

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT'S  
PASSPORT TO ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE



## **INFORMATION ABOUT F-1 FULL TIME STUDENT NON-IMMIGRANT STATUS**

- **WHAT IS “F-1” FULL TIME STUDENT STATUS?**

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"F-1" status is a nonimmigrant status granted to individuals whose main purpose for entering the United States (U.S.) is **to complete a full course of study and then return to their home country upon completion of their studies.**

- **WHAT IS A FORM I-20?**

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The Form I-20, otherwise known as a Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status, is a U.S. government form on which Essex County College certifies to the U.S. government that an individual is eligible for F-1 student status. To receive a Form I-20, an individual must be accepted for admission to Essex County College, must have declared a major course of study for a degree, must intend to study full time, and must have the financial resources to study and live in the U.S. without working illegally or suffering from poverty. **A Form I-20 is only issued by the school you plan to attend when you enter the U.S.**

- **WHY DO YOU NEED A FORM I-20?**

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A Form I-20 is required to obtain an F-1 (full-time student) visa at the U.S. Embassy in your home country. A Form I-20 is also required to keep lawful F-1 status when transferring or changing schools in the U.S.

- **DOES EVERYBODY NEED AN I-20?**

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NO, some international students do not need Form I-20. If you are maintaining another non-immigrant status in the U.S., you do not have to have an I-20 and may attend school **part-time**. Dependent children in E, F, H, I, J, L, M, N, O, P, R, or S status need to change status after their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday if they marry or if they want to attend school full-time.

**IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO ATTEND SCHOOL IN THE U.S., DO NOT ENTER THE COUNTRY WITH A B-1, B-2, OR B-1/B-2 VISA.** U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) prohibits a B nonimmigrant (both B-1 visitors for business and B-2 visitors for pleasure) from “enrolling in course of study or taking other actions inconsistent with B nonimmigrant status” unless and until the Service has approved the B nonimmigrant’s change to “an appropriate student non-immigrant status”.

**IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO ATTEND SCHOOL IN THE U.S., DO NOT ENTER THE COUNTRY WITHOUT A VISA.** If you are citizens or nationals of countries participating in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), you will not be able to extend your stay, and you will not be able to change to student status. VWP enables most citizens and nationals of participating countries to travel to the United States for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less without first obtaining a visa. Travelers must have a valid Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) approval before travel.

## **HOW TO OBTAIN A FORM I-20**

### **SEND AN APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE- ENROLLMENT SERVICES TOGETHER WITH ALL OF THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:**

- Completed and signed application for a Certificate of Eligibility for Non-immigrant (F-1) Student Status (Form I-20);
- Official English proficiency results sent directly from the test center:  
TOEFL-<http://www.ets.org/toefl> (TOEFL Code #2237) or IELTS-<https://www.ielts.org>;
- Notarized sponsor's affidavit of annual financial support and affidavit of free room and board if applicable. These affidavits may be photocopied if needed;
- Any other documents supporting your minimum annual expenses;
- Proof of high school graduation\*;
- International students transferring from another U.S. school must submit copies of all previous Form I-20s, passports, visas, Form I-94\*\*, official college transcript, and an international Student Advisor's Report.

\* To be admitted, all international students must present evidence of educational achievement equivalent to a high school diploma in the United States. **Such equivalency must be reviewed by an evaluation service. A listing of these services is available on our web page.**

\*\*Foreign visitors to the U.S. arriving via air or sea no longer need to complete paper Customs and Border Protection Form I-94 or I-94W. Those who need to prove their legal visitor status—to employers, schools/universities, or government agencies—can access their CBP arrival/departure record information online: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/request.html>

- **THE APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR THE FALL SEMESTER IS MAY 1 FOR STUDENTS RESIDING OUTSIDE THE U.S. AND JULY 1 FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS ATTENDING U.S. SCHOOLS.**
- **THE APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER IS AUGUST 1 FOR STUDENTS RESIDING OUTSIDE THE U.S. AND NOVEMBER 1 FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS ATTENDING U.S. SCHOOLS.**

