. Therefore, it is important that you follow these instructions.

### Review the SEVIS Form I-20

1. Verify your personal information on page 1. Please notify Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) at (401) 232-6946 or at [OISS@bryant.edu](mailto:OISS@bryant.edu) immediately, if you find an error.
2. Review financial information and make sure it reflects the source of funds on your original documents. You must have these documents ready to present to the U.S. Consular Officer.
3. Read carefully all information on page 3. This will explain YOUR legal responsibilities as an F-1 student in the U.S.
4. Sign with a ballpoint pen and provide the information requested if under the age of 18.

### SEVIS FEE

If you are seeking an F-1 visa for initial attendance at Bryant University, you must pay the SEVIS fee before applying for an F-1 visa. You may pay either by mail or over the internet. For more information, visit:

<https://www.fmifee.com/i901fee/index.html>

### Obtaining an F-1 Student Visa

We recommend that you contact a U.S. Embassy or Consulate as soon as possible. Processing times for visa issuance vary and may require additional time due to security checks on applications. For the latest information on visa processing, required materials, and current listings of U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad, we recommend the following web link from the U.S. Department of State (DOS): <https://www.usembassy.gov/>

Citizens of Canada and Bermuda may not require an F-1 entry visa to enter the U.S. if you are traveling from home country, but do require an I-20, passport, financial documentation and proof of SEVIS fee payment and must follow certain procedures. For more information: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/citizens-of-canada-and-bermuda.html>

### Required Documentation for F-1 visa:

For more detailed information, visit the DOS website at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html>. F-1 visa application process may vary at the U.S. embassy or consulate where you apply. You may consult the instructions available on the embassy or consulate website where you intend to apply. Please be advised that F-1 visa is issued within 120 days from the program start date noted on your SEVIS I-20 line 5. If you apply more than 120 days prior to the program start date, the Embassy or Consulate will hold your application until it is able to issue the visa.

**Note: Evidence of "compelling ties;" Student Visa applicants must assure the consular officer that they have the binding ties to a residence in foreign country that they have no intention of abandoning, and that they will depart the U.S. when they have completed their studies. It is important that you are able to articulate your educational goals; emphasizing how your degree will help you when you return home. Please refer to "10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa" by NAFSA, Association of International Educators.**

## ENTERING THE UNITED STATES

Earliest Admission Date: If you are entering the U. S. on I-20 with “initial attendance”, you cannot be admitted to U.S. sooner than 30 days before the program start date.

When you arrive in the U.S., you will be required to present the following documents to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) Officer at the port of entry. Since you must show your documents before you are allowed to claim your bags, **do not pack these documents in suitcases that are checked in.**

1. Passport with valid F-1 visa

\*Citizens of Canada and Bermuda are exempt from F-1 visa when entering the U.S. from within the Western Hemisphere. Exemptions are subject to change, please contact the U.S. Consulate or embassy in your country for the most current information.

2. Financial documents

3. SEVIS fee payment receipt

4. SEVIS Form I-20

### I-94 Arrival/Departure Record

Upon arrival, you will be enrolled in the US-VISIT entry-exit program. Once USCBP officer examines your documents and allows you to enter the U.S., the CBP official will determine the length of your visit on the electronic Arrival-Departure Record (Form I-94). Since Form I-94 documents your visa status and authorized period of stay in the U.S., you must access your I-94 at [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94), print and keep it in your passport once you arrive at Bryant. For more information on arrival procedure, visit <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/getting-to-the-united-states>

Once you are permitted to enter the U.S. and granted F-1 visa STATUS, it's imperative that you understand your legal responsibilities as an F-1 student to maintain your F1 status while in the U.S. Please refer to your legal requirements to maintain your lawful visa status in the U.S. found at: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/maintaining-status>

### Important Information for Students from Canada and Bermuda - Obligation to Comply with Immigration Regulations

In terms of immigration regulations, the only difference between Canadians and Bermudians and other international students coming to the United States is that citizens of Canada and Bermuda are not required to apply for an F-1 entry visa at a U.S. consulate.

Some Canadians and Bermudians have mistakenly assumed that other regulations that apply to international students do not apply to them. Citizens of Canada and Bermuda are subject to the same regulations regarding employment in the United States, requirement for full-time study and all other provisions for maintaining status. Other than applying for a visa, it is important that you read about and abide by all other provisions relating to F-1 status described in page 3 of SEVIS I-20. It is especially important for Canadian and Bermudian students to be vigilant about entering the United States in proper student status, as immigration inspectors are accustomed to admitting Canadian and Bermudian citizens as visitors.

### Students Transferring to Bryant University

If you plan to leave the U.S. prior to enrolling at Bryant University, you MUST use Bryant University SEVIS Form I-20 to enter the U.S. If you already have a valid F-1 visa, you do not have to obtain a new one, even though visa annotation on your F-1 visa stamp in your passport may indicate the name of a different educational institution. Follow the directions below – Arrival at Bryant University.

### Arrival at Bryant University

You are legally REQUIRED to register your immigration documents with Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) upon arrival at Bryant University. SEVIS registration is completed during the 4MILE@bryant for all new incoming international students for the fall. You MUST bring your passport, SEVIS Form I-20, Form I-94 and all previously issued Forms I-20 (if any) to the OISS. Further directions will be given prior to the 4MILE check-in date.

OISS will help you with all immigration-related matters during your studies at Bryant University, however, it is YOUR responsibility to maintain your status.

Please feel free to contact OISS with any questions. We look forward to meeting you soon and hope that your time at Bryant University will be academically and personally rewarding.