



ASCENT
COLLEGE

#YOURMOMENTISNOW

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

Ascent College

2022-2023

Admission to Ascent College

Application

Prospective students applying to Ascent College must submit a completed Application for Admission and a non-refundable application fee of \$25.00 US.

Scholastic

Prospective students must submit evidence of completion of a secondary school program. This completion could be demonstrated by an official transcript from the secondary institution. All applicants who have (or will) complete secondary school outside of the United States must provide an official secondary school transcript directly from all

schools attended and, where appropriate, official results and certificates of completion from a national secondary school examination. All applicants with foreign academic transcripts and certificates must provide official copies of those credentials in the native language with a certified English translation.

If you have completed college coursework, please submit all official university or college transcripts in native language with certified English translation. Transcripts should be sent from the previous institutions directly to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. Ascent College seeks to enroll international students who demonstrate strong academic performance with records suggesting potential for success at Ascent College. Undergraduate admission is competitive and is most often offered to applicants whose academic credentials indicate marks of “very good” to “excellent”.

English Language Proficiency

All students at Ascent College are expected to read, write, and speak English fluently. International students must demonstrate a proficiency in the English language by taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The TOEFL is administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) at numerous locations throughout the world. If not available locally, the Bulletin of Information and Registration form for TOEFL can be obtained by writing to:

TOEFL
P.O. Box 6154
Princeton, NJ 08541-6154, USA
<http://www.toefl.org/>

A score of 500 and above on the paper-based test or 233 and above on the Computer based test (CBT) (with no sectional score below 50) or a score of 84 and above on the internet based test (IBT) may qualify an applicant for admission.

Undergraduate applicants who earn an SAT 1 verbal score of 480 or higher do not need to take or submit scores from an English proficiency exam.

Non-native speakers of English who have earned a degree from the United States, United Kingdom, English-speaking Canada, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and commonwealth Caribbean are exempt from presenting TOEFL scores. Students with a music-performance degree from a U.S. institution are required to submit a TOEFL score to Ascent College. Native speakers of English are defined as those who have received all of their education in the countries listed above.

There are more than a dozen African countries where English is an official language. These include Zimbabwe, Uganda, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Africa, and Nigeria. If students can present evidence that their education was in English they would not be required to take the TOEFL.

Financial

Applicants currently holding or intending to seek an F-1 Student visa to study in the United States must complete the Certification of Finances, including bank statements that demonstrate sufficient funds to cover these expenses. See the Financial Certification form included in Appendix 1 for more information.

International applicants requiring an F-1 visa to attend Ascent College must certify sufficient funds to cover tuition and fees, books and supplies, living expenses, and medical insurance for themselves and any dependents. The estimated annual expenses for an individual student for the 2022-2023 academic year is \$19,255. The following amounts are approximate and may change at anytime without notice. These are good faith estimates.

Tuition and mandatory fees (two semesters)	\$7,575
Living expenses for 9 months (room, meals, local transportation, and incidental costs)	\$9,000
Books, supplies, and medical insurance	\$2,680
Total (one year):	\$19,255

Tuition and fees for each semester, as well as other college charges, books, and supplies must be paid in full before the first day of classes. Therefore, it is especially important to have adequate funds on hand at the start of each semester.

Medical insurance is required for all international students attending Ascent College.

Transfer Applicants

International students who are currently attending another college or university in the United States under an F-1 visa and who wish to transfer to Ascent College will complete the requirements above in addition to the following procedures below.

International students may complete the transfer process by one of two methods:

Option 1- If you plan to remain in the U.S. during the transition period between your old institution and Ascent College;

1. Complete section A of the “International Student Transfer Form” and ask the International Student Advisor at your current (“old”) school to complete Section B. The advisor will email or mail the form to us. You should ask the advisor for a copy of your records at that school for your files.

Refer to Appendix III for a copy of the International Student Transfer Form.

2. The Ascent College International Student Office will contact you when we receive this form. If you do not receive an e-mail concerning this within two weeks, please contact us immediately at info@ascent.edu.
3. Sign page one of the I-20 when you receive it.
4. Attend the “College Student Orientation.” Bring all your I-20’s, including the Ascent College I-20 passport, I-94 card and proof of health insurance to the session called “Documents Check.”
5. The International Student Office will officially complete the transfer process once you have attended Orientation and registered for the required number of courses.

Option 2- If you plan to travel outside of the U.S. during the transition period between your old institution and Ascent College;

1. Take your new 3-page Ascent College I-20 with you when you leave the country.
2. Upon re-entry, the USCIS officer will stamp page one of your I-20. Then s/he will return it to you. Verify that there is a USCIS stamp in the upper right-hand corner of your I-20 before leaving the immigration area. Also make sure that your I-94 has “F-1 D/S” written on it.
3. Attend the “International Student Orientation.” Bring your I-20, passport, I-94 card, and proof of health insurance to the session called “Documents Check.”
4. At the “Documents Check” session, the International Student Office will inspect and photocopy all your immigration documents and issue a new I-20 to show you have completed the transfer process.

Remember... Failure to complete the F-1 transfer process in a timely manner is a violation of F-1 student status. Loss of status will exclude students from F-1 benefits such as authorized employment.

Obtaining a Student Visa

Applicants Residing Outside of the United States:

To enter the United States, international students residing abroad will need a passport from their government and a visa from the U.S. Consulate.

To obtain a visa for the purposes of studying in the United States, the applicant must present a Certificate of Eligibility (form I-20) to the U.S. Consulate. The College will issue this form to admitted students who have submitted proof of having sufficient funds to cover the cost of a program of study (see Appendix I.)

