# **The Ultimate 2025 Guide to the US F-1 Student Visa for Indian Students: Your Step-by-Step Path to Success**

## **Introduction: Your Journey to a US University Begins Here**

### **The Enduring Appeal of a US Education for Indian Aspirants**

For decades, the United States has stood as a premier destination for Indian students seeking world-class higher education. This appeal is rooted in the unparalleled academic excellence and research opportunities offered by its universities. Institutions such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Harvard University, Stanford University, and the University of California, Berkeley, consistently dominate global rankings, representing a gold standard in fields from engineering and technology to life sciences and management.1 A degree from a U.S. institution is widely regarded as a gateway to a global career, equipping graduates with skills and networks that are highly valued in the international job market, particularly in high-demand STEM and business sectors.5

This sustained interest has translated into significant enrollment numbers. In recent years, India has overtaken China to become the largest source of international students in the United States, a testament to the deep-seated aspiration among Indian families to invest in a U.S. education.9 Despite a complex and evolving immigration landscape, the prestige and long-term value of a U.S. degree continue to draw a record number of applicants from India.

### **Navigating the 2025 F-1 Visa Landscape: Acknowledging the Hurdles**

While the allure of a U.S. education remains strong, the path to getting there—specifically, the F-1 student visa process—has become significantly more challenging in 2025. Aspiring students from India now face an environment marked by unprecedented operational hurdles. A primary challenge is the severe shortage of visa interview slots at U.S. consulates across India. Reports indicate that available appointments are often frozen or released unpredictably, vanishing within minutes due to overwhelming demand.11 This bottleneck has been exacerbated by temporary suspensions of visa interviews at critical times, creating a substantial backlog of applicants.11

Furthermore, applicants are encountering heightened scrutiny and longer processing times. These delays are partly due to expanded security protocols, including more rigorous social media screening, implemented by the U.S. Department of State.11 The consequence has been a marked increase in visa rejection rates. Data from the first half of 2025 suggests a staggering 44% decline in F-1 visa approvals from India, with rejection rates for even well-qualified applicants with strong profiles potentially reaching as high as 50%.11

This situation presents a clear paradox. On one hand, U.S. universities and government bodies celebrate the record numbers of Indian students from previous years and publicly state their commitment to facilitating student travel.10 On the other hand, the operational reality for 2025 applicants is one of systemic delays and stringent evaluations. This disconnect means that past success rates are no longer a reliable indicator of future outcomes. The visa process has fundamentally shifted, making meticulous preparation and strategic planning more critical than ever.

### **How This Guide Will Empower You for Success**

This guide is designed to be an indispensable resource for Indian students navigating the complexities of the 2025 F-1 visa application. It moves beyond a simple procedural checklist to offer a strategic framework for building a compelling, credible, and "rejection-proof" application. By providing a clear, step-by-step roadmap, definitive document checklists, and expert insights into the visa interview, this guide aims to demystify the process and empower applicants to overcome the current challenges. The objective is to transform anxiety into confidence, ensuring that every genuine student is equipped with the knowledge and tools needed to successfully secure their visa and embark on their educational journey in the United States.

## **Section 1: The F-1 Visa Blueprint: A Step-by-Step Walkthrough**

The F-1 visa process is a sequential journey with several distinct milestones. Understanding this timeline is the first step toward effective planning. The process begins the moment a university issues the Form I-20 and culminates with the visa interview and passport collection.

**A Timeline of the US Student Visa Process for Indian Applicants**

1. **Receive Form I-20 from University:** (1-4 weeks after accepting admission offer)
2. **Pay I-901 SEVIS Fee:** (Can be done immediately after receiving I-20)
3. **Complete Form DS-160:** (Approximately 90 minutes; can be saved and completed over time)
4. **Pay MRV (Visa Application) Fee:** (Payment processing can take up to 2 business days)
5. **Schedule OFC & Consular Appointments:** (This is the most variable step; wait times can range from weeks to several months due to high demand).11
6. **Attend OFC (Biometrics) Appointment:** (1-2 days before the consular interview)
7. **Attend Consular Visa Interview:** (The interview itself lasts 2-5 minutes)
8. **Passport Collection:** (5-10 business days after a successful interview)

### **Step 1: Securing Your Form I-20 from a SEVP-Certified University**

The F-1 visa process officially begins after an applicant has been accepted by a U.S. university. The foundational document for the entire application is the **Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status."** This document can only be issued by an educational institution certified by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP).16

Upon receiving the Form I-20, it is critical to review it immediately for accuracy. The form contains vital information that will be used throughout the visa process, including:

* **SEVIS ID Number:** A unique identifier in the top-left corner.
* **Program Details:** The course of study, program start and end dates.
* **Financial Information:** The university's official estimate of tuition, living expenses, and other costs for one academic year, along with the sources of funding declared by the applicant.
* **Personal Details:** The applicant's name, date of birth, and citizenship, which must match their passport exactly.