### **A REVIEW OF THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS WILL BE MADE UPON RECEIPT. IF THE DOCUMENTS MEET THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S REQUIREMENTS, A FORM I-20 WILL BE ISSUED AS FOLLOWS:**

- If you are not in the U.S., we will issue your SEVIS Form I-20 by Part I and Part II of your Form I-20 application.
- If you are an F-1 student in the U.S., we will issue your SEVIS Form I-20 only if you plan to travel outside the country before school begins (completed Part III, number three on your application for a Form I-20);
- If you do not plan to travel, you will receive instructions about how to transfer/change U.S. schools or change an educational level at Essex County College.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

**AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MUST BE ABLE TO PROVE ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO COVER THE MINIMUM ANNUAL EXPENSES FOR THE ENTIRE PROGRAM OF STUDY.**

- **THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE.** They represent a modest average budget, which does not include luxuries of any kind. We strongly recommend that you budget at least 10% more if possible. Expect an annual increase in tuition and living costs of about 7%.

To receive an F-1 student visa, the U.S. embassy or consulate in your home country requires evidence that funds are available to cover one year's minimum expenses and evidence that sufficient funds are, or will be, available for every year of the program.

### **What is a Sponsor?**

A sponsor is someone who provides financial support while you study in the U.S. This could include individuals who offer you housing and meals.

A sponsor can be one or more family members, friends, or organizations. You may have the option to fully or partially sponsor yourself.

However, it's important to note that a family member who is receiving money from another family member to support you does not qualify as a sponsor.

- **SPONSOR (S) MUST SUBMIT "NOTARIZED" AFFIDAVIT (S).**  
Each sponsor must submit a Sponsor's Affidavit of Annual Financial Support (included with your application for a Form I-20). The affidavit must state in U.S. dollars the amount to be provided annually for the student's support. Affidavits must be signed by the sponsor in the presence of a notary public and include the notary public's official seal. There are notary publics at all U.S. embassies and consulates.
- **FREE ROOM AND BOARD COUNTS AS FINANCIAL SUPPORT.**  
A person who is giving you a place to live and food to eat may also be considered a sponsor. This sponsor must submit a notarized Sponsor's Affidavit of Free Room and Board (included with your application for a Form I-20) with a copy of the property deed or rental lease, utility bill of the apartment you will stay in when you attend school. Free room and board reduce living expenses by the amount indicated for housing, utilities, and food expenses. If the sponsor is also providing other cash support, the sponsor should also submit a Sponsor's Affidavit of Annual Financial Support.

**Affidavits for Free Room and Board will not be accepted if the place to live is too small or too far from Essex County College.**

## THE DOCUMENTS WHICH PROVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT ARE:

- **SPONSOR'S AFFIDAVITS OF SUPPORT** (included in your application for a Form I-20);
- **PROOF OF INCOME**
  - a. Individual Sponsor: The letter from the sponsor's employer on the employer's letterhead indicating annual salary in U.S. dollars, on income tax return or receipts, or income estimated by a bank or private accountant when the sponsor is a self-employed business person or retired.
  - b. **The income of a company is not the income of the owner of the business and will not be accepted as proof of income. You must provide an official statement of salary paid to the owner/sponsor.**
  - c. Company Sponsor: Submit the most recent "Profit and Loss Statement" for the company.
- **BANK STATEMENT**
  - a. In the name of sponsor only, which states the date the account was opened, average annual balance, and present account balance in U.S. dollars.
  - b. **Bank letters saying 'enough' or 'sufficient' funds are available, or that 'the account holder is capable of supporting the student' will not be accepted.**
  - c. **Bank letters from a sponsor's business will NOT be accepted!**
  - d. **Self-employed individuals who wish to act as a student sponsor must submit a PERSONAL bank statement/letter.**
  - e. **If a bank statement is in the name of more than one person, each individual must submit an affidavit of support.**
- **SCHOLARSHIPS.**