*Admitted students with personal, family, or other source of private funding will be issued the Certificate of Eligibility (form I-20) to obtain the F-1 Student Visa.

Entering the USA

Refer to Appendix II for a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Information Sheet.

Maintaining F-1 Status

Immigration Responsibilities as an International Student

Remember that it is your responsibility to comply with all existing U.S. government rules and regulations as they apply to you. These regulations are continually amended and changed by the U.S. government. Each semester you should check with the International Office at Ascent College for updates and changes in the regulations. For additional information or any questions on these and other specific regulations, contact or visit the International Office at Ascent College.

Immigration Responsibilities as an International Student

Remember that it is your responsibility to comply with all existing U.S. government rules and regulations as they apply to you.

To Maintain Your Status as an F1 Student You Should:

- Maintain a valid passport unless you are exempt from the passport requirement
- Attend the school you are authorized to attend
- Pursue a full course of study and make normal progress towards the completion of the program of study. UNDERGRADUATE students must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours each Fall and Spring semester. 20-hour assistantships are equivalent to 24 units; 10-hour assistantships, 12 units. Courses taken for "audit" do not generate credits/units and **cannot** be used in calculating full-time status.
- Notify USCIS within 10 days of any change of address by verifying your information online. You must also do this each semester before the end of the schedule adjustment period. Go to the Ascent College International Student Office to check/update your records.
- Refrain from working off-campus unless you have official authorization from Ascent College or USCIS. F-1 students may work on-campus up to 20 hours total per week during the school year, and full-time on-campus during summers and vacation periods. You may work on campus as described above even if your Social Security card says that employment is not authorized. For more information on employment, review the Employment section below.

- Follow procedures to extend your educational program if you will not complete your studies by the date listed in section 5 of your I-20 form. Your I-94 arrival card in your passport indicates you have been admitted to the United States as an F-1 until "D/S" or "duration of status". This means the period during which you are maintaining full-time status as described above. When you complete your program, you have a 60-day grace period during which you can travel inside the U.S., apply to begin another degree program, change to another non-immigrant visa status, or begin your OPT. If you do not start any of these processes, you cannot travel outside of the U.S. and re-enter during this grace period.
- To legally remain in the U.S. as an F-1 student, you must also have a current I-20 which corresponds to your level, field and period of study. Be aware of the information on your I-20 and keep it current!

Failure to comply with these regulations will result in the loss of your F-1 student status. We refer to this as being "out of status." Please see an international student advisor if you think you are out of status.

Change of Status to F-1

In order to change your status to F-1 within the United States, you will use a newly issued I-20 along with the documents below. If you have not yet been issued an I-20 and you are a current student at Ascent College, call the International Student Office at Ascent College. You will need to provide financial support documentation proving that you have funds for your studies at Ascent College, including tuition, books, health insurance and living expenses. You will also need to submit a letter from your academic advisor detailing how much time you have left in your program and when you are expected to graduate. You will need to meet with an International Student advisor before submitting your change of status application to USCIS.

Submit the following to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Center:

- Form **I-539**
- SEVIS fee. This fee should be paid online when you complete and submit a Form I-901. The Form I-901 and the SEVIS Fee are found at the **U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement** website. Print and send your online receipt!
- Original copies of your financial support information
- \$200 check payable to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- Your signed I-20 form (all pages)
- A photocopy of your I-94 card (and those of any dependents to be changed to F-2). The I-94 is the white card in your passport.
- Supporting documentation verifying your current status, such as a visa stamp
- Cover letter explaining why you wish to change status
- Anyone in A or G status will also need to fill out a form **I-566** for clearance from their organization or embassy and the U.S. Department of State
- Please indicate clearly, "I-539: Change of status form", on the outside of the envelope.

The application should be sent to the following address if you reside in Maryland, Virginia or Washington, DC (as indicated on your form I-539):

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Vermont Service Center
75 Lower Welden Street
St. Albans, VT 05479-0001

If your address is not in one of these states, please speak with an international advisor to determine the correct service center.

You should receive a notice from the USCIS within two to three weeks indicating that they have received your application. However, the Vermont USCIS usually takes about two to six months to make a decision. Other USCIS Offices may take even longer. If you wish to work on-campus, you must wait until the change of status is approved by the USCIS. (After approval, F-1 students may work no more than 20 hours per week on campus while classes are in session, F-2 dependents cannot work in the United States.) For more information about the regulations governing F-1 students, please see an International Student Advisor in the International Student Office at Ascent College.

If your application is approved, you will have F-1 student status inside the United States. If you travel outside the US and intend to return as a student, you will need to obtain an F-1 visa from a US Embassy or Consulate abroad. If your application is rejected, please contact an advisor in our International Student Office.

The International Student Office staff is available to advise you on the process of changing your status to F-1. Please email info@ascent.edu to make an appointment.

Employment

Employment means the rendering of services on either a part-time or full-time basis for compensation, financial or otherwise, including self-employment. Although investing is not considered employment, working in a business in which a student is an investor *is* considered employment.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) in an on-campus training program

On-campus employment includes: employment located on Ascent College and employment at an off-campus location which is educationally affiliated with Ascent College. In any event the employment must be an integral part of the student's educational program. While school is in session, you may be authorized to work on a part-time basis (no more than 20 hours per week). During documented school vacations and breaks and during the summer you may be authorized to work on a full-time basis (40 hours per week). During the academic year, CPT employment is in addition to your regular full-time course load.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for internships, co-op programs, and work experience for credit in an off-campus training program

As stated in the USCIS regulations, F-1 students wishing to participate in an off-campus training program that is "an integral part of an established curriculum" must first obtain work authorization for CPT. The training, which must be directly related to the student's major field of study, is defined as "alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school" (federal regulation 8CFR214.2(f)(10)). This cooperative agreement is formalized through an Internship/Co-op/Practicum/Experiential Learning course in which the student enrolls. If the work is not a required or an elective component of a student's degree program, the student must apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT).