Any discrepancies must be reported to the university's Designated School Official (DSO) for correction immediately. Once confirmed, the applicant must sign and date the "Student Attestation" section on page one of the form.17

### **Step 2: Paying the I-901 SEVIS Fee – Your Digital Footprint**

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a U.S. government database used to track and monitor international students. To be registered in this system, every F-1 visa applicant must pay the one-time, non-refundable **I-901 SEVIS Fee**. As of 2025, this fee is $350.17

This payment must be made *after* receiving the Form I-20 but *before* attending the visa interview. The SEVIS ID number from the I-20 is required to complete the payment.

* **Official Payment Portal:** The fee must be paid online at the official U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) website: www.fmjfee.com.21
* **Confirmation Receipt:** After payment, it is essential to print and securely save the I-901 SEVIS Fee payment confirmation. This receipt is a mandatory document for the visa interview.17

### **Step 3: Mastering the DS-160 Online Application Form**

The **Form DS-160** is the official Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application that every applicant must complete. It is the most comprehensive part of the application, collecting detailed information about the applicant's background, education, family, travel history, and study plans.

* **Official Application Website:** The form is accessible only through the U.S. Department of State's Consular Electronic Application Center: ceac.state.gov/genniv/.27
* **Getting Started:** The first step is to select the location where the interview will take place (e.g., "INDIA, MUMBAI"). The system will then generate a unique **Application ID**.
* **Crucial Tip:** Applicants must write down and save their Application ID immediately. This ID, along with the first five letters of the surname, year of birth, and the answer to a chosen security question, is the only way to retrieve a saved application. The form can be saved and completed over multiple sessions.27
* **Photo Upload:** A digital photograph meeting the U.S. visa photo requirements must be uploaded during the process.16
* **Accuracy and Signature:** All information provided must be 100% accurate and consistent with the details in the applicant's passport, Form I-20, and other supporting documents. Under U.S. law, the applicant must personally and electronically sign the application by clicking the "Sign Application" button. Any inaccuracies or misrepresentations can lead to a temporary refusal under section 221(g) or a permanent finding of fraud.27

### **Step 4: Paying the Visa Application (MRV) Fee in India**

Separate from the SEVIS fee, applicants must also pay a non-refundable **Machine Readable Visa (MRV) fee**. This fee covers the cost of processing the visa application itself. As of 2025, the fee for F-1 visas is $185.17

Payment must be made through the official visa appointment scheduling portal for India. The portal provides several payment options, including National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT), mobile payments (IMPS), and cash deposits at designated bank branches.31 The MRV fee receipt contains a unique number that is required to book the visa appointments. This receipt is valid for one year from the date of payment and must be brought to the interview.16

### **Step 5: Scheduling Your Appointments on the USTravelDocs Portal**

The U.S. visa process in India is unique in that it requires two separate appointments, both of which are scheduled through the same online portal after the MRV fee has been paid.33

1. **OFC (Offsite Facilitation Center) Appointment:** Also known as the Visa Application Center (VAC) appointment, this is where the applicant's biometric data (fingerprints and photograph) is collected. This appointment must take place at least one day before the visa interview.
2. **Consular Interview Appointment:** This is the formal interview with a consular officer at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate (New Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, or Mumbai).

* **Official Scheduling Portal:** Both appointments are booked through the applicant's profile on www.ustraveldocs.com/in.31
* **Navigating the Appointment Shortage:** Given the severe lack of available appointments in 2025, a strategic approach is necessary. Applicants should book the first available slots for both the OFC and consular interview, even if the dates are several months away. After securing these initial appointments, they should check the portal multiple times a day for earlier slots that may open up due to cancellations.
* **Expedited/Emergency Appointments:** An applicant can request an expedited appointment only *after* scheduling a regular one. This request is submitted through the portal and requires a valid reason, such as a program start date that is earlier than the scheduled interview date. However, approval is not guaranteed, especially during peak season.11

| **Table 1: F-1 Visa Application Fee Summary (2025)** |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Fee Type** | **Cost in USD** | **Approximate Cost in INR**\* |
| I-901 SEVIS Fee | $350 | ₹29,200 |
| DS-160 Visa Application (MRV) Fee | $185 | ₹15,400 |
| **Total Mandatory Fees** | **$535** | **₹44,600** |
| *Note: INR amounts are approximate and subject to currency exchange rate fluctuations. Fees are non-refundable.* |  |  |

