

# GUIDE TO OBTAINING YOUR FORM I-20

## (Certificate of Eligibility for F-1 Student Status)

**IMPORTANT:** To avoid delays in obtaining your I-20, please read the instructions carefully before completing the forms and submitting financial documents.

*Due to new government regulations in immigration policies, the information contained in this document is subject to change.*

Return all completed forms and documents in **one** email to:

**Lena Grasso**  
Global Studies Coordinator  
Designated School Officer (DSO)  
lgrasso@sjny.edu

For information about your admission, program of study, registration for courses, contact:

LONG ISLAND CAMPUS 155 w. Roe Blvd Patchogue, NY 11772

[www.sjny.edu](http://www.sjny.edu)

### **This document includes:**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
What is a Form I-20, and why do you need one?	2
Rules for obtaining your Form I-20	2
Information Regarding Financial Documents	3
Funds from Sponsors/ Personal Funds	4
Estimated International Student Expenses	4
Application for Form I-20	6
International Transfer Students	6
Reason for I-20 Request	6
Affidavit of Support	7
Affidavit of Sponsor Providing Free Room and Board	8
When and How will you receive Form I-20?	9

***WHAT IS A FORM I-20 AND WHY DO YOU NEED ONE?***

**Form I-20 is an official document that tells the U.S. government that St. Joseph's University has determined that you are eligible for F-1 Student Status.** It certifies that (1) you are or expect to be a "bonafide" student; (2) you meet our admissions requirements; (3) you will pursue a full course of study; (4) you provided to us documents that indicate that you have enough money to study and live in the United States without working illegally or experiencing serious financial difficulties.

**You need a Form I-20 to obtain an F-1 student visa or status, or to keep lawful F-1 status when transferring or changing schools within the United States.**

### ***DOES EVERYONE NEED A FORM I-20?***

**NO, some international students do not need a Form I-20.**

J-1 students need a Form DS-2019.

B visitors and F-2 dependents visa holders must obtain a Form I-20 and apply for a change of status to F-1 Student before pursuing a course of study that is not vocational or recreational in nature.

If you are maintaining another nonimmigrant status in the U.S., you do not have to have an I-20 and may attend school full or part time. Dependent children in E, H, I, J, L, M, N, O, P, R, or S status need to change status after their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday or if they marry.

### ***REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING YOUR FORM I-20***

- 1. You must be a "bonafide" student,** accepted to a full-time program of study.
- 2. As required by United States law, you must prove that you can support the costs of living and studying** in the U.S. for each year of your program of study.
  - DO NOT EXPECT TO WORK IN THE U.S. TO HELP MEET YOUR ANNUAL COSTS!** On-campus employment is limited and competitive; off-campus employment is strictly controlled by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). *Additionally, the SJC ISS team does **not** guide students through the process of obtaining a social security number; that process, when applicable, is the student's responsibility.*
  - Carefully review the university's estimated *annual* financial requirements for international students and compute your total expenses.** This is the amount that you must prove that you can provide for ***every year*** of your program of study (estimate a minimum of four years for a Bachelor's Degree; 2 years for a Master's Degree).

- **These requirements are not negotiable.** They represent a modest average budget that does not include luxuries. We strongly recommend that you budget at least 10% more if possible. We advise that students and their families look closely at the costs of living and studying in the U.S. and make careful plans to be sure your needs will be met.
- **Expect modest annual increases in tuition and living costs.**

**Read and follow these instructions very carefully.** You cannot complete this process without following them step-by-step. We may ask you to provide more evidence of your financial ability; the U.S. government requires that we have confirmed, to the best of our ability, that you will have enough financial support to cover the full costs of your stay in the U.S.

### ***INFORMATION REGARDING FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS***

**St. Joseph's University follows strict guidelines regarding financial documentation for two reasons:**

- ❖ We try to be as thorough as the U.S. embassy or consulate and the Department of Homeland Security Centers. Our purpose is to be sure that St. Joseph's University students are not denied immigration applications because of financial questions. In order to be fair, we require all students to meet the same standards.
- ❖ Insufficient funds or the inability to access funds may result in serious problems for students. We advise that families be knowledgeable regarding the real costs of studying and living in New York [Long Island] and that they are as certain as possible that the student's financial needs can be satisfied.