Who is eligible for curricular practical training?

Eligibility requirements for obtaining authorization for CPT from the International Student Advisor are as follows:

- 1) You must be fully matriculated into a degree program
- 2) You must be enrolled in a full-time course of study (12 credits)
- 3) You must be in lawful F-1 status and have been a full-time student for at least one academic year when applying for CPT.

How many hours can I work?

While school is in session, you may be authorized to work on a part-time basis (no more than 20 hours per week). During documented school vacations and breaks and during the summer you may be authorized to work on a full-time basis (40 hours per week). **During the academic year, CPT employment is in addition to your regular full-time course load.**

If you work 12 months or more of full-time curricular practical training you will forfeit all optional practical training. Part-time curricular practical training is not counted toward the 12-month threshold at which a student loses eligibility for optional practical training. Employment of more than 20 hours per week is considered full-time and will be counted by the USCIS in determining your eligibility for optional practical training.

You may not continue to work beyond the end date that is specified on your Form I-20. If you do, you are working illegally.

A student may begin Curricular Practical Training ONLY *after* receiving an endorsement on the Form I-20 from International Student Advisor.

Visit the International Student Office during the registration period for the semester that you wish to engage in Curricular Practical Training for a counseling session on the requirements of the training program and the submission of the required forms.

Optional Practical Training (OPT) for off-campus employment in field of study

USCIS permits students in F-1 status to work in the United States so that they may reinforce what they have learned in university and college degree programs. This benefit is called Optional Practical Training (OPT). Like Curricular Practical Training (CPT), the work must be in the student's field of study; however, OPT is *unlike* CPT in several ways:

- USCIS, not Ascent College, authorizes this training
- A job offer is not necessary to apply for OPT
- The student may participate in OPT before and/or after completing the program of study
- A student may work for one or more employers, change jobs, or look for work during the training period
- OPT is limited to 12 months per degree level

An F-1 student may apply for authorization for temporary employment for OPT directly related to the student's major area of study. A student may be authorized 12 months of OPT and becomes eligible for another 12 months of OPT when he or she changes to a higher educational level. The student may not begin OPT until the date indicated on his or her employment authorization document. A student may apply for OPT up to 90 days prior to being enrolled for one full academic year, provided that the period of employment will not begin until the completion of the full academic year as indicated by the DSO.

Temporary employment for OPT may be authorized:

1. During the student's annual vacation and at other times when school is not in session if the student is currently enrolled and is eligible for registration and intends to register for the next term or session.
2. While school is in session, provided that OPT does not exceed 20 hours a week.
3. After completion of the course of study, or, for a student in a bachelor's, masters, or doctoral degree program, after completion of all course requirements for the degree (excluding thesis or equivalent). OPT must be requested prior to the completion of all course requirements for the degree or prior to the completion of the course study. A student must complete all OPT within a 14-month period following the completion. The total periods of authorization for OPT shall not exceed a maximum of twelve months during a degree program. Part-time OPT, 20 hours per week or less, shall be deducted from the available OPT at one-half the full-time rate. A student becomes eligible for another 12 months of OPT when he or she changes to a higher educational level. As required by the regulations, an F-1 student seeking OPT may not accept employment until INS has issued an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) to him or her.

To apply for OPT the student must bring to The International Student Office, the following items:

1. An I-538 with section A completed.
2. A letter from the academic advisor indicating the current academic status of the student and the expected date of completion of studies. C-15 does not view the graduation ceremony as completion of studies; completion of studies means completion of coursework or the date the final thesis is submitted.
3. Employment letter from the employer providing the OPT. Obtain an employment letter from the employer. The letter should be on letterhead and should clearly state the job title (e.g. intern, trainee), the job description, the location of the job (i.e. city, state), the exact starting and ending dates, the number of hours per week, and any salary agreements. (If any detail is missing the International Student Office will not be able to grant/recommend OPT.)

If everything is in order the International Students Office will complete section B of the I-538. In making a recommendation for OPT under SEVIS, the DSO will update the student's record in SEVIS as having been recommended for OPT. A DSO who recommends a student for OPT is responsible for maintaining the record of the student for the duration of the time that training is authorized. The DSO will indicate in SEVIS the start and end date of employment. The DSO will then print the employment page of the student's SEVIS Form I-20, and sign and date the form to indicate that Opt has been recommended. The F-1 student will file with the service center for an Employment Authorization Document, on Form I-765, with applicable fee and the SEVIS Form I-20 employment page indicating that the DSO has recommended OPT.

The student will submit the following documents:

1. \$180 bank check or money order made payable to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service.
2. A completed I-765.
3. A photocopy of the I-94 (front and back).
4. A photocopy of the last EAD (front and back), if available and applicable.
5. Two photos with a white background taken no earlier than 30 days before submission. They should be unmounted, glossy and unretouched. The photos should show a three-quarter front profile of the right side of your face, with your right ear visible. Your head should be bare unless you are wearing a headdress as required by a religious order to which you belong. The photo should not be larger than 1 ½ X 1 ½

inches, with the distance from the top of the head to just below the chin about 1 ¼ inches. Lightly print your name and your I94 number on the back of each photo with a pencil.

6. Photocopies of the identification pages from the student's passport.
7. A photocopy of the visa stamp from the passport.
8. The SEVIS I-20.
9. The I-538.