## **Section 2: The Definitive Document Checklist for Your Visa Appointments**

A meticulously organized file of documents is non-negotiable for the U.S. visa process. Consular officers have limited time for each interview, and fumbling for a missing document can create a poor impression and lead to a temporary refusal under section 221(g).39 Applicants should prepare two separate sets of documents: a smaller, essential set for the OFC (biometrics) appointment and a comprehensive file for the main consular interview.

### **Checklist A: Documents for the OFC (Biometrics) Appointment**

The OFC appointment is a procedural step focused solely on collecting fingerprints and a photograph. No interview is conducted, and academic or financial documents are not required. Bringing only the essential documents ensures a quick and efficient process.

| **Table 2: Document Checklist for OFC (Biometrics) Appointment** |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Description/Key Requirement** | **Why It's Needed** |
| Valid Passport | Original passport, valid for at least six months beyond the intended period of stay in the U.S. Must be in good condition. | For identity verification and to confirm eligibility for travel. |
| DS-160 Confirmation Page | A clear printout of the confirmation page with the CEAC barcode. The barcode must be scannable. | The barcode is scanned to retrieve the applicant's online visa application form. |
| Appointment Confirmation Letter | A printout of the appointment confirmation received after scheduling on the ustraveldocs.com portal. | To verify the scheduled date and time of the appointment. |
| Visa Fee (MRV) Payment Receipt | The original receipt confirming payment of the $185 visa application fee. | Proof that the required application fee has been paid. |
| Recent Photograph (Optional) | One passport-size photograph (2x2 inches, white background) as a backup in case the digital photo upload on the DS-160 failed. | To ensure a valid photo is on file if technical issues arise. |

### **Checklist B: Documents for the Consular Visa Interview**

This is the main event where the consular officer will assess the applicant's eligibility for the F-1 visa. All claims made in the DS-160 and during the interview must be supported by credible documentation. Documents should be neatly organized in a transparent folder for easy access.

| **Table 3: Document Checklist for Consular Interview Appointment** |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Document** | **Purpose & Expert Tip** |
| **Mandatory Documents** | All documents from the OFC Checklist (Passport, DS-160, Appointment Letter, Fee Receipt) | These are the foundational documents required to initiate the interview. |
|  | Original Form I-20 (signed by both the DSO and the student) | This is the primary evidence of acceptance into a SEVP-certified program. The officer will review it first. |
|  | I-901 SEVIS Fee Payment Receipt | Confirms that the applicant is registered in the SEVIS system. |
| **Academic Documents** | Original mark sheets, transcripts, and degree certificates (from Class 10 onwards) | To verify academic qualifications and prove the applicant is a bona fide student. |
|  | Standardized Test Score Reports (GRE, GMAT, TOEFL, IELTS, etc.) | To demonstrate the academic and linguistic capability to succeed in the chosen U.S. program. |
|  | University Admission/Offer Letter | Supplements the I-20 and provides context for the university choice. |
| **Financial Documents** | Bank statements for the last 6 months (from sponsor and/or applicant) | To prove access to sufficient liquid funds to cover the first year's expenses as listed on the I-20. **Tip:** Avoid large, recent, unexplained deposits. Officers look for a stable financial history. |
|  | Education Loan Sanction Letter | A strong form of financial proof. The letter must be from a recognized bank and clearly state the sanctioned amount and terms. |
|  | Sponsor's Affidavit of Support (Form I-134 is recommended but not mandatory) | A formal declaration from the sponsor confirming their intent and ability to support the applicant's education. |
|  | Sponsor's Financial Documents (e.g., IT Returns for 3 years, salary slips, business registration) | To establish the sponsor's financial credibility and the legitimacy of their income source. |
|  | Proof of Assets (e.g., property deeds, fixed deposit receipts, mutual fund statements) | While liquid funds are primary, these documents can strengthen the overall financial profile and demonstrate ties to India. |
| **Proof of Intent to Return** | Documents showing strong ties to India (e.g., family-owned property deeds, evidence of family business) | To counter the legal presumption of immigrant intent. This shows the applicant has compelling reasons to return to India after their studies. |
|  | Post-graduation job offer letters from Indian companies (if available) | This is very strong evidence of intent to return, though not common for most students. |

### **In-Depth Focus: Proving Financial Capacity for Indian Applicants**

For Indian students, demonstrating sufficient financial capacity is one of the most rigorously scrutinized aspects of the visa application.41 The consular officer must be convinced that the applicant can comfortably cover the full cost of the first year of study (as detailed on the I-20) without resorting to unauthorized employment in the U.S.

