

## Visa-Related Information for Incoming Students

### Students outside the USA

#### Step 1: Get Your I-20

If you are planning to study at SNHU on a student (F-1) visa, you will need SNHU to issue you an I-20 form, known as a Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status.

In order to receive an I-20, all accepted students must submit to SNHU:

- A colored copy of your passport
- Proof of financial support (for your program's required amount, please see step 3C of our [International Admission Requirements](#))
- A Financial affidavit form\* (if the proof of financial support is **not** in your name)

\*You can download an Affidavit under Step 3C on [this webpage](#).

These documents can be sent to us by email to [intUGdocs@snhu.edu](mailto:intUGdocs@snhu.edu) (Undergraduate applicants) or [intGRdocs@snhu.edu](mailto:intGRdocs@snhu.edu) (Graduate applicants).

There may be additional requirements for certain countries or students transferring from another US school, which will be listed in your acceptance letter.

Please review your acceptance letter carefully and submit needed documents to ensure timely issuance of your I-20. Once all the required documents are received and satisfied, we will send the I-20 form to your mailing address.

#### Step 2: Ensure Your I-20 is Accurate

When you receive your I-20, please check the following before applying for your visa:

- Is your name spelled exactly as it appears in your passport?
- Is the other information correct – date and country of birth, degree program, reporting date, completion date, and financial information?
- Is it signed by a school official on page 1?
- Has the reporting date (“student must report no later than”) passed? (Please note that the I-20 does expire and cannot be used after the reporting date.)

#### Step 3: Pay your SEVIS (I-901) Fee

As an international student, exchange visitor, or scholar, you will need to pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee prior to your visa interview at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate, or for students exempt from the visa\*, prior to entering the U.S. This fee is part of the F-1 and J-1 visa application process and is mandated by the U.S. government. For further information about paying the SEVIS Fee, please visit the I-901 Fee website: [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com).

*\* Canadian citizens, American Indians born in Canada, Citizens of the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda, certain Bahamian nationals and British subjects resident in the Bahamas, Caymen Islands, or Turks and Caicos Islands.*

### Step 3: Locate Your Embassy or Consulate

For a searchable database of the websites of U.S. Embassies, Consulates and Diplomatic Missions by country, please visit: <https://www.usembassy.gov>.

### Step 4: Apply For a Visa/Make Your Appointment

Once you have your I-20 from SNHU, you will need to apply for a visa. The process for applying for a visa varies by U.S. Embassy or Consulate depending on the country from which you are applying. You can find country-specific information on the [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov) website.

Generally, you will need to:

- Complete the online [Nonimmigrant Visa Application](#) (DS-160) and submit a photo ID
- Schedule an appointment for your visa interview (usually held at the American embassy or consulate in your country)
- Prepare for your visa interview

To avoid missing your visa interview date, we recommend you do not make an appointment until you receive your I-20 from SNHU.

### Step 5: Gather Required Documentation

Once your visa application interview has been scheduled, there are several tasks you need to complete and documents you need to prepare to present to the U.S. Immigration Officer during your interview:

- Pay the visa application fee (usually \$160 but may vary, details may be found on the [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov) website)
- Check your passport to confirm that it is valid for at least six months from the time of your interview
- Prepare to present the following documents:
  - A passport valid for at least six months
  - SNHU's Form I-20 (sign the form under Item 11)
  - The admission letter from SNHU
  - Your completed nonimmigrant visa application (DS-160)
  - A 2"x 2" (51 mm x 51 mm) photograph in the [prescribed format](#)
  - A receipt for the visa application fee
  - A receipt for the SEVIS fee. If you have not received an official receipt in the mail showing payment and you paid the fee electronically, the consulate will accept the temporary receipt you printed from your computer. If you do not have a receipt, the consulate may be able to see your payment electronically if your fee payment was processed at least 3 business days before your interview.
  - Financial documentation that shows you have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period you intend to study.
  - Any information that proves that you will return to your home country after finishing your studies in the United States. This may include proof of property, family, or other ties to your community.

There may be additional materials you need depending on the U.S. Embassy or Consulate requirements. Please refer to the "[Additional Documentation May be Required](#)" section of the [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov) website's Study and Exchange Visa pages for further information.

## Step 6: Prepare for the Visa Interview

During your visa interview, a consular officer will determine whether you are qualified to receive a visa, and if so, which visa category is appropriate based on your purpose of travel.

The most important thing to keep in mind when applying for a student visa is the applicant must prove to the consular officer that he or she:

1. Is a genuine student
2. Is financially capable
3. Has strong ties to the home country and will not remain permanently in the U.S.

During the interview, you should:

- Be articulate and project maturity and independence (but remember to be honest and unscripted)
- Explain very clearly why you chose SNHU and your particular program (and why it is necessary to study in the United States)
- Explain what plans you have upon returning home

*You can see a list of questions you should be prepared to answer at the end of this document.*

Please read these "[10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Student Visa](#)" from NAFSA Association of International Educators.

When applying for a student visa, you must demonstrate an academic plan that you have thought about and can clearly describe. Before going for a visa interview, it is very important to gather information about Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) as well as your program and courses and other details of university life.

***If you would like to schedule a Skype session with your university representative to discuss these details, please email [international@snhu.edu](mailto:international@snhu.edu) to schedule an appointment.***

## Step 7: Alert SNHU of the Result

Once you have completed the visa application process, please let International Admissions know the result by emailing [international@snhu.edu](mailto:international@snhu.edu).

### **Visa Denial Tips:**

An application may be denied because the consular officer does not have all of the information required to determine if the applicant is eligible to receive a visa, because the applicant does not qualify for the visa category for which he or she applied, or because the information reviewed indicates the applicant falls within the scope of one of the inadmissibility or ineligibility grounds of the law.

If denied a visa, in most cases the applicant is notified of the section of law which applies. You do have the right to apply for the visa a second time, but if you reapply, you should make sure to prepare very carefully. The Consular Officer will want to see new evidence that adequately overcomes the reasons for the first denial.

Give careful thought to your educational goals and career plans and consider which documents to bring to your second interview. *Please inform SNHU if your visa application is denied so we can help you determine your options.*

You can find more information on visa denials here:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/denials.html>

### **Students currently in the USA**

International students inside the U.S.A. who wish to transfer to SNHU should follow the transfer instructions sent to them along with their acceptance letter. For more information, please e-mail [intladm@snhu.edu](mailto:intladm@snhu.edu)

## **Questions students should consider before their visa interview**

### Background

1. Where did you study before and what did you study?
2. Why do you want to study in your chosen major?

### Education plan

3. Why did you decide to come and study in the U.S.?
4. How did you hear about SNHU?
5. Why did you choose SNHU?
6. Why did you choose your particular program?

### Finances

7. How are you going to pay for your education?
8. Do your finances support your plan of study at SNHU?

### Student Life plan

9. Where do you plan to live during your study?
10. What do you know about student life on campus?

### Future plan

11. What do you plan to do with your degree after you finish at SNHU?
12. How does your study relate to your future career goals?