Forms I-538 and I-765 are available through the Dept. of Homeland Security web page- [Http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/index.htm](http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/index.htm)

Applications for OPT must be made before the completion of the student's program of study. They may be submitted 90 days before the completion date. OPT must be completed within 14 months of completing the program of study.

Students can begin their employment only after they have received their EAD from the INS.

If you have any questions concerning employment for F-1 visa holders, please contact The International Student Office.

Employment with an International Organization

F-1 students who have been offered employment with an International Organization such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, or the United Nations, may apply for special employment permission from USCIS. Students may work part-time (20 hours per week) while school is in session and full-time during vacation periods, provided they will continue their studies in the following semester. Work permission with an International Organization does not reduce the amount of curricular or optional practical training one can use. *Note: Students cannot participate during the school year if they already have an assistantship or other on-campus employment equaling 20 hours per week.

Employment based on economic necessity

F-1 students who have encountered severe economic hardship may apply to USCIS for off-campus work authorization. A student seeking authorization of this type must be able to prove that the current financial situation was the result of unforeseen circumstances that were beyond his/her control. Prior to applying to USCIS, the student must have made a good faith effort to find on-campus employment.

Change of Degree, Funding, or Study Area

Making sure that all information on your I-20 is up to date is an important part of maintaining your F-1 status. If any changes occur regarding your degree level, funding, or major/program of study, you will want to update your I-20.

Change of Funding

The International Student Office of Ascent College advises that you update your funding before you leave the U.S. if you are planning to renew your visa before you re-enter. You will need to provide financial support documents to the International Student Office. If you have other reasons for updating the funding information on your I-20, then it is suggested that you come in to speak with an advisor.

Change of Major/Program of Study

If you change your major or add an additional major, you will need to visit the International Students Office to indicate what the change is so that we may update your I-20.

Extension of Stay

Although you were admitted to the United States for *duration of status* (D/S on your I-94), each academic program you pursue has a date by which you are expected to complete that program. This period of study may or may not correspond to Ascent College's departmental degree period limitations. If the completion date indicated on your I-20 form (see section 5 on I-20) will pass before you can complete your studies, you must apply for a program extension **before** the program end date on the I-20 is reached. The International Student Office recommends that you see an advisor about the extension process one or two months before the end date.

EXTENSION PROCESS REQUIREMENTS

You are eligible for an extension if the following apply:

- You have continually maintained full-time F-1 student status.
- The delay in completing your studies was "caused by compelling academic or medical reasons, such as changes of major or research topics, unexpected research problems, or documented illnesses."

Delays resulting from academic probation or suspension are not acceptable reasons for an extension.

PROCEDURE

- Have your departmental academic advisor complete an academic extension form and attach a *brief and separate statement on departmental letter head* explaining why there was a delay.
- Make an appointment to see an International Student Advisor.

- Bring to the International Student Office the following: the program extension form, letter from your departmental advisor, proof of financial support, documents and copies of your current immigration documents - passport ID/expiration date page, I-94 card, and current I-20 (pages 1&3).
- If the delay was due to medical reasons, you will also need to provide a letter from your medical doctor.

A new I-20 with the new end date will be produced after your eligibility and documents are verified. If you have questions about program extensions, please contact the International Student Office.

Transfer Process

Transferring OUT OF Ascent College

If you are a current student at Ascent College and have decided to transfer to another institution, there are several documents that you must submit to the International Student Office before we will be able to transfer your SEVIS record to another school. These documents are:

- **Transfer Out Form**
- **Exit Plan Form** (filled out and signed by your academic advisor)
- Letter of admission from the new institution

If you are a student on OPT and are planning on starting a new program of study at a different institution, you will only need to submit the **Transfer Out Form** and the letter of admission from the new school.

Reinstatement of Status

F-1 students who have not followed USCIS regulations are considered out of status. They may be able to regain status by one of two methods.

1. TRAVEL & RE-ENTRY with New Initial Attendance I-20

The F-1 student may elect to leave the U.S. and then re-enter with a new Initial Attendance I-20. Re-entry with this I-20 will allow the student to re-establish her/his F-1 standing. However, until the student has maintained status for 9 months from the time of re-entry, the student will not be eligible for off-campus employment. To obtain a new I-20 for the TRAVEL option, you must visit or call the International Student Office and provide proof of financial support.

2. APPLY FOR REINSTATEMENT to F-1 status

If the student does not wish to travel, then she/he may apply to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for reinstatement to student status. Reinstatement is possible only if the student:

- Can establish "that the violation of status resulted from circumstances beyond the student's control or the violation relates to a reduction in course load that would have been within DSOs power to authorize and that failure to receive reinstatement to lawful F-1 status would result in extreme hardship to the student;" [USCIS]
- Is currently pursuing, or intending to pursue, a full course of study at the school which issued the FORM I-20 A-B
- Has not engaged in unauthorized employment and is not deportable on any ground other than section 241 (a)(1)(B) or (C)(i) of the Act [overstaying or failing to maintain status]. [8CFR 214.2(f)(16)]
- Has not been out of status for more than 5 months at time of filing request (unless student provides substantial reasons for delay)
- Does not have a record of repeated or willful violations

REINSTATEMENT APPLICATION PACKET

If the student decides to proceed with the reinstatement option, then s/he should gather the following for the application packet:

- Check made out to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
- Original of form I-94
- Form **I-539** (available at the International Student Office; to be completed in blue ink)
 - F-1 Reinstatement should be written across the top of the form
 - F-1 Reinstatement should be entered in Part 2 / Question #1
- Letter from student explaining failure to maintain status
- Any additional documents or statements to support case
- Original New Form I-20 issued with the notation "Reinstatement"
(make sure that you sign and date the I-20 in section 11 before you send it!)
- Transcript or other proof of current full-time enrollment
- Photocopies of all old I-20's
- Proof of financial support for remainder of academic program
- Photocopies of your passport number/photo/expiration date page(s).

