



Frequently Asked Questions

You've got questions? We've got answers! If we haven't answered them here, let us know. Save yourself a phone call by emailing us at Trujillo@davenportdiocese.org.

When should I apply to the Diocese of Davenport?

You should apply as soon as possible. It is best to start early and have everything in order long before you are supposed to leave for the United States. Please follow the steps on How to Apply for F1 status.

How to apply?

Contact the school you want to attend to get your acceptance and interview with the administrator. After you have been accepted they should provide you with the Diocesan application packet and Host Family Information packet. Complete the diocesan application packet and submit to our office by email or mail with payment. All has to be complete before an I-20 will be issued. Instructions and forms are found in the International Student Admissions Application Packet found on our website: www.davenportdiocese.org/international-application-proces or you can contact Virginia Trujillo Trujillo@davenportdiocese.org or 563-888-4230.

Is there a fee to apply for F1 visa / I – 20?

As of July 1, 2016 the Diocese of Davenport has implemented a processing fee per student of \$250.

What other fees are there?

We require \$300 to hold your place at the school you have been accepted too. This fee will be sent to the Diocese of Davenport with your application and financial information. We will then forward this money to the school and they will deduct \$300 from the tuition balance you are required to pay upon registration at the school. One year's tuition is required upon registration as well as specific documents.

What education documentation do I need?

Transcripts written in a language other than English must be translated into English at the student's expense and submitted to the school so you can be accepted to the school.

Is financial aid or parish member discounts available for international students?

The Diocese of Davenport offers excellent value in private education. International students are not eligible for scholarships. Parish member discounts do not apply to International Students.

What other documentation is involved in the admissions process?

There are several documents you must submit for the admissions process to be completed. The documents that are required are found in International Student Admissions Application Packet www.davenportdiocese.org/international-application-process. You must send all completed documents in the same envelope to the Diocese of Davenport, 780 W. Central Park, Davenport, IA 52804 or send them electronically to email: trujillo@davenportdiocese.org.

- Background Check Information is done online through our Safe Environment Program www.vitus.org. This is required for all host family members over the age of 18.
- Completed Application for Admissions will all required signatures
- Declaration of Finances with all required signatures
- Bank statement

- Acceptance Letter from requested school
- I-20 information sheet



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- Authorization for Adult Custodial
- Copy of F1 Visa
- Copy of Passport
- Copy of I-94
- Copy of I-901 Fee Receipt
- Medical records or Certificate of Health
- F1 Responsibilities Form
- Parent / Student Agreement forms
- Parental Consent form
- Medical Treatment Consent Sign Off (host family)
- Liability Release Agreement (host family)
- Transfer information (if this applies)
- Payment for \$550 in US Dollars

Do I need a visa to be a full-time student?

YES! Once you are accepted, the I-20, school acceptance letter, Declaration of Finances, and financial statements needed to obtain your visa. IMPORTANT: wait for this documentation to arrive before coming to the United States! You will need to take these documents to the local American Embassy where a decision on granting you a visa will be made. The Embassy will be looking for a number of things including your financial ability to attend, and willingness to return to your country upon completing your studies (since you are applying for a non-immigrant visa). Entering the country on a tourist visa will stop you from becoming a full-time student. Please follow all procedures requested by the Diocese of Davenport and the Visa Officer on the American Embassy in your country.

How do I obtain my visa?

After you have submitted the appropriate documentation, an I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F1) Student Status will be sent to you and you should make an appointment with the U.S. Embassy in your home country. (Please do this as soon as possible since it sometimes takes weeks to secure an appointment at the Embassy). You will need to take the I-20, acceptance letter and supporting financial documents with you to this appointment. You will be interviewed and a determination to issue you a student visa will be granted after considering:

- Do you have sufficient funds to support yourself in the U.S.?
- Do you have sufficient reasons to return to your home country? You are applying for non-immigrant visa and most are denied if the Consulate Officer suspects you will attempt to immigrate to the U.S.
- Do you have a legitimate offer of acceptance from a U.S. school?

If you are granted an F-1 student visa you should receive a stamp or sticker for your passport saying so. You may make your travel arrangements to arrive by the date posted on the I-20. Please note that an F-1 student cannot work while in high school.

If you have difficulties at this point please call the Diocese of Davenport and we will try to help you.

What is an I-901 fee?

