

## WHAT IS A FORM I-20 AND WHY DO YOU NEED ONE?

***A form I-20 is a government form that tells the U.S. government that you are eligible for F-1 Student Status.*** It certifies that (1) you are or expected to be a “bona fide” student; (2) you meet our admission requirements; (3) you will pursue a full course of study; (4) you proved to us that you have enough money to study and live in the U.S. without working illegally or suffering from poverty.

**You need a form I-20 to obtain an F-1 student visa or status, or to keep lawful F-1 status when transferring or changing schools within the U.S.**

## DOES EVERYBODY NEED AN I-20?

**NO, some international students do not need I-20's.** J-1 students need a Form DS-2019 and should ask us for that application. B visitors and F-2 dependents must obtain an I-20 and apply for a change of status to F-1 students to pursue a course of study that is not a vocational or recreational in nature. If you are maintaining another nonimmigrant status in the U.S., you do not have to have an I-20 and may attend school full- or part-time. Dependent children in E, H, I, J, L, M, N, O, P, R, or S status need to change status after their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday or if they marry. If you have no legal status, you may attend school but you are not eligible to change status and do need an I-20.

## THESE ARE THE RULES FOR GETTING YOUR FORM I-20

- 1. YOU MUST BE A “BONA FIDE” STUDENT, ACCEPTED TO A FULL-TIME PROGRAM OF STUDY**
- 2. YOU MUST PROVE TO US THAT YOU CAN SUPPORT THE COST OF LIVING AND STUDYING IN THE U.S FOR EVERY YEAR OF YOUR PROGRAM OF STUDY. THIS IS REQUIRED BY U.S LAW**
  - DO NOT EXPECT TO WORK IN THE U.S. TO HELP MEET YOUR ANNUAL COST!** On-campus employment is limited and competitive; off-campus employment is strictly controlled by U.S. citizenship and Immigration Services.
  - Carefully review our school's “Estimated Annual Financial Requirements for International Students” on page six and figure out *your* annual costs in the workbook on page seven. This is the amount that you must prove that you can support for every year in your program of study. (Estimate a minimum of two years for**

an Associate's degree; 2 years for a Master's; 4 years for a Bachelor's; 5 for a Doctorate)

- **THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE.** They represent a modest average budget that does not include luxuries of any kind. We strongly recommend that you budget at least 10% more if possible. Too little money causes pain and distress. We insist that student and their families look closely at the cost of living and studying in the U.S. and make careful plans to be sure your need will be met.
  - **EXPECT ANNUAL INCREASES** *in tuition and living costs of approximately 10%.*
3. **READ AND FOLLOW THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS VERY CAREFULLY. YOU CANNOT COMPLETE THIS PROCESS WITHOUT FOLLOWING THEM STEP-BY-STEP.** Sometimes, we may have to ask you to give us more evidence of your financial ability – perhaps more than once. The U.S. government requires that we be absolutely sure, to the best of our ability, that you will have enough financial support to cover the full cost of your stay in the U.S

## SOURCES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

**YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT CAN COME FROM ANY COMBINATION OF THE FOLLOWING SOURCES IN THE U.S. OR ABROAD.**

1. **FUNDS FROM “SPONSORS”** *(Parents, relatives, friends, organizations).*  
*You may have as many sponsors as you need. Sponsors may provide you with support in the form of cash and/or room and board. Free room and board is when you live with someone and do not have to pay for your room or food.*

### WARNING #1

It is highly recommended that **at least part of your financial support come from your home country.** This is important for getting your student visa!

### WARNING #2

**A sponsor should promise only as much money as he or she is able to give you.** Some sponsors believe that the more money they promise to give the easier it will be to get your I-20. **THE MOST COMMON REASON FOR REJECTION OF FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS IS THAT WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE SPONSOR CAN AFFORD TO GIVE AS MUCH AS PROMISED.** A sponsor should promise only what he or she intends to give and only as much as can be afforded.