Make photocopies of each item in the application packet for your records and then mail the entire packet (by certified or return receipt mail/courier service) to the address provided by the International Student Office.

NOTIFICATION OF USCIS DECISION

A student will eventually receive notification from USCIS as to whether or not s/he has been reinstated. If the student has been reinstated to F-1 status, then s/he will be eligible for F-1 benefits as long as s/he had maintained F-1 status for at least 9 months before the violation. PLEASE CONTACT YOUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR AS SOON AS YOU RECEIVE THE DECISION FROM USCIS.

Travel Abroad

If you are leaving the U.S. and intend to return as an F-1 student, the information below will help you determine what documents you need.

Valid documents (Passport, I-20, Visa)

Check the expiration date of your **passport**. Your passport should be valid for the duration of your academic program but at a minimum, your passport should be valid for 6 months beyond your expected date of re-entry to the U.S. If you need to extend your passport, contact your **embassy in Washington D.C.** for instructions. If you are issued a new passport and you still have a valid F-1 visa in the old passport, ask if you can carry both; thereby allowing you to use the visa. Otherwise, on your next trip outside the U.S., you will have to apply for a new F-1 visa stamp.

Check the information on your I-20 form

The current form should be up to date. Check the expiration date and major field of study in section 5, and the source of funding in section 8.

1. If any of the above information has changed, you will need a new I-20. Submit proof of funding to the International Student Office with your request for a new I-20. Please allow 3 business days for your request to be processed.
2. If the information on the I-20 is correct, you will need a **travel signature** on the 3rd page of your I-20. Travel signatures are valid for **5 months**. Drop your I-20 off at the International Student Office. You may pick it up after 2:00 pm on the next business day.
3. Carry all your I-20s with you when you travel. The Immigration Official at the port of entry may want to see your F-1 history. This is particularly important if you have transferred from one school to another, changed program levels, or extended your I-20.

You need a valid F-1 U.S. visa stamp in your passport to re-enter the U.S.

U.S. visa stamps are entry permits. The visa stamp does not determine how long an individual can stay in the US. However, a valid visa stamp is required to enter or re-enter the U.S. from abroad. When checking the validity of a U.S. visa stamp, review the number of entries (usually marked "1", "2", or "M" = multiple) and the expiration date. If your visa has expired or all entries have been used, then you will need to apply for a new visa stamp while you are abroad. F-1 visas cannot be obtained inside the U.S. If your F-1 visa has not expired and is marked "M" for multiple entry, you do not need to apply for a new visa even if you have transferred schools and the old school's name is written in the remarks section on the visa. However, you must show the I-20 for the school you intend to attend to the Immigration official when you enter the U.S.

Applying for a new visa

If your visa has expired or you have used all of the entries, you will need to apply for a

renewal of your F-1 visa stamp on your next trip abroad. Make sure you can obtain a U.S. visa in the country you plan to visit and within the time limits of your trip. Check for visa application guidelines and wait times at [U.S. consulates](#). Some consulates take applications by appointment only. Others have a drop off process that can take several weeks. Some consulates will not accept third country applicants. Please check on the process of the particular consulate you plan to visit before you go.

Special Travel Situations

Automatic Visa Revalidation

Special Rules for Travel to Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean (except Cuba) If you are planning a trip:

1. To Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean **ONLY** (Applicable Caribbean islands are listed below)
2. And your trip will last **LESS THAN** 30 days

Then you can re-enter the U.S. using an expired F-1 visa stamp if you meet the following criteria:

1. You are in valid F-1 status
2. You have a valid passport (for at least 6 months beyond day of re-entry to U.S.)
3. You have an I-94 marked "*Admitted F-1 until D/S*"
4. You have a recent travel signature (within 5 months) on the 3rd page of your I-20. Please note, the Canadian government prefers to see a more recent travel signature (within 2 months) before they issue a Canadian tourist visa stamp.
5. You have an expired U.S. visa stamp in your passport. It cannot be stamped "cancelled." If you applied for a new visa and it has not been issued or has been denied, you will not be able to re-enter the U.S. on your expired visa.
6. You are NOT from one of the following countries: Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, or Syria.

***NOTE:** Students who have changed status to F-1 in the U.S. and who are traveling out of the U.S. for the first time are NOT eligible for automatic visa revalidation. Please check with the appropriate embassies to see whether you will need to apply for a visa before you enter Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean islands. [The Canadian Embassy](#); [The Mexican Embassy](#):

Caribbean Islands Where Automatic Visa Revalidation is Applicable:
Saint Pierre, Miquelon, The Dominican Republic, Haiti, Bermuda, The Bahamas,
Barbados, Jamaica, The Windward and Leeward Islands, Trinidad, Martinique, and other
British, French and Netherlands territory or possessions in or bordering on the Caribbean
Sea.

Traveling after graduation while participating in Optional Practical Training (OPT)

If your F-1 visa stamp is still valid, carry:

1. Your Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
2. A letter from your employer indicating that you have a temporary job in your field of study and are returning to employment
3. Your current I-20 with a travel signature.
4. Your old I-20s; see section on valid I-20 above.
5. Your valid passport.

If your F-1 visa stamp has expired, if you have not yet received your EAD or if you are not yet working, then see an advisor before traveling while on OPT.

