



Congratulations on your acceptance to Hollins University!

We are very excited to welcome you to our vibrant international community on campus. With over 25 countries represented in our international student population, you will join a tight-knit, diverse, and welcoming group. Additionally, you will receive immigration advising and cultural engagement support through the office of International Student Engagement (ISE).

Below you will find important information regarding your Form I-20, required preparation steps, and obtaining a visa interview. Read through these materials thoroughly, as they are very important for you during your pre-arrival preparations.

Your I-20 is accessible to download through your Hollins Student Portal.

If you have any questions regarding your pre-arrival preparations, please reach out to the ISE office at any time.

Email: ise@hollins.edu

WhatsApp: 540-588-6316

Instagram: @hollins_ise

Best regards,

Erin Carney (she, her)

Director and PDSO, HU Connect and International Student Engagement

email: carneyek@hollins.edu

office phone: 540-362-6089

1. Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status

- Due to disruptions in postal services in the past few years, the U.S. government has allowed schools to issue, sign, and send I-20s electronically.
- **You will need to print, sign, and date your I-20 before it can be used for any purpose, including your application for the F-1 visa and entry into the U.S. once your visa has been approved.**

Your Form I-20, also known as the Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status, is the document which allows you to study in the U.S. and at Hollins. You will use this document to apply for a visa interview. **Please ensure that all biographical information on your I-20 (ex. name, spelling, date of birth, etc.) are correct once you receive this document.** You should keep all copies of your I-20 throughout your time studying in the U.S., as they will be very important when you apply for work authorizations or a change of status in the future. Note that there will be no information or signatures on Page 2 of your I-20 until you arrive in the U.S.

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status
OMB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID: N0004720633

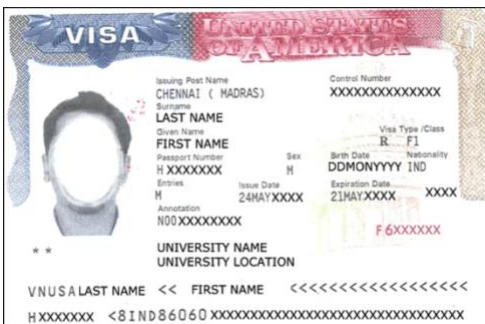
1 SURNAME-PRIMARY NAME Sample		GIVEN NAME Student	Class of Admission F-1 ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE
PREFERRED NAME Student Sample, II		PASSPORT NAME	
COUNTRY OF BIRTH LAGO		COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP LAGO	
DATE OF BIRTH 04 MAY 1995		ADMISSION NUMBER	
FORM ISSUE REASON CONTINUED ATTENDANCE		LEGACY NAME	
2 SCHOOL INFORMATION			
SCHOOL NAME SEVP School for Advanced SEVIS Studies SEVP School for Advanced SEVIS Studies		SCHOOL ADDRESS 9002 Nancy Lane, Ft. Washington, MD 20744	
SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL Helene Robertson FDSO		SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE HLL144444400 03 APR 11 2015	
3 PROGRAM OF STUDY			
EDUCATION LEVEL SCHOOL 2	MAJOR 1 History and Philosophy of Science and Technology 54.0104	MAJOR 2 None 00.0000	
PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Required	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES Student is proficient	EARLIEST ADMISSION DATE 04 APRIL 2016	
START OF CLASSES 01 JUNE 2016	PROGRAM START/END DATE 04 MAY 2016 - 30 MAY 2020		
4 FINANCIALS			
ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR: 9 MONTHS		STUDENT'S FUNDING FOR: 9 MONTHS	
Tuition and Fees	\$ 15,000	Personal Funds	\$ 19,000
Living Expenses	\$ 4,000	Funds From This School	\$
Expenses of Dependents (0)	\$ 0	Funds From Another Source	\$
Other	\$ 0	On-Campus Employment	\$
TOTAL	\$ 19,000	TOTAL	\$ 19,000
REMARKS			
5 SCHOOL ATTESTATION			
I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(d)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.			
SIGNATURE OF: Helene Robertson, FDSO		DATE ISSUED 04 May 2016	PLACE ISSUED Ft. Washington, MD
STUDENT ATTESTATION			
I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of any extension of stay. I certify that all information provided on this form refers specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full program of study at the school named above. I also authorize the named school to release any information from my records needed by DHS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.3(g) to determine my nonimmigrant status. Parent or guardian, and student, must sign if student is under 18.			
SIGNATURE OF: Student Sample		DATE	
NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN		SIGNATURE	ADDRESS (city/state or province/country) DATE