Students receiving scholarships may use the scholarship as a source of financial support. Official award letters indicating the annual amount of the scholarship must be presented.
- **ALL FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS MUST BE IN ENGLISH,**
- **ALL FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS MUST BE LESS THAN TWO MONTHS OLD, AND**
- **ALL FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS MUST BE QUOTED IN U.S. DOLLARS.**

## YOUR SPONSOR'S INCOME IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUR SPONSOR'S BANK LETTER.

- Bank letters alone are very poor evidence of a sponsor's ability to support you. Proof of a sponsor's income, however, is a strong indicator of the sponsor's ability to support your educational needs beyond the first year that you are in the U.S.
- **NON-LIQUID FUNDS OR PROPERTY ARE NOT ACCEPTED!**
- Income from investments and property should appear in bank accounts.
- **Retirement accounts are not accepted.**

## **FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

The amounts **below** represent the minimum estimated expenses for **one year at ECC**. The budget does not allow for luxuries, and you will want to have more money available. We strongly recommend that you budget at least 10% more if possible. Expect an annual increase in tuition and living costs of about 7%.

**You must be able to prove that you can support these minimum annual expenses to be eligible for a Form I-20.**

### **TUITION AND SCHOOL FEES**

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<b>UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS</b>	\$8,170* (\$10,302**)
Additional fees:	
Technology fee:	\$15-75 per course***
Course material fee:	\$21 per credit***
<b>Course Lab Fee</b>	<b>\$***</b>

\*This includes tuition for 12 credits and general and student activity fees for both Fall and Spring semesters.  
Summer sessions are not included.

\*\* Recommended: This includes tuition for 15 credits and general and student activity fees for both Fall and Spring semesters. Summer sessions are not included.

\*\*\*Additional fees may apply depending on your major: Technology fee \$15 per course, Course Material fee approximately \$63 per course

**The College reserves the right, with no prior notice, to restructure tuition and fee rates.**

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**THE TUITION AND FEES FOR YOUR PROGRAM HAVE BEEN ENTERED IN THE "WHAT ARE YOUR MINIMUM ANNUAL FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS?" WORKBOX FOR YOU.**

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### **LIVING EXPENSES:**

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HOUSING AND UTILITIES	\$	5,700
This is based on the average cost of a single (private) room in a shared house or apartment.		
FOOD	\$	3,800
MISCELLANEOUS	\$	1,500
BOOKS AND SUPPLIES	\$	1,500
(On average, students should expect to pay \$180 per class on books and supplies.)		
<b>TOTAL MINIMUM ANNUAL LIVING EXPENSES:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>12,500</b>

\*International student health insurance might not seem important to you; however, we highly recommend that you purchase private health insurance

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**THE LIVING EXPENSES FOR YOUR PROGRAM HAVE BEEN ENTERED IN THE "WHAT ARE YOUR MINIMUM ANNUAL FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS?" WORKBOX FOR YOU.**

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#### **DEPENDENT EXPENSES**

Students planning to bring a spouse or children or who have family now with them in the U.S. must show an additional **\$7,250.00 per year to support the spouse and \$2,700 per year for each child.** These amounts do not include medical insurance. Although medical insurance is not legally required for F-2 dependents, it is highly recommended.

**A student should not assume that he/she would be able to work to help meet expenses!! The Immigration Service strictly controls employment!**

#### **WORKBOX**

##### **WHAT ARE YOUR MINIMUM ANNUAL FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS?**

TUITION AND FEES	\$	8,170* (10,302**)
LIVING EXPENSES	\$	12,500.00
SUBTOTAL ( <b>STUDENT ONLY -NO DEPENDENTS</b> )	\$	<u>20,670.00 (22,802)</u>
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS HEALTH INSURANCE (IF ANY)	\$	<u>***</u>
DEPENDENT EXPENSES (IF ANY)	\$	<u>          </u>
TOTAL:	\$	<u>          </u>

**ENTER THIS AMOUNT ON YOUR APPLICATION FOR FORM I-20.**

\* Additional fees may apply depending on your major and courses taken

\*\* \* International student health insurance might not seem important; however, we highly recommend purchasing private health insurance

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