How to Prepare for Your New Visa Status

Quick Tips and Resources for Your Student Visa Application
First, let us say....

Welcome!

Berkeley International Office is located on the 2nd floor of International House.

We can help you:

• **Understand** immigration and visa matters through our advising services and workshops.

• **Find** resources to answer your questions and address your concerns.

• **Meet** friends through our social events.

• **Achieve** academic and personal success with tips from our workshops and referrals to our campus resource partners.

Connect with Us!
All international students (except Canadian nationals) are required to obtain an F-1 or J-1 visa to enter the U.S. and pursue a full-time program of study at UC Berkeley. This short guide is intended to help you get started in organizing your documents and making plans for your arrival.

In upcoming weeks, we’ll send you more information to help you get ready and answer frequently asked questions.
Congratulations on submitting your NIF! If everything is complete, you will soon receive the I-20 or DS-2019 document you need to apply for your visa.

THE I-20 (F-1)

THE DS-2019 (J-1)
THE SEVIS FEE

The SEVIS Fee is a government fee for F, J and M visas only.

It is not a University fee and thus provides no funds to UC Berkeley.

F-2 and J-2 family members are not required to pay the fee.

Carry this receipt when entering the U.S.

Resources

The SEVIS Fee

Understanding SEVIS

Quick Tips

Pay the SEVIS Fee online at least 3 days before your visa application.

Make copies of the SEVIS Fee receipt and keep in a safe place.

Transfer students do not need to pay the SEVIS Fee again if their SEVIS number remains the same from one school to another.
A visa **ONLY** needs to be valid on the date you enter the U.S. It does not define your allowed length of stay.

If the visa expires after your arrival, you are not required to renew it to remain in the U.S.

Canadian citizens do not require a visa.

**Expiry Date** is the last day you can enter the U.S. with this visa.

“M” means you can enter the U.S. multiple times on this visa until the expiration date.

“R” means “regular” passport. “Type/Class” is your visa status.

Your passport must be valid for at least six months **beyond your arrival date to the U.S. but we recommend at least 12 months validity.** Check your expiration date!
If you have been in the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 student status, you must request a transfer of your SEVIS record from your current school to UC Berkeley.

**Transferring Your F-1 Visa**

- You are eligible for a SEVIS transfer if no more than 5 months has passed between your last day at the previous school (or OPT) and the first day of classes at UC Berkeley.
- You will receive a “Transfer Pending” I-20 from UC Berkeley once your SEVIS record has been transferred and your record is complete.
- You may leave the U.S. and re-enter with your “Transfer Pending” I-20 any time between the end date at your previous school and the start date of studies at UC Berkeley. Or, you may remain in the US between programs once you have requested the transfer from your previous school.

**Transferring Your J-1 Visa**

- Contact Berkeley International Office for information about eligibility and the process for transferring and travel plans between schools or programs.

**Quick Tips**

- **F-1 transfer students** may continue to travel with their unexpired F-1 visas previously obtained as long as their SEVIS number noted on the visa remains the same.
- **J-1 transfer students** must obtain a new visa if traveling outside the U.S. prior to or during the UC Berkeley program.
International students who are currently in the U.S. with another type of non-immigrant visa may request an I-20 or DS-2019 to obtain a change of status to F-1 or J-1 by indicating in the NIF if the change will take place by: 1) travel, or 2) application to USCIS.

Review this Change of Status tutorial [pdf] for complete details on the process you've selected. If your plans change, contact Berkeley International Office immediately.

Please note!
Students in F-2 and tourist status must obtain F-1 or J-1 status before school begins in order to enroll at UC Berkeley.
Quick Tips

International Student Advisors at Berkeley International Office (BIO) advise international students on immigration, personal, social, and cultural matters.

We serve as advocates to the university community and help connect students to the appropriate resources.

We also help university faculty and staff best serve our international student population.