**General Information:**

1. Sponsors should only promise what they can truly provide for your educational costs.
2. Bank statements *must contain actual U.S. dollar amounts.*
3. Documents must be current. We will not accept documents that are more than two months old.
4. **Copies or faxes**, *not* originals, should be provided. You will present the originals at the embassy when applying for an F-1 visa.
5. Documents must be **in English.**
6. Every dollar amount being promised **must be proven** with supporting documentation.
7. Scholarships and grants may be used to qualify for an I-20.
8. Funds from sponsors and your personal funds may be combined. Any combination of support is acceptable. For example, (a) you can have a sponsor or sponsors for financial support; (b) you can have another to provide you with room and board; (c) you can

sponsor yourself. Be sure that all financial support equals the total amount of the budget in the *Estimated International Student Expenses* section below. Please make sure that you provide us with evidence to go with each form of support.

9. **Send all documents together in one email as soon as you have completed them.**

***SPONSORS PROVIDING FUNDING FOR YOUR EDUCATION***

These funds may be provided by members of your family, friends, and/or organizations, including St. Joseph’s University, who have agreed to sponsor you in the form of cash, scholarships, and/or housing and board:

~ Your sponsor(s) must provide proof of their ability to make stated funds available to you. They must give you, **in addition to** the affidavit of support and bank statements, income tax statements **or** a letter from an employer verifying their annual salary **or** at least 3 months of pay stubs.

~A sponsor can agree to provide **housing and food (room and board)**, for which the cash value is listed below, and the same or a different sponsor can promise you the remainder of the cost of attendance.

**TO SPONSORS (Please Read Carefully):**

- ❖ Complete the attached affidavit of support.
- ❖ Depending on the support you are providing, attach proof of your financial ability to the Affidavit form: bank statements, along with income tax copies; letters of employment and /or salary stubs; copies of the apartment lease or the deed to your home if you are promising room and board.
- ❖ Return all documents to the student as soon as possible to be submitted as part of the packet.

***PERSONAL FUNDS***

These are funds from your own resources. Please provide us with a completed Affidavit of Support, unless all financial documents appear in your name. The money can be in U.S. banks or abroad but it is recommended that you have at least half in U.S. banks so that it is available for you to use immediately.

**ESTIMATED ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPENSES**

	<b>Undergraduate Programs</b>	<b>Graduate Programs</b>	
	<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Graduate</b>	<b>Graduate - MFA</b>
Tuition and Fees	\$34,175.00	\$23,696.00	\$34,484.00
Room	\$16,128.00	\$16,128.00	\$16,128.00
Student Health Insurance	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Books, transportation, food & personal expenses	\$9,500.00	\$9,500.00	\$9,000.00
<b>Total Per Year:</b>	<b>\$61,303.00</b>	<b>\$50,824.00</b>	<b>\$61,112.00</b>

Tuition for undergraduate studies covers 12-18 credits for each of the fall and spring semesters. Tuition for graduate studies covers 9 credits each of the fall and spring semesters.

*Dependents:* A student planning to bring a spouse or a child in F-2 status or planning to change the status of a spouse or child already in the U.S. to F-2, must show additional funds of **\$9,000** per year for spouse and **\$4,000** per year for each child.



***IF YOU ARE TRANSFERRING FROM ANOTHER U.S. INSTITUTION***

❖ **INS Admissions Number** (can be found on your form I-94 Departure Card): \_\_\_\_\_

❖ **SEVIS ID Number** (can be found on the top right corner of your form I-20): \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you plan to travel outside the U.S. before school begins? :**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Yes.** If you plan to travel outside the U.S. before beginning classes, you must make careful arrangements with your advisor. You will be in violation of your F-1 status if you travel with your previous school's I-20. Provide us with acceptable financial support documents so that we can issue you a new I-20 for travel.

\_\_\_\_\_ **No.** Provide us with required financial support documents so that we can issue you a transfer I-20.

