

Applying and Obtaining an “F-1” (Student) Visa

ABROAD

for a Degree Programme at Old Dominion University

This document was prepared by representatives in the HQ SACT Office of the Legal Advisor in coordination with Old Dominion University (ODU) Visa & Immigration Service Advising (VISA) officials and provides general information for applying and obtaining an “F-1” (Student) Visa **ABROAD** for a Degree Program at ODU.

This information is offered as a courtesy. It is strictly informative in nature and does not, nor is it intended to, constitute legal advice or counselling.

There are two ways to apply for F-1 visa status (if eligible):

1. **depart** the U.S. and apply for an “F-1” visa at a U.S. Embassy or consulate abroad; OR
2. **remain** in the United States and apply for a change of status through the U.S. Department of State and then U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Applications for a change of visa status (COS) from “NATO” or “A” visa status to “F-1” visa status are the responsibility of the Principal Alien (i.e. the staff member) and dependent (applicant).
NOTE: A Change of Status in the United States is currently taking **8-10 months**. During such time, students can attend classes but are likely precluded from participating in other activities (i.e., internship, teaching assistant, employment, etc.). Consult officials in the VISA office at ODU for information and guidance on this matter.

This document ONLY addresses the process for applying for an F-1 (Student) visa abroad.

HQ SACT Office of the Legal Advisor are not involved in the administrative process of applying for a visa abroad. Consult officials in the VISA office at ODU for information and guidance on this matter.

For information regarding submitting a visa change of status in the United States, please contact representatives in the HQ SACT Office of the Legal Advisor.

Requirement to remain in a derivative (NATO or A) visa status: Generally the dependents of NATO or PFP personnel are required to remain in a derivative NATO or A category visa throughout the principal alien’s (i.e., serving staff members) tour of duty/employment contract. There are exceptions, such as when an unmarried son or daughter, who is studying full-time, reaches their 23rd birthday. Please contact representatives in the Office of the Legal Advisor for additional information.

TIMELINE & CHECKLIST - APPLYING FOR F-1 VISA OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

- 60 – 90 days before eligible:** Consult officials in the VISA office at ODU for information and guidance. Also, consult appropriate U.S. Embassy or consulate abroad regarding visa application requirements. Gather required forms and supporting documentation. Information can also be found at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html>
- 30 days before eligible:** Request the Form I-20 (“Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant [F-1] Student Status”) from ODU’s VISA website (www.odu.edu/visa). Select the FORMS link on the right side. Near the bottom of the page under the section entitled “Visa Document (I-20/DS-2019) Extension or Update”, click on “Request a New I-20 or DS-2019”.
- Submit financial documentation** via email (intlstu@odu.edu) to ODU’s VISA office one month before eligible: All documents must be accompanied by the Financial Form and dated within the last six months. Consult officials in the VISA office at ODU for information and guidance on this requirement. Acceptable documentation can be found at: <http://www.odu.edu/international/services/resources/financial>.
- Upon notification by ODU’s VISA representatives of Form I-20’s issuance (up to 10 business days after request submission)** pay the I-901 SEVIS fee (instructions will be provided in the notification e-mail from ODU’s VISA Office) and then make an appointment with the appropriate U.S. Embassy or consulate abroad to obtain the F-1 visa in your passport.
- Within 30 days of eligibility:** Dependent must depart the United States.
- Prior to returning to the United States:** Make an appointment at the U.S. consulate and comply with their requirements for issuance of an F-1 visa.
- Within one week of return to the United States in F-1 status:** The student must make an appointment with his/her ODU VISA advisor (based on the first letter of the family name/surname) to complete immigration processing, receive an updated I-20 and obtain information on how to maintain F-1 status. Failure to do this may result in the **termination of the new visa status**.

Applying and Obtaining an “F-1” (Student) Visa

ABROAD

for a Degree Programme at Old Dominion University

NOTE: HEALTH INSURANCE—Once you have F-1 visa status (i.e. once you have entered the U.S. on the F-1 visa), you will be REQUIRED to enrol in the university health insurance plan. More information on ODU’s health insurance requirement and enrolment procedure will be provided by the VISA office when you meet with your VISA advisor. There are only **two** exceptions to this requirement: 1) full sponsorship of all education and living expenses by the home government and the insurance is provided by a U.S. carrier; **or** 2) a spouse or a parent in the U.S. is employed by a U.S. company and is provided with U.S.-based plan that provides coverage for dependents. For further details on international student health insurance requirement and plan, please visit VISA’s International Student Health Insurance Requirement [page \(http://odu.edu/international/insurance#tab132=6\)](http://odu.edu/international/insurance#tab132=6).

I have received this information sheet and understand that I am personally responsible to comply with University and U.S. Policy and Regulations:

NAME: (Sponsor) _____

NAME: (Applicant) _____

SIGNATURE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

DATE: _____