2. Obtaining a Visa Interview

**Note to Canadians:* Canadian citizens do not need a visa to enter the U.S. but they must have proof of citizenship and identity, a valid I-20 form, documentation of their ability to pay their tuition and living expenses while studying in the U.S., and a receipt indicating that they have paid the I-901 fee when entering the U.S. through Customs and Border Patrol.

What is a Visa?

A visa is a stamp in your passport that allows you to enter the U.S. legally. The type of visa you will be applying for is an **F-1 non-immigrant student visa**. Your visa is tied to the university listed on your I-20; therefore, you should refrain from entering the U.S. using a visa showing another school's name, as this could cause issues during your Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) entry process.



Visas are issued by U.S. embassies and consulates throughout the world. You should apply for your F-1 visa at the embassy or consulate that is responsible for visa applications from your place of residence. You can apply at consulates elsewhere; however, in most cases it is expected that you will apply in your home country.

As of summer 2023, F-1 visas for new students can be issued up to 365 days in advance of the start date for a course of study. However, you will not be allowed to **enter** the United States on your student visa more than 30 days before your program start date (listed in the 'Program of Study' section on your I-20, in the bottom center).

Although every U.S. embassy and consulate applies the same regulations and laws, each visa office follows its own procedures. It is important to check the website of the consulate to which you will apply for your visa to learn about their specific procedures. Links to the websites of U.S. consulates around the world can be found online at <https://www.usembassy.gov/> along with a great deal of information about U.S. student visas and immigration. For an overview of how to apply for your student visa, see: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#howtoapply>.

Steps to getting a visa interview

There are three things you must do **before** arriving at your visa appointment:

- 1. You must request an appointment online for a visa interview at the embassy/consulate.** Your embassy/consulate's website will tell you how to schedule your visa interview. In some countries, you can get an interview very quickly; in other countries, it can take several weeks. To find out how long it takes to schedule an interview at your consulate, visit the following link and input your nearest embassy or consulate location: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html>
- 2. You must complete the Nonimmigrant Visa Application (DS-160) online** prior to your visa appointment: <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>. Once you complete your application, you will need to print the confirmation page and bring it with you to your visa appointment once you have scheduled one. Your local embassy or consulate may allow you to submit a paper copy of the visa application; you should inquire about that process with that specific location.
- 3. You must pay the \$350 Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) fee, also called the I-901 fee.** This must be paid before you head to your visa interview. To get information on how to pay the fee, visit USCIS's online <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/students>. You will need to have a receipt indicating that you have paid this fee when you go for your visa interview.

You should bring the following materials with you to the visa interview:

- confirmation page from your online visa application
- a valid passport
- your Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 form) from Hollins
- documentation of financial resources indicated on the I-20
- your letter of admission to Hollins
- your I-901 receipt, indicating that you have paid the I-901 fee
- a color, passport-style photo (please see photo requirements here:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html>)

- [the visa fee](#) (which is separate from the I-901 fee)
- any other required documentation listed on the consulate's website

Further information regarding your visa interview

The visa process is dictated solely by the U.S. Department of State through Embassies and Consulates abroad; schools do not have any say in whether a student is granted or denied a visa. Below are some tips that have been helpful to other students in the past:

