PHOENIX
IMMIGRATION CONSULTING SERVICES

F-1 Student Visa: Academic Study in the United States

F-1

Full-time study at SEVP-certified U.S. universities and colleges, with on-campus work, CPT, 12 months of OPT and a 24-month STEM OPT extension.

12 months	24 months	4 years	$ 350
Optional Practical Training after study	STEM OPT extension for eligible degrees	Maximum admission from 15 September 2026	SEVIS I-901 fee

Why the F-1

The F-1 visa is for international students enrolled full-time at SEVP-certified U.S. universities, colleges and other academic institutions. After admission, your school issues Form I-20; you then pay the SEVIS fee, complete Form DS-160 and attend a visa interview. F-1 students can work on campus, train through CPT and gain post-study experience through OPT and the STEM OPT extension. Phoenix prepares students for the interview and plans the path beyond.

Key benefits

World-class education
Study at world-class U.S. universities and colleges.

Work during studies
Limited on-campus work during studies, and Curricular Practical Training (CPT) where part of the curriculum.

Family can join
Spouse and children may accompany you in F-2 status.

Future green card
U.S. degrees and experience can strengthen a future green card case such as EB-2 NIW.

At a glance

Visa type
Temporary student visa

Key document
Form I-20 from an SEVP-certified school

Work options
On-campus work, CPT, OPT, STEM OPT

Length of stay
Program length, up to 4 years per entry

Program overview

- Your school issues Form I-20; you then pay the SEVIS fee, complete Form DS-160 and attend a visa interview
- Interviews take place at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad or the Consulate in Karachi
- You must show you can fund your studies, have a clear academic plan and intend to study, not immigrate

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Work options

F-1 students can gain U.S. work experience both during and after their studies.

Option 1
On-campus work

Limited

Limited on-campus work is permitted during your studies.

Option 2
CPT

Curriculum

Curricular Practical Training, available where the training is part of the curriculum.

Option 3
OPT

12 months

Optional Practical Training after graduation, to gain post-study experience in the U.S.

Option 4
STEM OPT extension

24 months

An additional 24-month OPT extension for graduates with eligible STEM degrees.

Eligibility requirements

- Admission to an SEVP-certified school and a Form I-20
- Payment of the SEVIS I-901 fee
- Proof of funds for tuition and living costs (at least the first year)
- Completed DS-160, including social media identifiers, and a visa interview
- Intent to study full-time, ties to your home country and nonimmigrant intent

Good to know

- Fees include the **$350** SEVIS I-901 fee and the **$185** visa application (MRV) fee
- A **$250** Visa Integrity Fee was enacted in 2025; collection was not confirmed for all posts as of late 2026
- From 15 September 2026, admission is for program length (max four years); longer programs need a Form I-539 extension
- The post-completion grace period is cut from 60 to 30 days under the same DHS rule

Your application journey

Admission

01 Consultation on school choice, funding and long-term plans

02 Obtain admission and Form I-20 from an SEVP-certified school

Visa

03 Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee

04 Complete Form DS-160 and pay the visa application fee

05 Prepare for questions on funding, study plans and home ties

06 Attend the visa interview in Islamabad or Karachi

Arrival

07 **Enter the U.S. up to 30 days before your program start date**

Talk to a Phoenix advisor

We assess your eligibility, compare the routes open to you and manage your application from first consultation to approval.

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Program rules, government fees, processing times and visa-free access can change at any time. Figures are indicative as of November 2026; please confirm current terms with Phoenix Immigration Consulting Services before applying. This fact sheet is for general information and is not legal advice.