

US Student Visas

Category: International Students and Immigration

Location

US Department of State - Bureau of Consular Affairs

Website

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html>

Description

Generally, a citizen of a foreign country who wishes to enter the United States must first obtain a visa, either a nonimmigrant visa for temporary stay, or an immigrant visa for permanent residence. A citizen of a foreign country must have a student visa to study in the United States. The course of study and the type of school determine whether an F visa or an M visa is needed.

F VISA:

• University of College

• High School

• Private Elementary School

• Seminary

• Conservatory

• Another academic institution, including a language training program

M VISA:

• Vocational or other recognized nonacademic institution, other than a language training program

Visit the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) [Student and Exchange Visitor Program \(SEVP\)](#) website to learn more about SEVIS and the SEVIS I-901 Fee. Visit the Department of State [EducationUSA](#) website to learn about educational opportunities for undergraduate and graduate study, and an overview of the application process. You can also visit the DHS [Study in the States](#) school search page to search for SEVP-certified schools.

CAN FOREIGN NATIONALS STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES ON THE VISA WAIVER PROGRAM OR WITH VISITOR VISAS? No. A student visa (F or M) is required to study in the United States. Foreign nationals may not study after entering on a visitor (B) visa or through the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), except to undertake recreational study (non-credit) as part of a tourist visit. For more information on the VWP, see [Visa Waiver Program](#).

IS A STUDENT VISA REQUIRED FOR RECREATIONAL STUDY? A visitor (B) visa permits enrollment in a short recreational course of study, which is not for credit toward a degree or academic certificate. Learn more about [Visitor Visas](#). Study leading to a U.S. conferred degree or certificate is never permitted on a visitor (B) visa, even if it is for a short duration. For example, a student in a distance learning program that requires a period of time on the institution's U.S. campus must obtain a student (F or M) visa prior to entering the United States.

HAVE STUDENTS VISA SERVICES BEEN SUSPENDED DUE TO COVID-19? In May 2020, the US State Department announced suspension of routine visa services in all US Embassies and Consulates. Restrictions, including suspending entry of immigrants who present risk to the US labor market, were also announced. Services to US citizens continues to be available. For updates to how COVID-19 is impacting Visa Services, please visit [here](#).

[Back to All Resources & Opportunities](#)