2. **PERSONAL FUNDS** that came from your own resources, not those of your relative. Unless you have enough cash to support yourself for your entire program of study or can prove other sources of personal income, you will need a sponsor with an income sufficient to support you.
3. **FUNDS FROM THIS SCHOOL** such as, a scholarship, assistantship, or fellowship. Not all College support covers the entire program of study or all expenses, so you may need additional support to meet your minimum annual costs.

## **DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS**

**COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FOR THE FORM I-20 (attached) AND SUBMIT IT WITH ALL THE NECESSARY EVIDENCE OF FINANCIAL CAPABILITY DIRECTLY TO THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES OFFICE, BY MAIL OR FAX.**

**WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU DO THIS AT THE SAME TIME AS YOU ARE APPLYING TO THE COLLEGE. THAT WAY, ONCE YOU ARE ACCEPTED, YOUR FORM I-20 CAN BE ISSUED QUICKLY!**

**ALL DOCUMENTS YOU GIVE MUST BE:**

1. **Less than two months old.**
2. **In English.** (We cannot review documents that are not in English)
3. **Photocopies or faxes, NOT originals.** You will need the originals of all the documents you have sent us to take to the American Embassy when we send you your I-20.
4. **Sponsor Affidavits must be notarized**, that is, signed by the sponsor in the presence of a notary public, the notary public must sign, and the official seal of the notary public must be on the affidavit. There are notaries public at all U.S. embassies and consulates. In the U.S., most neighborhood pharmacists, lawyers and accountants are notaries. There are notaries in all countries, though the names for them may be different. There are officials licensed by the national or regional government to take sworn statements for courts of law or to witness contracts and property deeds.

**EVIDENCE REQUIRED:**

**SPONSORS OF CASH SUPPORT:**

1. **AFFIDAVIT OF ANNUAL CASH SUPPORT.** This form may be photocopied for each sponsor. ALL questions must be answered. The form must be notarized.

## 2. PROOF OF INCOME

### Individual Sponsor (any of the following):

- Employer's salary statement on letterhead stationary with most recent pay stub, or
- If self-employed, salary estimate from private accountant or bank, or
- Income tax returns or receipts with most recent pay stub, or
- Pay stubs for last six months, or
- Documents of investments

### Company Sponsor

- Submit the most recent "Profit and Loss Statement" for the company.

### **WARNING #3**

If there is no proof of income submitted, bank statements must prove that there are sufficient funds to cover the entire program of study. Statements balances will be totaled and divided by the number of years in your program of study to determine that amount available to you for each year.

### **WARNING #4**

A company's income is not the income of the owner of the business and will not be accepted as proof of income. You must provide an official statement of the salary paid to the owner/sponsor.

3. **BANK STATEMENT** in the name of the sponsor *only*. A monthly statement of balances and deposits indicating the type of currency.

### **WARNING #5**

If a bank statement is in the name of more than one person, each individual must submit an affidavit of support.

### **WARNING #6**

We cannot accept bank statements that do not specify monthly balances and deposits!

**SPONSORS OF FREE ROOM AND BOARD:**

1. Affidavit (notarized) of Free room and board
2. Proof of income (any of the following):
  - Employer's salary statement on letterhead stationary with most recent pay stub, or
  - If self-employed, salary estimate from private accountant or bank, or
  - Income tax returns or receipts with most recent pay stub, or
  - Pay stubs for last six months, or
  - Documents of investments
3. Photocopy of lease, deed, rent receipts, phone bill or electric bill

**WARNING #7**

**If you are presently in the U.S., you must be living with the sponsor** at the time of filing this application for this to be counted towards your means of support

**PERSONAL FUNDS:**

BANK/ ASSETS STATEMENTS IN YOUR NAME. A monthly statement of balances and deposits indicating the type of currency.

**SCHOOL FUNDS:**

COPY OF YOUR AWARD LETTER OR CONTRACT stating exactly what you will be receiving and for how long.