This fee went into effect September 1, 2004 by Immigration. New students and exchange visitors with a Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 issued on or after September 1, 2004 are subject to the fee. This is a fee which can be paid by mail using form I-901 together with a check or money order or paid electronically via the Internet and using a credit card. Please visit <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/> for more information regarding this fee.



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What do I need at the Port of Entry?

At the port of entry you will need your passport, visa, I-20 and evidence of financial support. The immigration official will process your information (**no paper I-94 will be issued after April 30, 2013**), they will stamp your passport and then you need to print of your I-94 proof at www.cbp.gov/i94. You will be given an eleven digit admissions number. The official will take the school copy of your I-20 and return the endorsed student copy to you. Make sure they return both the white card and I-20 student copy to you. If you have difficulties at this point call the Diocese of Davenport immediately and we will try to help you.

What kind of travel arrangements should I make?

The Immigration and Naturalization regulations allow for the student to arrive no sooner than 30 days prior to the date posted on the I-20. The closest international airport to most of our schools is in Moline, Illinois. Flights can also be booked to O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, Illinois. A bus/limo are available to take you from O'Hare to Davenport and/or Moline, Illinois. Please discuss this with the host family or program coordinator prior to making travel arrangements so location and date can be agreed upon.

When you arrive please take your documents to the school office and register. They will need to make copies of your documents.

How soon can I come to the United States after being granted and F1 visa?

30 days prior to the program start date on your I-20.

What do I need to do if I can not attend school by the program start date?

Notify the PDSO immediately trujillo@davenportdiocese.org. If the program start date has passed, we will not be able to defer your attendance. You will need to get a new Form I-20. While it is possible that the POE (Port of Entry) will allow the student to enter after the program start date, if the record has been cancelled, the PDSO will not be able to activate it. The student will have to leave and reenter with a new Form I-20 or apply for reinstatement. Students, who cannot arrive by the program start date, must contact us, defer their program start date, and get a reprinted Form I-20.

What do I do when I arrive at school?

You need to report to the school office immediately upon arrival. You are required to arrive at school within 30 days of your admission at the Port of Entry (POE). You will need to provide our original I-20 with 3 signatures (PDSO in blue or red ink, student, and parents), VISA, I-94 proof (printout), proof of insurance and Passport. The school office will need to make copies of these documents and send them to the Diocese of Davenport.

What is maintaining status?

Once a non-immigrant student starts a program in the United States, the student must comply with the terms and conditions of their F-1 visa.

- Maintaining Status: complying with these regulatory requirements is referred to as maintaining status.
- Out-of-status: students who fail to meet any of the regulatory requirements are potentially out of status.

What if I change my addresses, guardians or host family?

The school office and International Student Advisor needs to be notified within 3 days. There is an Address Change form in packet, website www.davenportdiocese.org/forms-for-international-students or you can get from the school.



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If I move from one host family to another host family do I have to do anything?

Yes, before you can move, a background check needs to be completed on the new family and an explanation for the move. You need to give the school and our office the new address and phone number. This information needs to be updated in the Immigration program SEVIS. Failure to report this information could result in deportation.

Am I required to live at the address I listed on my application form?

Yes, this is required that you maintain your residence with the host family you listed on your application. If you have moved you need to fill out an Address Change Form and report it to the school and the PDSO. We and the school reserve the right to visit your residence to insure you are living where you listed on your application form. Failure to follow these procedures will result in termination of your I-20. Immigration also conducts spot checks to see that students are living where they say they are on their I-20. All host parents have to be screened and complete our Safe Environment Program prior to you living there.

Can I work while attending your school?

No, we do not allow you to have a job while attending our school system.

Can I take Drivers Education?

No, we do not allow you to drive a car in class or out of school. You can take the book instruction but that is all.

Can I travel outside of the United States on my I-20?

Regulations allow F students in good status to travel outside of the United States, and to reenter the country without jeopardizing their non-immigrant status. The only restrictions on such travel are as follows:

- The student needs a Form I-20 with current information that is signed by the PDSO on pages one and two allowing travel outside of the United States
- The student's visa and passport must still be valid at the time the student reenters the United States (this means that the expiration date on the student's visa has not passed at the time of reentry).
- Proper travel forms need to be filled out and submitted.
- A student cannot travel alone while on our program unless they are returning to their home country.

What do I do if I want to transfer to another school?

