

Public Grade 9-12 Student Life Cycle (F-1)

1 Apply to a Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-Certified School

Student applies and is accepted to an SEVP-certified grade nine through 12 public high school. Please note, F-1 students are not permitted to attend public school in grades kindergarten through eight.



2 Receive a Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status"

A student's Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) record is created and the student is then issued a Form I-20 by the designated school official (DSO) at the SEVP-certified school they have chosen to attend.



3 Pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee

Student must pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee at FMJFee.com and the full, unsubsidized per capita cost of attending public school. Payment of these fees must occur before the prospective student applies for an F-1 visa.



4 Apply for Student Visa

Student brings the Form I-20 and other required documents, including proof of payment of applicable fees, to apply for a student visa from the U.S. Department of State.



5 Arrive in the United States

Student arrives no more than 30 days before the program start date and presents the Form I-20 and valid student visa to U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents at the port of entry. If admitted, the student receives an electronic Form I-94, "Arrival/Departure Record," and should verify that the "Admit Until" date lists "D/S" for Duration of Status.



6 Maintain Status During Program Study

Student may study at a public high school for a maximum period of 12 months. Student must meet the minimum number of hours per week the school determines is necessary for normal progress toward graduation or completion of the grade level.



7 Explore Post-Graduation Opportunities

Student may transfer to a private SEVP-certified high school or a post-secondary SEVP-certified school. Student may also transfer to another public high school within their 12-month time limit but cannot transfer to another public high school once the 12-month time limit is reached.



8 Depart the United States

After completion of the program of study, student has 60 days to depart the United States.



F-2/M-2 Dependents at the K-12 Grade Level

For minor F-2 and M-2 dependents (dependent children of F-1 or M-1 students), the regulations governing education are different. Minor F-2 and M-2 dependents may attend a private or public school at the appropriate grade level without any additional permission or documentation from SEVP. State compulsory education laws may require that F-2 and M-2 students attend the appropriate grade level until a certain age. The elementary or secondary school an F-2 or M-2 student attends does not need to be SEVP certified.