

## **F-1/J-1 VISA RENEWAL PROCESS**

**Visa Information:** International students in the U.S. are generally admitted under the F-1 student visa classification. Under special circumstances, international students may also be admitted on J-1 sponsored student visa. Those who petition for F-1 or J-1 visas are admitted as a non-immigrants, and are granted temporary stays in the U.S. In order to apply for the F-1 visa, the prospective student must receive a SEVIS I-20. Those applying for J-1 visas receive the form DS-2019. All nonimmigrant visas should not be expired at the time of entry/re-entry to U.S. The guideline information on visa renewal is available at the [U.S. State department services website](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html).

### **When to renew your F-1/J-1 visa?**

Your F-1/J-1 visa needs to be valid for entry to the U.S. but can expire during your enrollment at UL Lafayette if you stay in the U.S. If you are studying full-time at UL Lafayette with a valid F-1/J-1 status, you do NOT need to renew your F-1/J-1 visa while you are in the U.S. You only need to renew your F-1/J-1 visa if you plan to travel outside of the U.S. and return to the U.S. to study. If your F-1/J-1 visa expires before you travel outside of the U.S., you will need to apply for a new visa to re-enter the U.S. We **strongly recommend** that you renew your F-1/J-1 visa before completing your degree program as it will be very difficult to apply for a student or exchange visitor visa once you have completed your program. **Please note that F-1/J-1 visas cannot be renewed from within the U.S.**

**STEP 1:** Request full-time enrollment letter for visa renewal by completing the form online located at: [https://internationalaffairs.louisiana.edu/sites/internationalaffairs/files/Student%20Letter%20Request%20Form\\_rev%202.16.22..pdf](https://internationalaffairs.louisiana.edu/sites/internationalaffairs/files/Student%20Letter%20Request%20Form_rev%202.16.22..pdf)

If all of the information listed on your I-20 or DS-2019 (including major and funding) is accurate, you will not need to be issued an updated I-20/DS-2019. Once we receive your Student Update Form, the letter will be generated in 2-3 business days. We can email it to you or you may pick it up at the front desk. When you submit the form to [ويا@louisiana.edu](mailto:ويا@louisiana.edu), please let us know how you would like to receive your letter (email or pick-up).

**STEP 2:** Complete the online visa application (FORM DS-160) and upload a photo that meets the requirements.

**STEP 3:** Schedule an interview with the U.S. embassy in your home country. If you are considering applying for a visa in a third country, please review the information [here](#). Make sure to allow enough time to apply for visa. We recommend applying while you are still in the U.S. and ensuring that you have enough time to obtain your visa to return before the start of the next academic semester. You can search for visa wait times at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html>.

620 McKinley Street, Student Union, Room 136

**STEP 4:** Pay the non-refundable visa application fee and issuance fee.

**STEP 5:** Gather required documents to bring to interview:

- A valid passport (must be valid within 6 months of entry date to U.S.)
- A valid UL Lafayette I-20 (F-1 students) or DS-2019 (J-1 students)
- **F-1 students:** A valid signature (travel authorization) on page 2 of the I-20, which is less than 12 months old.
- **J-1 students:** A valid signature (travel authorization) on the bottom right-hand corner of the DS-2019, which is less than 12 months old.
- New students (F-1 or J-1) who are enrolling at UL Lafayette for the first time OR who are enrolling in a new degree program do NOT require a travel authorization.
- Expired visa (if available)
- Application fee payment receipt
- Photo (if photo cannot be uploaded electronically)
- Academic transcripts (for continuing students only)
- Standardized test scores (if applicable)
- UL Lafayette Full-Time Enrollment Letter (requested in Step 1)
- Financial information showing proof of necessary funds to cover ALL expenses while in the U.S. This can be either a letter from your department stating the amount of funding you are receiving, a letter from another financial sponsor stating the amount that they are giving you, PLUS supporting financial documents (i.e. bank statements). Please note that most scholarships/assistantships do not cover all expenses, and therefore, it is advisable to provide proof of personal or family funding.
- Since you are applying for a non-immigrant visa, be prepared to explain your intent to depart the U.S. upon your completion of course of study.

While all of this documentation may not be required, it is best to bring as much as possible with you.

**STEP 6:** Attend your visa interview

Before attending your interview, we recommend that you read through some interview tips from our professional organization, NAFSA. To access these tips, click [here](#).

Please visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html> for more information or contact us at [ويا@louisiana.edu](mailto:ويا@louisiana.edu).