

Factsheet on US Visas



Travel.State.Gov – US Department of State

Visa applications for foreign citizens who come to the U.S. to study or participate in an exchange program are handled by Travel.State.Gov.. Before applying for a visa, all student and exchange visitor applicants need to be accepted and approved for their program. Once accepted, educational institutions and program sponsors will provide each applicant with the necessary approval documentation, to be submitted when applying for a visa.

Read more: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1270.html

Applying for a Visa

You will need to apply for either an F1 or J1 visa. Check with your host institution which one is appropriate for you.

Please follow the links below for instruction on applying for your visa.

F1: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html (General instructions)

<http://london.usembassy.gov/students.html> (US embassy in London)

J1: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1267.html (General instructions)

<http://london.usembassy.gov/exchange.html> (US embassy in London)

Prior to your visa interview, you are required to take the steps outlined below. Please review the information carefully. Failure to present the required forms and documents on the day of the interview will result in the cancellation of your appointment.

Step 1: Check if you have ever [arrested and/or have a criminal conviction](#), have a [medical ineligibility](#), or have been [denied entry into or deported from the United States](#) as you will be required to furnish documents relating to your situation in support of your application. Please click on the relevant links for further information.

Step 2: Read through the information about applying on the embassy website: <http://london.usembassy.gov/apply.html>

Book your interview (<http://london.usembassy.gov/interview.html>) and pay the \$140 nonimmigrant MRV application fee AT THE SAME TIME as scheduling the appointment for the visa interview. Payment is by credit or debit card only, have your details ready to pay when you make the call.

Step 3: [Pay the SEVIS fee](#)

It is a one off fee charged to F (\$200) and J (\$180) visa applicants to cover the cost of administering the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Read all about it <http://london.usembassy.gov/sevis.html>

Or just go ahead and pay it online here: <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/>

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Step 4: [Complete the online DS-160](#)

Read the full information about it here <http://london.usembassy.gov/ds160.html> but note that their link to the photo guidance doesn't work – try this one http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/frvi_3882.html

Step 5: [Gather additional required documents](#)

Notes on scheduling the interview

An appointment for a non-immigrant visa interview may be arranged by calling the Operator Assisted Information Service:

- **Monday - Friday : 8.00 a.m. until 9.00 p.m. GMT**
- **Saturdays : 09.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m. GMT**

The service is available on U.S. public holidays but not U.K. public holidays.

Callers from within the United Kingdom should dial 09042-450-100. Calls to this line are charged at £1.23/min from BT landlines; some mobile and network providers may charge more. In addition, callers from outside the U.K. and some mobile and network providers cannot access this number. Apparently it's less busy early morning and later in the evening.

Information required by the operator:

- Name & address;
- Place & date of birth;
- Passport nationality & number; and
- Email address. (If you do not have an email account in your name, you may elect a third party to receive the information on your behalf); **and**
- Receipt number of the approved petition (petition based applicants only); **or**
- Program number on the form DS-2019 (exchange visitor (J-1) visa applicants only).

Payment of the nonimmigrant MRV application fee

Applicants are required to pay the nonimmigrant MRV application fee when scheduling the appointment for the visa interview. Payment is by credit or debit card only. Please ensure that you have your credit card details available when making the call.

Please note:

- An appointment for an interview may only be scheduled through the Operator Assisted Visa Information Service; appointments cannot be scheduled by email. If you are unable to call the number yourself, please have a friend, relative or colleague call on your behalf. They will require your passport number in order to schedule an appointment.
- Family or married couples applying for visas at the same time may schedule one appointment per family or couple. All others must schedule individual appointments;
- A child under the age of 14 is not required to attend the interview. If the parent is applying for a visa, s/he may bring the child's application to the interview.

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Visa wait times

http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html

Success rates

The US government has a vested interest in having international students and scholars in the US.

- In fact, F and J visas receive priority processing.
- The majority of visa applications are successful, and for most UK citizens applying in the UK, this process is straightforward.
- The key is completing paperwork and your interview in an accurate and timely manner.

Education USA has put together quite a nice guide to the whole process

<http://www.educationusa.info/pages/students/visa.php>

Arriving at a U.S. Port of entry...what a student can expect.

F1 student Factsheet: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/factsheet/100104ent_stdnt_fs.htm

J1 student Factsheet: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/factsheet/100104ent_exchng_fs.htm

(They are almost exactly the same!)