



Office of International Students and Scholars Services

Preparing for an F-1 Visa Interview

This information is for students who plan to study in the United States for the first time. For information on bringing dependents to the U.S., returning to continue studies, renewing your visa, or for more details on applying for a student visa, refer to the [Student Exchange Visitor Program at HIU](#) and the [U.S. Department of State](#).

Steps:

1. Apply and be accepted to one of our degree-granting programs. You will receive an acceptance letter from the Admissions Office.
2. Complete and submit the [I-20 Request E-form](#). You will need to upload financial documentation that equals or exceeds the cost of attendance and a copy of your biographic passport page.
3. Please contact your local U.S. Consulate or Embassy to ask how to get an F-1 international student visa.
4. After you receive an I-20 form from Hartford International, follow the U.S. Embassy/Consulate's instructions to schedule an interview for your F-1 student visa. It is important to apply for your student visa as soon as possible. Many consulates recommend that appointments be made at most 90 days from the intended travel date, but some can make earlier arrangements for interviews.
5. Complete the [DS-160 Form online](#) and pay the visa application fee by following instructions on your local U.S. Embassy's or Consulate's website.
6. Pay the \$350 SEVIS I-901 fee, if applicable. HIU pays this fee for all fully funded MAP-admitted students.

To Pay by Mail:

- Get a Form I-901 Fee Remittance for Certain F, J, and M Nonimmigrants.
- Download the [I-901 form](#) or
- Ask for the form by phone at 800.870.3676 (inside the United States)
- Complete the Form I-901. Be sure to write your name exactly how it appears on your I-20 form.
- Prepare a check, international money order, or foreign draft (drawn on U.S. banks only) for USD 350, payable to "The Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement."
- Many foreign banks are able to issue checks or money orders drawn on a U.S. bank. You may, therefore, obtain a check from a bank chartered or operated in the United States, a foreign subsidiary of a U.S. bank, or a foreign bank that has an arrangement with a U.S. bank to issue a check, money order, or foreign draft that is drawn on a U.S. bank.
- Mail the completed I-901 and payment to the address listed on Form I-901.



- A Form I-797 receipt confirmation letter should be mailed within three days of processing the fee. Be sure to make copies of this receipt letter and keep it with your other important immigration documents.

To Pay Online (recommended):

- Find the [I-901 Form](#)
 - Complete the form online and supply the necessary Visa, MasterCard, or American Express information. *Be sure to write your name exactly how it appears on your I-20 form.
 - Print a copy of the online receipt.
 - Be sure to make copies of your receipt and keep it with your other important immigration documents.
 - Please make sure to bring the fee payment receipt to the interview. If you have lost the receipt, the Visa Officer should be able to view your payment history in their database.
 - If you are transferring schools, extending your program, applying for an F-2 dependent visa, or have paid this fee and been denied a visa within the last twelve months, you do not need to pay the \$350 SEVIS fee.
7. Prepare and bring to your visa interview the following:
- A passport valid for at least six months
 - Form I-20 (sign the form under Item 11)
 - School admission letter and scholarship letter, if applicable.
 - Two 2"x 2" photographs in the [prescribed format](#)
 - A receipt for the visa application fee (MRV fee)
 - A receipt for the SEVIS I-901 fee. Suppose you have yet to receive an official receipt in the mail showing payment, and you paid the fee electronically. In that case, the consulate will accept the temporary receipt you printed from your computer. If you do not have a receipt, the consulate may be able to see your payment electronically if your fee payment was processed at least three business days before your interview.
 - Financial evidence that shows you have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period you intend to study.
 - Any information that proves that you will return to your home country after finishing your studies in the United States. This may include proof of property, family, or other ties to your community.
8. Remain calm and answer all the Consular Officer's questions openly and honestly. Make sure you can clearly and concisely state your intended study purpose and why you are particularly interested in studying religion/peacebuilding/chaplaincy. Here are some additional [interview tips](#).