

Q: When should I register for my US residency?

A: You should register as soon as registration opens for your selected location and at least 3-4 months in advance of the residency start date. You will receive a residency registration confirmation email approximately 24-48 hours after your registration is processed.

Remember, you should register for your first residency as soon as you begin your program (PhD, DBA, DIT, MSW, DSW, EdD, DrPH, DHA) or as soon as you become eligible based on program requirements (MS).

Q: Why do Walden international students need a special process for US residency attendance?

The rules and regulations of the US Department of State require all non-US students attending Walden residencies in the United States to obtain an I-20 from Walden University for entry into the United States. Students who are citizens of Visa Exempt countries, Canada and Bermuda, do not have to apply for a separate visa; however, these students must obtain an I-20 and pay the SEVIS fee. Students from all other countries, including visa waiver countries, must also obtain an F-1 student visa for entry into the United States to attend Walden residencies.

Therefore, non-US students cannot attend a US residency without having the proper documentation for attending an academic program. This documentation is the I-20 and F-1 student visa or, for students who are citizens of Canada or Bermuda, the I-20 only.

Q: What is an I-20?

A: The Certificate of Eligibility (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services I-20 form) is a document required by the US Department of State and issued by Walden University through SEVIS.

Q: What is SEVIS?

A: The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a national database used to maintain current information on international students and exchange visitors who are in the United States for educational purposes.

Q: When should I apply for an I-20?

A: You should apply for an I-20 immediately after you register for your US residency and receive your registration confirmation email, at least 3-4 months in advance of your residency date. This allows sufficient time for your I-20 processing. If you apply for your I-20 less than 3-4 months before your residency start, the required processes and approvals may not be completed in time for you to be able to attend your preferred residency.

Q: How do I obtain an I-20?

A: In order to obtain an I-20, you must complete the [Walden University I-20 online application](http://residencies.waldenu.edu/2250.htm) (<http://residencies.waldenu.edu/2250.htm>) and provide proof of your financial ability to attend the Walden residency. The information in this application is required by the US Department of Homeland Security. The creation of an Initial I-20 generates a data record for you in the SEVIS (the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System).

Q: How long does it take to issue an I-20 after the form is completed?

A: Depending on your location, you can expect to receive a hard copy of your Form I-20 within 30 days.

Q: How can I expedite the Form I-20 application?

A: Walden processes completed Form I-20 applications as quickly as possible while ensuring compliance with US Department of State and the Student Exchange and Visitor Program policies and regulations. The time to process each application varies based on individual circumstances. Because Walden processes hundreds of applications each year, it is not possible to give individual students priority over other students. Again, **we strongly recommend all international students begin their Form I-20 and F-1 student visa process 3-4 months prior to their intended residency start date to ensure they have enough time to obtain all required documentation and complete all required processes.**

Q: Do I need a new I-20 each time I enter the US for a residency? What if my F-1 student visa is still valid?

A: Yes. A new Form I-20 must be obtained, and a new SEVIS fee payment made, for every residency regardless of whether you already have an F-1 student visa. This is because the SEVIS payment is attached to the Form I-20 and the Form I-20 expires after the last day of each residency.

If your F-1 student visa is valid through the dates of your last intended residency, you do not need to obtain a new F-1 student visa for your other residency locations.

Q: How do I pay the SEVIS fee?

A: There are many forms of payment that can be used to pay the SEVIS fee. Your options include mailing in a bank check, sending a wire transfer, or paying by credit card.

To learn more about these options, please review the SEVIS Fee website FAQ:

<http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/faq>. If you have already done this and still have questions, please contact the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Department directly at fmjfee.sevis@ice.dhs.gov or 1-703-603-3400. Be sure to include your name and SEVIS ID number on all email communications.

Walden University does not have any connection to the SEVIS fee payment website or process. To ask questions about the SEVIS fee please email or call the given addresses above.

Q: When should I apply for an F-1 visa?

A: Once you register for a residency, receive your I-20 and pay the SEVIS fee, you can apply for an F-1 student visa. The application process for an F-1 student visa may take several months to complete and processing time varies based on your home location. You should contact the appropriate US consulate to determine the timeline for obtaining a student F-1 visa. **WARNING: If you start the process too close to your residency start date, there is a risk you may not finish the process in enough time to attend the residency.** Visit the US Department of State Travel website, Visa Wait Times - for Interview Appointments and Processing, http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html for more details.

Q: I have my F-1 student visa, current Form I-20, receipt of SEVIS fee payment, and proof of ties to my home country. Now what?

A: **Make sure to have your F-1 visa, your Form I-20, and all of your important documentation with as you pass through US Customs at the airport!**

You should have received your residency confirmation email already. That email was sent to you a few days after you registered for the residency and it contains all the information needed to plan your schedule and to make arrangements. If you need another copy, please email askevents@waldenu.edu.

Q: If my F-1 student visa application is denied, can Walden University get it approved?