1. **Make sure that you have all your paperwork**, including your financial documents, acceptance letter, and I-20, etc. all printed out neatly and organized.
 - Some embassies or consulates may want particular kinds of financial documentation, so it is best, if possible, to check the consulate's website and/or call in advance to find out exactly what documents they require.
2. **Make sure that your I-20 is signed by you (and your parents if you are under 18)**. You will sign on the bottom of page 1.
3. An important part of the interview is **making sure you are clear about your 'non-immigrant intent.'** The F-1 student visa is a non-immigrant visa, meaning that your main purpose for the visa is NOT to live in the U.S. forever. They often ask you indirectly about your non-immigrant intent, for example, 'what are your plans after you finish your degree at Hollins?'. It is up to you to decide how to answer a question like that, but again, the most important part is that you show non-immigrant intent.
4. Lastly, if you are not able to secure a visa from the U.S. Embassy in your home country, **you can try applying through an Embassy or Consulate in another country**. Please monitor the visa wait times at embassies close to your home in order to see which location will be the best for your specific circumstances.

Further Resources for F-1 Visa Applicants

- [DHS' Study in the States website](#): The official U.S. online resource for F-students applying to and studying in United States colleges and universities. Many of the questions you will have about your visa interview, documents, and arrival expectations can be found on this website.

- [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement \(ICE\) website](#): Information from ICE on what to expect when you first enter the U.S., maintaining status, leaving, and reentering the U.S., and other important topics.
- [NAFSA's 10 points to remember when applying for a visa](#): Guidance from the Association of International Educators, the U.S.'s largest association for international education and student exchange.
- [The International Student Experience at Hollins](#): Information for Hollins specific information about your arrival and time studying in the U.S.!
 - **Note:** *This website is currently undergoing revisions, so if you have any questions about the information listed there, please reach out to ise@hollins.edu for further clarification.*

3. Hollins Specific Information

Email communication:

Until you receive your Hollins email address, Hollins will be contacting you via the email address you listed on your application. If that has changed or you would like us to contact you at a different address, please let me know as soon as possible.

Once you have been assigned your Hollins email account, you will receive an email with specific instructions on how to set up your Hollins email account.

- **We will be using that new Hollins email address from then on as all important university business will be sent to your Hollins email account.**
- Hollins will be communicating very important information to you, so please check your Hollins email often and provide us with a timely response where needed. This will enable us to better assist you and make sure everything is set for your arrival.

Student Financial Responsibility

There will be no further funding available from Hollins University during your enrollment beyond the scholarship you received per your admission letter. While you are enrolled as a student at Hollins, you will be responsible for the total cost of attendance and other optional expenses. Additionally, there are very few scholarships available in general from outside scholarship providers for international students in the U.S. Lastly, **do not count on on-campus positions to cover the cost of your remaining tuition**; on-campus positions at Hollins are very competitive for international students, and often the pay at on-campus positions will only cover personal spending costs. **Off-campus employment is not allowed for international students until they finish two full semesters at Hollins, per federal immigration regulations.**

Save the date!- International Student Orientation Program (ISOP)

New international students are required to participate in the International Student Orientation Program (ISOP) upon arrival to Hollins. The ISOP orientation runs the week before the main

New Student Orientation begins. This year, ISOP Orientation will begin during the last week of August 2024.

- **IMPORTANT!- Do NOT purchase your flight tickets to the U.S. until you receive your U.S. visa and until you have communicated your plans with the ISE office at Hollins!**

What is ISOP?

ISOP is a program designed to support first-year international students and first-year students with extensive international experience during their first year at Hollins. In ISOP, new students are paired with upper class peer mentors who serve as an important resource for understanding Hollins, the transition to the U.S., and building community. You will also receive important information regarding your F-1 visa regulations through the ISE office, which oversees ISOP.



Questions? Contact the International Student Engagement Office today!

Email: ise@hollins.edu

WhatsApp: 540-588-6316

Instagram: @hollins_ise

Erin Carney, ISE Director and PDSO

Email: carneyek@hollins.edu

Office Phone: 540-362-6089