- Tell your current school immediately
- Intent to Transfer form needs to be filled out complete (found under Forms)
www.davenportdiocese.org/forms-for-international-students
- The school you want to attend needs to contact our office.
- All fees due to the current school need to be paid
- The school you will want to attend needs to be a SEVIS approved school
- Acceptance letter from the new school is required.
- You need to apply for enrollment at the school you want attend
- Student needs to be in good status
- Have a proof of acceptance letter from the other school
- Pay a transfer fee of \$100 to the Diocese of Davenport



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What documents are required for the visa?

- SEVIS I-20, issued by the Diocese of Davenport
- An application Form DS-156, available from the consulate or at www.travel.state.gov
- Form DS-158, available from the consulate or at www.travel.state.gov
- Males between the ages of 16 and 45 must complete Form DS-157, available from the consulate or at www.travel.state.gov
- A passport valid for least six months after entry into the United States
- One photograph www.travel.state.gov has current photo requirements
- A receipt for visa processing fee, information available from the consulate or at the specific consulate website
- Financial documentation supporting study in the United States, as indicated on the I-20 or DS-2019.
- Acceptance letter from the school you are attending

What should I do if my visa application is denied?

Some visa applicants may be able to overcome a visa application denial. The U.S. Department of State has useful information on its Web site regarding visa denials, see www.travel.state.gov/visadenials.html for more information. If your visa is denied the PDSO at the Diocese of Davenport needs to be contacted immediately.

Tuition & Common Expenses

How much will it cost?

The cost of attending school in the United States varies widely by school, from approximately \$5000-\$15,000 for high school and \$2000-\$7000 for elementary school per year for tuition (does not include other fees). You must also consider the cost of books, living expenses, health insurance (required). Before enrolling at one of our schools, you will be required to show proof of financial support. This means having enough money to pay for one full year of tuition. Health insurance can also be a major expense.

Balancing School and Sports

Are sports scholarships available to international students?

Contact the school for more information about scholarship availability. Because of telephone calls from foreign countries can be expensive; it's wise to use the Internet for your research. We have a link to each one of our schools on the International Students home page. www.davenportdiocese.org/international-students

How can international students balance athletics with schoolwork and academic life?

Many international students' athletes face language and cultural challenges upon arriving at our schools. Programs, as well as academic and athletic support is available at our schools and will assist student athletes with adjusting to their new environment. Many athletic departments offer tutoring and mentoring services to assist athletes with the transition. Check with a counselor for more information.

Travel Tips:

Do you have everything you need for traveling?

Plan ahead, and make your travel plans as soon as possible. Be sure to arrange for transportation to our school. Clearly label all your baggage, and carry important documents, such as your passport, with you at all times. Most of our schools will ask you to arrive approximately one week before classes start to attend orientation and to become familiar with the campus.



Frequently Asked Questions

Tests and Grading

The U.S. system of education differs from what you're accustomed to in your native country. The types of exams administered, the academic calendar, and the grading system will seem unusual to you at first. Make an effort to understand the education system and your transition to academic life will be more comfortable and less overwhelming.

Academic Calendars

A majority of American schools operate under the semester system – approximately 15 weeks of class. Classes and exams occur during two separate semesters. Generally, fall semester begins in late August and ends in mid-December. The spring semester begins in early January and ends in late May.

Exams

The tests you'll take in the U.S. will vary by school and class. Large classes will usually include multiple-choice tests capable of being quickly graded. Smaller classes will feature tests that have a mixed format of multiple choice and short answer questions, along with one or two more in-depth essay questions.

Grading System

Most schools in the United States use the following five letter grading system:

A = Excellent

B = Good

C = Average

D = Below Average

F = Failing

At the end of each quarter, the letter grades will be given in a report card. You will receive progress reports half way through the quarter to show how well you are doing and how you might improve if needed.

F1 students are required to maintain a C or above to stay in good standing with Immigration requirements, failure to do so can result in termination of I-20. Grades are sent to the PDSO every quarter to verify this information.

What are the customs?

Names – In many countries, when people give their name, they refer to themselves using their last name. In the United States, however, people generally refer to themselves using their first name. On the first day of class, teachers will introduce themselves and will tell you how they'd like to be addressed, as well.

Culture shock – It is common for people living far away from home to experience culture shock, but it doesn't have to spoil the experience. If you find yourself feeling homesick, call a friend at home or go to your school's counselor. Culture shock is a normal part of living in a new environment, so do not be alarmed.