Travel for F-2 family members

F-2 spouses and children, whether traveling with the F-1 student or not, need certain documents to re-enter the U.S.:

1. Valid passport
2. Valid F-2 visa
3. Travel signature on the F-2's I-20

F-2 visa holders are also eligible for automatic visa revalidation in Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean islands.

Special Registration

The National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) was implemented in 2002 and requires that certain non-immigrants go through a special registration procedure when entering and exiting the United States due to certain security issues. Students from the following countries are subject to NSEERS:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Students subject to special registration will receive an I-94 card with "NSEERS" and a special code handwritten on it. They also must register any departure from the U.S. with Immigration before they leave, and they are only able to depart the U.S. from certain airports. More information about the registration process and a list of designated ports of departure can be found at the [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#) webpage.



ASCENT
C O L L E G E

APPENDIX I

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASCENT COLLEGE CERTIFICATION OF FINANCES FORM (FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE APPLICANTS ONLY)

All F1 international applicants who are applying for undergraduate admission to Ascent College must certify sufficient funds for college expenses including tuition, books, fees, supplies and living expenses (travel is not included). To certify finances, the applicant must submit the Certificate of Finances Form with original copies of requested documentation. If this form is not completed and received by Ascent College, your application **will not** be considered for admission and you will not receive the Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 for F1).

ESTIMATED EXPENSES TO BE CERTIFIED FOR 1 YEAR

Tuition and mandatory fees (two semesters)	\$7,575
Living expenses for 9 months (room, meals, local transportation, and incidental costs)	\$9,000
Books, supplies, and medical insurance	\$2,680
Total (one year):	\$19,255

*Medical insurance is required for all international students attending Ascent College.

TYPES OF CERTIFICATION

Please note that the Certificate of Finances must show funding that is accessible to the student immediately. You may not show property, pension, trust funds, etc. The Certificate of Finances is valid for 6 months only.

PERSONAL SAVINGS

Personal savings may be used for all or part of your financial support. Please indicate the name of your bank in the space provided on the Certificate of Finances Form. An official of the bank must attach a current bank balance statement to verify the cash amount you have indicated. If you are relying solely on personal savings, you must show funding for the entire duration of your studies.

PARENTS AND/OR SPONSOR

If your parents or another sponsor is willing to sponsor all or part of your studies, they must indicate the amount of funds on the form below. Your sponsors must have an official of their bank attach a current bank statement to verify the cash amount indicated. This amount must cover a minimum of one year of our estimated program expenses. They must also sign the bottom of the below form.

HOME GOVERNMENT OR AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

If you will be sponsored by your home government or an international organization/foundation, indicate the name of the agency and include a letter, signed by an authorized representative detailing the terms of your award. The letter of award should answer the following questions:

1. Will the sponsoring agency pay your tuition and fee expenses?
2. Will the agency provide you with living expenses? If yes, how much?
3. For how long is the sponsorship valid; one year, two years or renewable until the degree is awarded?
4. Will the sponsors provide you with extra support should your spouse or children accompany you? If yes, how much?

OTHER

You may have other sources of income. Please note that these sources must be cash sources and accompanied by a certified letter and bank statement indicating the amount to be supplied. If funding will come from someone in the US, that sponsor must complete an Affidavit of Support I-134 form which can be found at www.uscis.gov

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION FOR DEPENDENTS

If your spouse and/or your children plan to accompany you during your studies, you must provide evidence on the Certificate of Finance Form of \$4,500 additional funds for each dependent before they can be included on your immigration documents. Please attach a letter listing each dependent's *last, first and middle name, date of birth, gender, relationship to you, city of birth, country of birth, country of citizenship, and country of legal permanent residence.*

SIGNATURES

The Certificate of Finances Form must be signed by both the student and any sponsors listed. Failure to do so will delay processing your application.

ADDRESS

Please send the completed Certificate of Finances and all supporting documentation to
Admissions Office
Ascent College
PO Box 690
Gainesville, VA 20156-0690
or **info@ascent.edu**



ASCENT COLLEGE

International Student Certification of Finances

All applicants holding or intending to seek an F-1 Student Visa **must** complete this form and submit it with required documents and the application for admission. Neither a Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20) nor an admission decision will be released until this information is provided.

International applicants requiring F-1 visas to attend Ascent College must certify sufficient funds-exclusive of travel costs-to cover tuition and fees, books and supplies, living expenses and medical insurance for themselves and any dependents. Please complete this form and attach any required documents as described. Give all amounts in U.S. dollars.

Student Personal Information

_____ - _____ - _____

1. U.S. Social Security Number (if any)

2. Family/Last Name of Student

3. Given/First Name of student

4. Middle Name

4. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)

Financial Information

Applicants: The documents listed below must be provided for previous year which will show a commitment of support for all remaining years.

Important: Please specify how you intend to finance your education.

Source of Funds	Amount per Year in U.S. Dollars
<input type="radio"/> Personal Funds	
<input type="radio"/> Full Funding from Parents or Sponsor	
<input type="radio"/> Private Organization or Employer	
<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)	
<input type="radio"/> TOTAL	

All financial documents must be dated within the past six months in order to be considered valid. Appropriate documents reflecting financial ability include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Bank Statement, signed by a bank official
- Affidavit of support, submitted by sponsor and accompanied by financial verification
- Scholarship letter from sponsoring organization
- Account summary of assets

The combination of all bank statements, award letters, and affidavits must show a total amount equal to or greater than the estimated expenses for one year.

Dependent Information

If you will be accompanied by your spouse and/or your children while studying at the college, you are required to demonstrate financial ability to support them. The college estimates that the additional cost of bringing a dependent is approximately U.S. \$4,500 per year. Please provide us with the information regarding your dependents.