Acceptable sources of funds include:

* **Personal and Family Savings:** These must be shown in bank accounts. The key is to demonstrate a history of these funds. A common red flag for visa officers is a large sum of money deposited into an account just days before the interview, as this suggests the funds may be borrowed temporarily simply for the visa application.39
* **Education Loans:** A sanctioned loan letter from a reputable bank is considered very strong evidence. The letter should clearly specify the applicant's name, the loan amount, and confirm that it is approved for the purpose of education in the U.S.
* **Sponsorship:** If a sponsor (typically parents or close relatives) is funding the education, their financial stability is paramount. The application should include an Affidavit of Support (Form I-134 is a good format to follow) along with the sponsor's income tax returns for the past three years, salary slips, and business documents to prove a stable and legitimate source of income.43

## **Section 3: Mastering the F-1 Visa Interview: Questions, Strategies, and Red Flags**

The F-1 visa interview is the final and most critical step in the application process. While it typically lasts only two to three minutes, the impression made during this brief interaction determines the outcome.39 The interview is not an academic test but a credibility assessment, designed to verify the applicant's intentions.

### **The Core Principle: Overcoming "Presumption of Immigrant Intent" (INA Section 214(b))**

Under Section 214(b) of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act, all nonimmigrant visa applicants are legally presumed to be intending immigrants until they convince the consular officer otherwise.11 This means the burden of proof is entirely on the applicant. The primary goal of the interview is to demonstrate two things conclusively:

1. The purpose of travel to the U.S. is solely for education.
2. The applicant has strong social, economic, and familial ties to India that will compel their return after the completion of their studies.

Every question asked by the consular officer is, directly or indirectly, aimed at assessing this nonimmigrant intent.

### **Common Interview Questions & Strategic Answers for Indian Students**

Preparation is key to a successful interview. Applicants should be ready to answer questions concisely and confidently across several key categories. The goal is to present a coherent and compelling personal narrative that logically connects their past academic achievements, their present study plans, and their future career aspirations in India.

* **Questions About Your Study Plans**
  + *Sample Questions:* "Why do you want to pursue this specific course?" "Why can't you study this course in India?"
  + *Strategic Approach:* Avoid generic answers. Connect the chosen U.S. program to unique academic resources, specialized faculty, or advanced research facilities that are not readily available in India. For example, instead of saying, "The U.S. has a good education system," a better answer would be, "The Master's in Artificial Intelligence at Carnegie Mellon University offers a specialization in Reinforcement Learning under Professor Andrew Moore, whose research directly aligns with my final year project. This specific expertise is crucial for my goal of working in autonomous vehicle development at a company like Tata Elxsi in Bangalore".44
* **Questions About Your University Choice**
  + *Sample Questions:* "Why did you choose this particular university?" "How many universities did you apply to, and where were you accepted?"
  + *Strategic Approach:* Honesty and specificity are crucial. Demonstrate that the choice was based on thorough research. Mention specific professors, research labs, curriculum structure, or unique internship opportunities at that university. Be truthful about other applications and results. This shows that the applicant is a serious student who has made a deliberate choice, not someone who simply took the first available offer to get a U.S. visa.47
* **Questions About Your Financial Status**
  + *Sample Questions:* "Who is funding your education?" "What is your father's annual income?" "How will you cover the expenses for your second year?"
  + *Strategic Approach:* Provide clear, confident, and precise answers. State financial figures in both Indian Rupees and U.S. Dollars. Have all supporting financial documents organized and ready to present if asked. The answers must align perfectly with the documents submitted. For example, "My education is being sponsored by my parents. My father is a Senior Manager at HDFC Bank with an annual income of ₹30 lakhs, which is approximately $36,000. We have savings of ₹40 lakhs and a sanctioned education loan of ₹50 lakhs to cover my entire two-year program".44
* **Questions About Your Post-Graduation Plans (The 214(b) Test)**
  + *Sample Questions:* "What are your plans after you graduate?" "Do you intend to work in the U.S.?" "Do you have relatives in the U.S.?"
  + *Strategic Approach:* This is the most critical part of the interview. The answer must unequivocally demonstrate the intent to return to India.
    - Have a clear and realistic career plan in India. Mention specific job roles, target companies, and how the U.S. degree will make the applicant more competitive in the Indian job market.
    - Acknowledge Optional Practical Training (OPT) as a temporary period for gaining practical experience relevant to the degree, but frame the long-term career goals firmly within India.44
    - Be honest about relatives in the U.S. but emphasize that the applicant's primary support system and career opportunities are in India.