***OTHER REASONS FOR I-20 APPLICATION***

**Please check all that apply:**

- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ I am a student with another status. Which one? \_\_\_\_\_. I am planning to change my status to F-1. Please make an appointment with the advisor for instructions.
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ I plan to travel outside the U.S. and need to renew my F-1 visa. I am going to \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ (date). I will return on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ I plan to travel outside the U.S. and need to apply for an F-1 visa because I entered the U.S. on another type of visa.
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ I am applying for an extension of time to complete my program. My I-20 is expiring on \_\_\_\_\_.
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ I am applying for Reinstatement to F-1 student status.
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ I am applying for F-2 status and/or visa for my spouse or children named below. My dependents are currently in the U.S.: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Name (family, first, middle)	Date of Birth	Country of Birth	Relationship
1.			
2.			
3.			

If you are currently attending another school in the U.S., and are an F-1 Visa Holder, please refer to the "Transfer-In Information" and complete and submit the "Transfer-In Application" to schedule the release of your SEVIS record to St Joseph's University, which will issue your "Transfer-In Form I-20" as soon as this release date has passed and we have received all of your documentation.

**AFFIDAVIT OF SUPPORT**

*(You may copy this form for use by more than one sponsor.)*

I hereby certify that I am willing and able and that I will provide (FULL NAME OF STUDENT)

with \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in cash, for ***each*** of the years of study at St. Joseph’s University.  
(See ***Estimated International Student Expenses on p.5***)

My relationship to the student is \_\_\_\_\_.

The following persons are dependent on me for their housing, food, or financial support (do not list grown children or spouses who are supporting themselves.) DO NOT INCLUDE THE STUDENT NAMED ABOVE.

Name	Relationship	Age
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

❖ This affidavit must be sent with proof of the sponsor’s annual income and bank statements. This affidavit **will not be accepted** unless it has been signed by the sponsor in the presence of a Notary Public and signed and sealed by the notary public. If this form has erasures or changes, the sponsor and the notary must initial each change.

**AFFIRMATION OF OATH**

I hereby affirm or swear that the contents of the above statement are true and correct:

**Name of Sponsor** (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Sponsor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SWORN AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME ON** (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Notary:** \_\_\_\_\_ *SEAL (required)*

**AFFIDAVIT OF SPONSOR PROVIDING FREE ROOM AND BOARD**

*(To be completed only by a person who owns or rents the property.)*

This affidavit *must* be sent with a photocopy of a lease or deed in the sponsor's name.  
**All** questions must be answered.

**Name of Sponsor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Relationship of Sponsor/Landlord to Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address, including room or apartment number, of residence to be provided to student:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What will be offered to the student?** *Check all that apply.*

Room \_\_\_\_\_ Board (inc. meals) \_\_\_\_\_ Incidentals (books, transportation) \_\_\_\_\_

**Does the sponsor live at the address listed above?** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**How many rooms are in the house/apartment?** \_\_\_\_\_

**How many persons will be living in the house/apartment?** \_\_\_\_\_

Does the sponsor: own \_\_\_\_\_ or lease \_\_\_\_\_ the property?

**AFFIRMATION OF OATH**

I hereby affirm or swear that the contents of the above statement are true and correct:

**Name of Sponsor** (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Sponsor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SWORN AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME ON** (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Notary:** \_\_\_\_\_ *SEAL (required)*

## ***WHEN WILL YOU RECEIVE FORM I-20?***

The Form I-20 lists your program start date; you are allowed to enter the United States 30 days before this date. F-1 student visas **can** be issued **ONLY up to 120 days in advance** of your program start date. The program start date is different from the date your classes begin because it allows time for ORIENTATION, MOVE-IN (if you will be living at EHS/St. George Residence) or with a relative, final program registration with an academic advisor, etc.

**To apply for your Form I-20, you must submit ALL of the following documents to St. Joseph's University:**

- Application for Form I-20 (page 6 of this packet)
- Reason for I-20 request, and Transfer Information, if applicable (page 6)
- Affidavit of Support (page 8)
- Affidavit of Sponsor of Free Room and Board, if applicable (page 9)
- Supporting financial documentation (see page 5 for guidelines)
- A copy of your (valid) passport and visa, if you currently have one.

*Return all completed documents to:*

For information about your admission, program of study, registration for courses, contact:

Lena Grasso, DSO  
631-687-1281, [lgrasso@sjny.edu](mailto:lgrasso@sjny.edu)  
155 West Roe Blvd.  
Attn: Global Studies, Rm. 220  
Patchogue, NY 11772