Name: Last, First	Date of Birth	Country of Birth	Citizenship	Relationship



ASCENT

COLLEGE

ASCENT COLLEGE
CERTIFICATE OF FINANCES FORM for UNDERGRADUATE APPLICANTS

To be completed by International Applicants only.

Before completing this form, please read the attached instructions carefully. If this form is not completed and received by Ascent College your application will not be considered for admission and you will not receive the Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 for F1).

Source of Funds	Assured Support		Projected Support (include 15-17% cost increase per year)	
	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year
SELF SUPPORT A Bank official must attach a statement on bank's stationer verifying total amount available for your expenses				
PARENT/SPONSOR Attach a bank balance statement verifying eligibility to provide you with funds indicated here. He/she must also sign below.				
GOVERNMENT OR SPONSORING AGENCY Enclose a signed copy of award letter.				
OTHER Specify _____ Enclose appropriated signed official documentation				
TOTAL The total should reach program expenses listed on instruction sheet attached.				

Student Signature

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Social Security # (if applicable) _____

I certify that the information provided above is correct and complete.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sponsor Signature

My signature below certifies that I have read the information furnished by the applicant on this form, that it is a true and accurate statement and that the funds are available and will be provided to the applicant as required. If you are a sponsor that lives in the USA you must supply the University with the Affidavit of Support I-134 Form available at www.uscis.gov

Name of Sponsor: _____

Address of Sponsor: _____

Relationship of Sponsor to applicant: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Send to: Admissions Office
Ascent College
PO Box 690
Gainesville, VA 20156-0690
or info@ascent.edu

Name: _____

SSN: _____

(if applicable)

Certification of Finances

Instructions

International applicants requiring visas to attend Ascent College must certify sufficient funds-exclusive of travel costs- to cover tuition and fees, books and supplies, living expenses and medical insurance for themselves and any dependents. Only applicants holding or intending to seek an F-1 Student Visa must complete the Certification of Funds form and submit required documents. A Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20) will not be issued until this information is provided. Please complete the form and attach any required documents. All bank statements must be current (issued within last six months). Award letters and affidavits must be signed. Give all amounts in U.S. dollars.

Financial Information

Source of Funds

Personal: If you have personal savings and intend to use this money for all or part of your financial support, indicate the amount of funds you will use per year. A statement from your bank official on the bank's stationery must be enclosed. The statement should verify the amount of money (in U.S. dollars) you have on deposit at the bank.

Full Funding from Parents or Individual Sponsors: If your parents or other individuals are willing and able to sponsor all or part of your educational expenses, indicate the amount of funds they will make available to you per year. A statement from their bank official on the bank's stationery must be enclosed. The statement should verify the amount of money (in U.S. dollars) they have on deposit at the bank.

Private Organization or Employer: If you will be sponsored by a private organization, employer or another agency, indicate the amount of funds they will make available to you per year. A signed copy of your award letter on the agency's stationery detailing the terms and amount of your award must be enclosed.

Other (specify): If you have another source of support not included above, you should indicate the amount of funds that will be made available to you per year. (For example, some applicants intend to stay with friends or family who live close to the college and, therefore, these friends or family contribute to the applicant's support.) If you have other such sources of support, enclose a signed affidavit from an authorized person certifying the amount of and details of the support.

Total: The combination of all bank statements, award letters, and affidavits must show a total amount equal to or greater than the estimated annual expenses.

APPENDIX II

ICE Press Office
U.S. Department of Homeland Security



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

January 15, 2004

Information Sheet

Contact: SEVP Program
202 305 2346

WHAT A STUDENT OR EXCHANGE VISITOR CAN EXPECT UPON ARRIVAL AT A U.S. PORT OF ENTRY

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), an office of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection and the Department of State, wishes to assist you in your entry into the United States.

Approximately 28 million non-immigrants enter or leave the United States annually to conduct business, study, visit family, or tour the country. Legitimate visitors are most welcome and the U.S. government is committed to facilitating their travel. However, a critical need for tighter security requires that we enforce entry and exit procedures.

Careful planning and preparation by students and exchange visitors can ensure that the delay based on these procedures is minimal.

If you are a non-immigrant student or exchange visitor, here are some things you should do:

- ☑ Before leaving your country, confirm that your passport and visa are still valid for entry into the United States. The passport should be valid for at least six months beyond the date of your expected stay.
- ☑ Also, check to see that your visa accurately reflects your correct visa classification.
- ☑ When you receive your nonimmigrant visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate, the consular officer will seal your immigration documents in an envelope and attach it to your passport. **You should not open this envelope!** The Customs and Border Protection Officer at the U.S. port of entry will open the envelope.
- ☑ When you travel, you should carry some specific documents on your person. Do not check them in your baggage! If your baggage is lost or delayed, you will not be able to show the documents to the Customs and Border Protection Officer and, as a result, may not be able to enter the United States.

www.ice.gov

Here are the documents you should carry on your person:

- **Passport (including attached envelope of immigration documents) with visa**
- **SEVIS Form I-20 AB, I-20 MN, or DS-2019**
- **Evidence of financial resources**

In addition, SEVP recommends that you also carry the following:

- **Evidence of Student/Exchange Visitor status (recent tuition receipts, transcripts)**
- **Name and contact information for Designated School Official or Responsible Officer at your intended school or program**
- **Writing instrument (pen)**

If you are traveling by aircraft, the flight attendants on board will distribute CF-6059 Customs Declaration Forms and I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Forms for immigration, before you land at your initial point of entry in the United States. Complete these forms while you are on the aircraft and submit them to the appropriate Customs and Border Protection Officer upon your arrival. **If you do not understand a form, ask the flight attendant for assistance.**

Upon arrival at the port of entry, proceed to the terminal area for arriving passengers for inspection at one of the Department of Homeland Security stations. As you approach the inspection station, **have your:** passport, SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019, Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record, and CF-6059 Customs Declaration Form available for presentation to the Customs and Border Protection Officer. The Form I-94 should reflect the address where you will reside (not the address of the school or program).

