

# How To Obtain Your F-1 Visa & Status



## Check Your I-20 for Errors

Check your Form I-20 for any corrections or updates that need to be made. **Your name on the Form I-20 must match your name in your passport!** Sign and date your Form I-20.



## SEVIS I-901 Fee

Pay the **SEVIS I-901** fee prior to applying for an F-1 visa at the U.S. embassy or consulate and applying for admission at the US port of entry in F-1 status. Payment of this fee may be made at <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/>. Print the SEVIS I-901 fee payment confirmation page and attach it to your Form I-20. If your Pepperdine Form I-20 is issued for "transfer pending," and you have paid the fee previously, attach the payment confirmation page for your previously paid SEVIS I-901 fee.



## F-1 Student Visa

Go to the U.S. Department of State (DOS) website ([www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)) to see instructions on how to apply for the student visa, or to find out if you are exempt from visa requirements. If your application for a student visa is denied, we encourage you to apply again as soon as possible. If your application was denied under Section 214(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, prepare evidence of strong ties to the country to which you intend to return upon completion of your studies.



## Arriving at the U.S. Port of Entry

Arrive at the US port of entry ***not more than 30 days*** before the "program start date" on your Form I-20 (see #5 on your Form I-20) if your Form I-20 was issued for "initial attendance." To avoid delays or problems being admitted to the U.S., visit the **U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)** website ([www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov)) and **U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** website ([www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov)) for additional information on entry/exit procedures and requirements. If you are cleared for admission, the CBP officer will provide an admission stamp in your passport indicating the date of admission, class of admission (for students, the class is "F-1"), and length of authorized stay (for students, the authorized stay is for "duration of status," or "D/S").



## Form I-94

Upon entry to the U.S., search for your **I-94 number**, which is important evidence of your lawful entry to the U.S. It is created each time you enter the U.S. as an automated electronic arrival record at an air or sea port of entry. You must go to [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94) as soon as you arrive in order to retrieve and print your I-94 number. Keep each Form I-94 for your records.



## Report to OISS When You Arrive

Not later than one week of the program start date listed on your Form I-20, you must complete the Mandatory Arrival Report (MAR) so that your Designated School Official (DSO) can register your arrival in the Department of Homeland Security database system (SEVIS). The MAR is located on the international student portal at [oiss.pepperdine.edu](http://oiss.pepperdine.edu). Note that the form has four parts to submit!



## Reporting Your Name

Be consistent in the way you enter your name, date of birth and other information on forms submitted to the US government for immigration, driver's license, employment, tax and other purposes. The information you provide should match the information in your passport and on your Form I-20. Your name in the Pepperdine University system should also conform with your passport name.



## Transfer or Withdraw

If you decide to cancel or defer your attendance at Pepperdine University, or if you decide to attend another school after entering the U.S. on a Pepperdine University Form I-20, notify the OISS immediately. In order to attend another school, the program start date at the new school must be within 30 days of the date of your entry to the U.S. if your Form I-20 is issued for "initial attendance," or within 5 months of your last school attendance if your Form I-20 was issued for "transfer pending."