

## Information for F-1 Students

### Student Visa Process

- Please find your I-20 form enclosed. Now that you have received your I-20, you can begin the student visa process!
- After reviewing your I-20 (confirm that all the information is correct), you must pay the \$350 SEVIS fee online at [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com). *Do not pay this fee at other websites.*
- Next, you must complete the DS-160 nonimmigrant application. Please refer to the U.S. Department of State for further instructions <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>.
- After you pay the SEVIS fee and complete the DS-160 application, you can schedule your appointment at the U.S. Embassy for your visa interview. For specific document requirements, please refer to the U.S. Embassy in your home country.

### U.S. Customs and Border Protection

- By law you may enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to your course start date.
- To enter the U.S. you will need to present the following to U.S. Customs and Border Protection: passport, student visa, and I-20. Students may also be asked to present an ELC confirmation letter and a financial support document.
- If you are allowed to enter the U.S., the CBP official will provide you with an admission stamp and I-94 (record of your permission to be in the U.S.).

### Helpful Post-Arrival Information

- Your F-1 student visa requires that you study full-time. Full-time is defined as 18 clock hours or more per week.
- If your I-94 states “D/S” or “Duration of Status” then you can stay in the U.S as long as you are studying full-time. Even if your visa expires, you are still in legal F-1 status. However, if you plan to travel outside of the U.S. and your visa has expired, you will need to obtain a new visa.
- If you would like to schedule a vacation, please speak with an ELC staff member at least four weeks prior to the vacation start date. Students must be studying for 12 weeks before they are able to take a vacation. If you plan to leave the US during your vacation, you must obtain a travel signature from a DSO/school representative.
- The only work permitted on an F-1 visa is work-study at ELC. ELC does not currently offer a work-study program.
- Please notify an ELC staff member if you change your address in the U.S.
- Students must maintain an 80% rate of attendance throughout their program if they wish to remain in status. Attendance policy violation may result in I-20 termination. Students who have a terminated I-20 must depart the United States within 15 days.
- Your I-20 form must not expire while you are at school. If you want to continue studying at ELC after the end date on your I-20 form, please notify an ELC staff member before the end date so that ELC can issue a new I-20 to you.
- Upon completion of your program, you are allowed a 60-day grace period to prepare for departure or to transfer to another institution. If you are out of status due to circumstances beyond your control, please speak with the Director about reinstatement.

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