If you are entering through a land or designated sea port, the Customs and Border Protection Officer will provide the necessary CF-6059 Customs Declaration Forms and I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Forms at the port of entry. **If you do not understand a form, ask the Customs and Border Protection Officer for assistance.**

Like all entering visitors, you will be asked to state the reason you wish to enter the United States. You will also be asked to provide information about your final destination. **It is important that you tell the Customs and Border Protection Officer that you will be a student or exchange visitor.** Be prepared to include the name and address of the school or exchange visitor program where you will enroll/participate.

Once your inspection is complete, the inspecting officer will:

- **Stamp your SEVIS Form for duration of status (“D/S”) for F and J visa holders**
- **Stamp your SEVIS Form for 30 days beyond program end date for M visa holders**
- **Stamp the I-94 and staple it in the passport**

SECONDARY INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS:

If your information cannot be automatically verified by the inspector or you do not have all of the required documentation, you may be directed to an interview area known as “secondary inspection.” Secondary inspection allows Inspectors to conduct additional research in order to verify information. Verifications are done apart from the primary inspection lines so that an individual case will not cause delays for other arriving passengers.

In the case your admission/participation needs to be verified, **we strongly advise** that you have the **name and phone number of the foreign student advisor** at your school or the person responsible for your J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. In the event you arrive during non-business hours (evenings, weekends, holidays), you should have a phone number where this individual can be reached during non-business hours.

Failure to provide proper documentation and to comply with entry/exit procedures is cause to refuse the student or exchange visitor admission into the United States. In limited circumstances, if a student or exchange visitor is mostly, but not fully in compliance, he/she may be issued a Form I-515A “Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor”. This form authorizes temporary admission into the United States and requires the student or exchange visitor to take immediate action to submit proper documentation. Noncompliance with the directions contained on these forms can result in denied entry.

US-VISIT:

On January 5, 2004, US-VISIT, a comprehensive entry-exit registration system was implemented at all international airports throughout the United States, pre-clearance inspection facilities and designated seaports servicing cruise ships.

At this time, non-immigrant visitors holding visas will be participating in the program which involves obtaining a scan of two index fingerprints and a digital photograph of an arriving visitor.

Race, national origin, and religion **are not factors** in the US-VISIT program, as it applies to nonimmigrant visa holding aliens.

US-VISIT is scheduled to expand to land ports of entry beginning December 31, 2004.

For more information visit www.dhs.gov/us-visit

NATIONAL SECURITY ENTRY-EXIT REGISTRATION SYSTEM:

Some visitors will require additional scrutiny and will have to provide additional information under the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, or NSEERS. In the future, NSEERS will be integrated under US-VISIT. Anyone could be subject to additional scrutiny and should follow the directions of the Customs and Border Protection Officer if additional information regarding itinerary, length of stay, or other security questions is required. A packet of information will be available at the port of entry explaining the registration procedure.

For more information, search for NSEERS at <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/index.htm>

For greater detail on procedures for traveling and arriving in the United States, visit: <http://educationusa.state.gov/predeparture/travel/customs.htm>

FOLLOWING ADMISSION INTO THE UNITED STATES:

Students should report to their school as soon as practical and register for courses or validate their intended participation.

Exchange visitors should report to their exchange program Responsible Officer within (but no later than) 30 days after the “Program Begin Date” listed on their Form DS-2019, for validation of intended program participation with the Foreign Student Advisor.

CONTINUING STUDENTS:

Continuing Students who are going to travel outside of the United States must see their foreign student advisor and obtain an endorsement from the Designated School Official (DSO) or Responsible Officer (RO). The endorsement will be made on page 3 of the SEVIS Form I-20 or page 1 of the DS-2019. When returning to the United States, a continuing student/exchange visitor must present a valid SEVIS Form I-20 or DS-2019 with the DSO or RO signature showing that the student is active and in good standing with the school or program.

If you are authorized optional practical training (OPT) by your school, make sure that the school has updated your records in SEVIS to reflect this authorization and issued you a new SEVIS I-20 showing OPT authorization on page 3 of form.

APPENDIX III

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRANSFER FORM
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Section A (To be completed by the student.)

Please complete the following information if you are an F-1 applicant currently residing in the U.S. and do not intend to depart the U.S. prior to beginning your program at Ascent College.

Name: _____
Family Name First Name Middle Name

Home Phone: _____ **Cell Phone:** _____

Current Address: _____

E-mail address: _____

Semester you wish to attend Ascent College: _____

Please sign below authorizing the International Student Advisor at your current college or university to provide the information requested.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Section B (To be completed by the International Student Advisor at your previous school.)

Current visa type: _____ **Admission number:** _____

SEVIS number: _____ **SEVIS release date:** _____

I-20/IAP66 expiration date: _____

Student completed or will complete program on (enter date): _____

Student is in status: **Yes:** _____ **No:** _____

If no, please explain: _____

Previous work authorization (if applicable): _____

Name of Institution: _____ Telephone: _____

Name and title of official: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return original form to:

**Ascent College
Admissions Office
PO Box 690
Gainesville, VA 20156-0690
or info@ascent.edu**



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