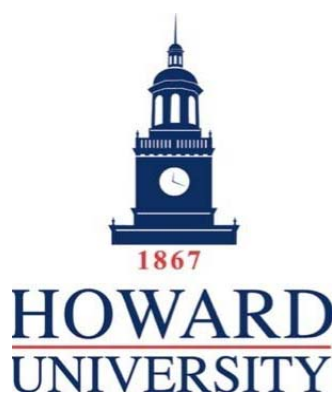


OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES



2400 6TH STREET NW
BLACKBURN ROOM 119
WASHINGTON DC 20059
P: 202-806-7517 F: 202-806-4073

HOW TO APPLY FOR A VISA TO ENTER THE U.S

PROCEDURE

A visa is granted by the Department of State at a US Embassy or Consulate **located outside the United States**. It is important to distinguish between a **visa** and **status**. The visa is granted **for entry purposes only**. Status is granted when you **enter the U.S and is regulated by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**. Once you have entered the United States, the visa has no other purpose. It is like a key that opens the door. Once you are inside, you do not need to use the key. If it expires, it will have no effect on your status, as long as you remain in the United States in a legal status. If you plan to travel outside the US with an expired visa and want to return to the U.S, you will have to apply for a new visa at a US Embassy or Consulate. **Please note that there is no guarantee that you will receive a new visa. If you are denied, you will not be able to re-enter the US.** The only exception to this regulation is travel for 30 days or less to Canada, Mexico, and nearby Caribbean islands, except Cuba. Instructions for travel to these countries are found in the handout, "TRAVEL WITH AN EXPIRED VISA."

You must have a valid entry visa* and supporting documentation to enter the U.S. as an F-1 or J-1 Exchange Visitor student. Contact a U.S. Embassy or Consulate for information on specific requirements to obtain a visa. You will be asked to provide the following documents:

- ☒ Valid Passport
- ☒ Non-immigrant Visa application
- ☒ Form I-20 for an F-1 student/F-2 dependent or DS-2019 for a J-1/J-2 exchange visitor
- ☒ Letter of admission (for new students)
- ☒ Evidence of financial support. Your proof of support needs to match the total indicated on your Form I-20. Research Assistants, Graduate Assistants and Teaching Assistants should obtain a letter from their department detailing the annual amount of the award. Funds from your sponsor or from a personal account should be verified with a current bank statement or a letter on an official bank letterhead. It is recommended that bank statements are not older than two months. Scholarships and other financial awards should be verified by providing a letter from your school, college or the financial sponsor.

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- ☒ Proof of residence abroad to which you intend to return after completion of studies. According to federal regulations, “an applicant for a nonimmigrant visa shall be presumed to be an intending immigrant until the consular officer is satisfied that the applicant is entitled to a nonimmigrant status. The burden of proof is upon the applicant.” A common reason for denying a visa is that the consular officer is not convinced that a nonimmigrant intends to return home. The consular officer has the discretion to require whatever evidence he or she deems necessary. Applicants should be prepared to provide evidence to the consular officer that there is both a need and reason to return to their home country. This may be done by providing: (1) evidence of a job offer or a job to which you plan to return, (2) proving ownership of property, or (3) explaining family ties and responsibilities. **Following these options does not guarantee that a visa will be issued. The final decision rests with the visa issuing officer.**
- ☒ Photographs
- ☒ Application fee, if required
- ☒ Receipt of SEVIS fee (US\$100.00)
- ☒ Other documentation may include evidence of competence in English, and standard test scores for the GRE, MCAT, etc.

ARRIVAL IN THE U.S.

At the port of entry, you must show your passport, Form I-20 or DS-2019, and evidence of financial support to the United States Citizenship and Naturalization Services (USCIS) official. The official should issue to you the following documents:

F-1 students: I-94 Arrival/Departure Record

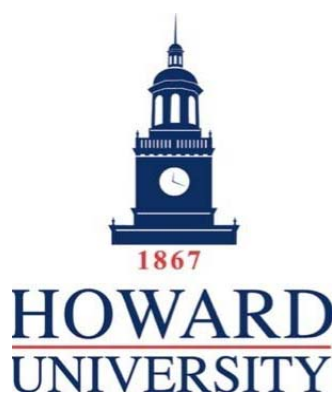
Form I-20, with a red USCIS entry stamp in upper right hand corner of page 1

J-1 students: I-94 Arrival/Departure Record

DS-2019 with a red USCIS entry stamp in lower left-hand corner

F-2 and J-2 dependents will only receive the I-94 Arrival/Departure record

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TOURIST VISAS

Do not enter the U.S. with a multiple entry B-2 tourist visa. Students with this type of visa are generally not allowed to change their status to that of an F-1 or J-1 student in the United States. Only those with a “Prospective Student” classification on a B-2 entry visa may change their immigration status to F-1 or J-1. To obtain a prospective student B-1/B-2 entry visa you must apply to a U.S. Embassy or Consulate, even if you already have a multiple entry B-1/B-2 visa in your passport. You must present documentary evidence that you will attend Howard University.

Do not enter the U.S. with a WT (Waived Tourist) status if you intend to study. This status is valid for only 90 days and cannot be changed or extended in the U.S.

WHAT YOU NEED TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

- ☐ Valid F or J entry visa. Under certain circumstances, an F-1 student may re-enter the US with an expired visa provided that the student applies for readmission to the U.S after an absence not exceeding 30 days in Canada, Mexico, or adjacent islands in the Caribbean, except Cuba. For more information about the requirements for using this provision, please read our handout entitled, “TRAVEL WITH AN EXPIRED VISA.”
- ☐ A valid passport.
- ☐ Proof of financial support may be required.
- ☐ Form I-94
- ☐ Form I-20 or DS-2019 endorsed by an International Student Advisor for re-entry.

*Canadian citizens, “landed immigrants” of Canada who are citizens of British Commonwealth countries, and Bermudians **do not** need a visa to enter the U.S. These students must apply for admission to the U.S. by presenting the Form I-20 or DS-2019 together with the supporting documentation described above, except for the non-immigrant visa application and the photograph.

PLEASE RETAIN THIS FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS.