

INFORMATION ABOUT F-1 STATUS

What is F-1 Full-Time Student Status?

F-1 status is a nonimmigrant classification granted to individuals whose primary purpose for entering the United States is to pursue a full course of academic study. Individuals in F-1 status are expected to return to their home country upon completion of their studies.

What is Form I-20?

Form I-20, officially titled the *Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status*, is a U.S. government document issued by Essex County College. It certifies that an individual is eligible to apply for F-1 student status.

Eligibility Requirements for Form I-20

To receive Form I-20, an individual must:

- Be accepted for admission to Essex County College;
- Declare a major course of study leading to a degree;
- Intend to study full-time;
- Demonstrate sufficient financial resources to study and live in the United States.

A Form I-20 is issued only by the institution you plan to attend upon entry into the United States.

Why Do You Need Form I-20?

Form I-20 is required in order to:

- Apply for and obtain an F-1 student visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your home country;
- Maintain F-1 status when transferring to or changing schools within the United States.

Important Warning

Do not enter the United States on a B-1, B-2, or B-1/B-2 visa if you intend to study.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) prohibits individuals in B status (business or tourism) from enrolling in a course of study unless your changing of your status has been approved to F1.

How to Obtain Form I-20

Applicants must apply online through the Essex County College website.

Required Documents

Application Requirements

- Completed and signed Application for Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20)

Proof of English Proficiency

Official test results must be sent directly from the testing center:

- TOEFL (Institution Code: 2237)
- IELTS
- Alternatively, applicants may take a placement test at Essex County College.

High School evaluated

All applicants are required to have your high school evaluated. Essex County College accepts evaluations of foreign credential completed by NACES and AICES members.

- <https://naces.org/members/>
- <https://aice-eval.org/membe>

Please note that you are required to have your high school credentials evaluated, and the evaluation must be sent directly from the evaluation company to ISSO email.

Financial Documentation Requirements

To receive Form, I-20, applicants must provide:

1. A valid passport (valid for at least 6 months from the program start date);
2. A personal bank statements.

If the applicant does not have sufficient funds to cover two academic years (\$20,700), the following is required:

- A sponsor's bank statement
- A personal bank statements.

Note: Applicants who submit personal bank statements are generally more successful in visa applications, as this demonstrates financial independence.

Important Requirements for Financial Documents

All financial documents must:

- Be in English;
- Be from a checking or savings account;
- Be issued within the last 6 months;
- Show balances in U.S. dollars (USD).

Estimated Cost of Attendance (Student Only – No Dependents)

- Tuition and Fees: \$8,170
- Living Expenses and Books: \$12,500
- **Subtotal:** \$20,670

Please note that tuition rates may increase.

Health Insurance

Essex County College does not provide insurance; therefore, students can obtain their own coverage.

Additional fees may apply depending on the selected major and courses.

Dependent Expenses

Students planning to bring dependents must demonstrate additional financial resources:

- \$7,250 per year for a spouse;
- \$2,700 per year for each child.

These amounts do not include medical insurance. While not mandatory for F-2 dependents, health insurance is strongly recommended.

Additional Requirements for Transfer Students

Applicants currently attending another U.S. institution must submit:

- Copies of all previous Forms I-20;
- Copy of passport identification page;
- Copy of visa;
- Copy of Form I-94;
- Official college transcript;
- International Student Advisor's Report.

Application Deadlines

Fall Semester

- May 1 — Applicants outside the United States
- July 1 — Transfer students within the United States

Spring Semester

- August 1 — Applicants outside the United States
- November 1 — Transfer students within the United States