A: Unfortunately, Walden University cannot intervene at the US Embassy on a student's behalf. It is entirely at the discretion of the consular officer whether to issue a visa or not. You can learn more about visa denials at the US States Department website, US Visas – Visa Denials, <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/denials.html>. If you intend to apply again, we have a few suggestions. Please understand that these suggestions have been learned from our observations of student experiences and cannot guarantee that you will be granted a student visa on your second try.

Other options for you may have included attending your residency abroad since Walden's residency calendar for many doctoral programs includes at least one academic residency outside the US each year. PhD students also have the option to attend residency 2 and residency 4 virtually. If you are interested in these alternative options to US residencies, please contact your academic advisor to see how they may fit into your degree progress. For tips on successfully applying for a student visa, please read on.

The two most important things a consular officer looks for are proof of ties to your home country and honesty in the applicant. **Proof of ties** often means a job that you will return to, immediate family in your home country, and financial stability shown in the ownership of a house, car, savings account, etc. **Honesty** is important as the consular officer must trust that the applicant isn't hiding any information that could potentially harm American people while the applicant is visiting the US.

In addition, you may have issues if you:

- *Try to bring your entire family with you on your F-1 student status
- *Apply for the visa in a country that is not your country of citizenship

Finally, during the interview make sure to dress professionally, speak politely, smile and make eye contact with the consular officer. Walden can also send a letter of verification with your specific program information explaining the purpose and validity of Walden's academic residencies within your degree program. Please email formi20@waldenu.edu if you feel you need a verification letter for support.

Q: Do non-US citizens with a work or visitor (B-1/B-2) visa need to get an F-1 student visa, and be registered in the SEVIS database to attend domestic residencies?

Yes. **It is illegal to study towards a degree while on a B-1/B-2 visa.** The United States government holds both students and schools accountable for ensuring international students enter the United States with the proper documentation. **If you enter the US without the Form I-20 and F-1 student visa, Walden University is legally obligated to deny you entrance to the residency.** It could also hurt your chance of returning to the US if an official learns that you entered the country without proper documentation.

Q: Will my B-1/B-2 visa be cancelled if I apply for an F-1 student visa?

A: There is no policy against holding multiple different visa types – in fact, holding multiple visas is mandatory for those who enter the US repeatedly for different reasons. However, we have heard of some officers cancelling the B-1/B-2 visa as students apply for, or enter the US with, the F-1 visa. Every consular and customs officer is able to cancel a student's visa if they feel it is prudent to do so.

We suggest you travel with the letter of support included in the Form I-20 packet that explains the purpose and length of an academic residency. In addition, you can bring a secondary letter of support from your employer explaining that once the residency is complete you will use your B-1/B-2 visa to enter the US for work. Finally, we recommend you speak politely with the officers you interact with and specify which visa to use every time you enter the United States.

Q: What are the requirements for citizens of Visa Waiver countries?

A: The Visa Waiver only allows holders to enter the United States for business and tourism purposes. Therefore, the Visa Waiver is not applicable for you since you are entering the United States for educational study towards a degree. If you are from a Visa Waiver country, you must obtain an F-1 student visa and Form I-20 to attend a Walden academic residency in the US.

Q: What are the requirements for citizens of Visa Exempt countries such as Canada & Bermuda?

Canada and Bermuda are Visa Exempt countries. Canadian and Bermudian students are required to enter the United States with a Form I-20, receipt of SEVIS payment, proof of financial support, and proof of ties to home country. Please see the US's Canadian Embassy website <http://canada.usembassy.gov/visas/visas/student-and-exchange-visas.html> for more details.

Q: Why did I not need the Form I-20 for previous residencies?

A: In 2012, Walden University became a Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP)–certified school. The SEVP is a part of the National Security Investigations Division and acts as a bridge for government organizations that have an interest in information on nonimmigrants whose primary reason for coming to the United States is to be students. On behalf of the Department of Homeland Security, SEVP manages schools, nonimmigrant students in the F and M visa classifications and their dependents. When Walden first registered with SEVP, we were able to give students some flexibility as they accustomed themselves to the new travel requirements. However, as of 2015, all international students are required to adhere to SEVP regulations and there are no exceptions.

Q: What happens if I do not apply for an I-20 and/or F-1 visa?

A: If you fail to comply with the Walden policy and attempt to attend a US residency without the proper documentation, you will be denied entry to the residency.

If you register for a US residency and have not completed the mandatory steps to obtain an I-20 and an F-1 student visa within 30 days prior to the residency, your residency registration will be canceled and subject to the cancellation parameters below.

- Cancellations at least 30 calendar days before the start of the residency – 100% refund without penalty.
- Cancellation from 30 to 11 days before the start date – refund minus a 5% cancellation fee.
- Cancellation within 10 days of the start date – no refund will be issued.

Non-US students cannot attend a US residency without having the proper documentation for attending an academic program. There are absolutely no exceptions to this policy.

Q: How long prior to and after a residency can I stay in the US?

A: You can enter the US up to 30 days before the residency start date and you have 60 days to depart from the US after the completion of the residency.

Q: Where can I go to find more information?

A: You can visit the US State Department website, US Visas - Student Visa, <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student.html> for more information. You can also contact your academic advisor or email formi20@waldenu.edu with questions.