| **Table 4: Common F-1 Visa Rejection Reasons & Proactive Solutions** |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rejection Reason** | **Why It Happens** | **Proactive Solution** |
| **Failure to Prove Nonimmigrant Intent (Section 214(b))** | Vague post-graduation plans; over-emphasizing relatives in the U.S.; expressing a desire to "settle abroad." | Prepare a detailed 2- and 5-year career plan based in India. Articulate strong family, property, and professional ties to India. Frame OPT as temporary training, not a path to immigration. |
| **Insufficient or Unverifiable Financial Proof** | Large, unexplained bank deposits just before the interview; sponsor's income seems insufficient for the costs; incomplete loan documentation. | Provide bank statements showing a consistent history of funds. Ensure the sponsor's income is well-documented with ITRs and salary slips. Obtain a clear, official loan sanction letter. |
| **Poor Interview Performance** | Nervous, inconsistent, or memorized answers; lack of knowledge about the chosen university or course; poor communication skills. | Conduct multiple mock interviews. Research the university and course curriculum thoroughly. Prepare key points, not a script, to sound natural and confident. |
| **Incomplete or Inconsistent Documentation** | Missing documents (e.g., SEVIS receipt); discrepancies between the DS-160 and verbal answers; questionable academic credentials. | Use the checklists in this guide to organize all documents. Triple-check the DS-160 for accuracy. Ensure all information is consistent across all platforms. |
| **Questionable Choice of University/Course** | Applying to a little-known university despite having a strong academic profile; choosing a course that does not align with past education or work experience. | Be prepared to provide a strong, logical justification for the choice of university and course, linking it directly to specific academic and career goals. |

### **The Final Impression: Dress Code, Demeanor, and Communication**

First impressions are formed within seconds. A professional and respectful demeanor can positively influence the interview's tone.

* **Dress Code:** Business casual or formal attire is recommended. This shows respect for the process and the consular officer.46
* **Demeanor:** Maintain a positive and confident attitude. Greet the officer politely with a "Good morning" or "Good afternoon." Maintain eye contact and avoid looking down or fidgeting.39
* **Communication:** Speak clearly and concisely. Listen carefully to the question before answering. Provide direct and honest responses; do not volunteer unsolicited information.

## **Section 4: After the Interview: Visa Approval, Refusal, and Next Steps**

The conclusion of the visa interview brings one of three outcomes: approval, refusal, or a request for administrative processing. Understanding each possibility and the subsequent steps is crucial for managing the final phase of the visa journey.

### **Visa Approved: The Finish Line is in Sight**

If the visa is approved, the consular officer will typically say, "Your visa is approved," and will retain the applicant's passport for stamping.

* **Passport Collection:** The stamped passport will be sent to the chosen Visa Application Center (VAC) or delivery address selected during the appointment scheduling process. This usually takes 5-10 business days. Applicants can track their passport status through the ustraveldocs.com portal.31
* **Understanding the Visa Stamp:** The visa foil in the passport will contain important information, including the visa type (F-1), issuance and expiration dates, and the number of entries allowed. It is crucial to check this information for accuracy upon receiving the passport.
* **Preparing for U.S. Entry:** A valid visa does not guarantee entry into the United States. At the port of entry, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer will make the final determination. It is essential to have the passport, visa, and original Form I-20 readily accessible in carry-on luggage. Crucially, F-1 students are not permitted to enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the program start date listed on their Form I-20.16

### **Visa Refused: Understanding the Outcome and Planning Your Next Move**

A visa refusal can be disheartening, but it is not necessarily the end of the road. It is vital to understand the reason for the refusal to strategize the next steps effectively. Refusals are typically communicated with a letter citing a section of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

* **Section 214(b) Refusal:** This is the most common reason for F-1 visa refusal and means the applicant failed to convince the officer of their nonimmigrant intent.30 There is no formal appeal process. The only recourse is to reapply for the visa. However, reapplying without a significant change in circumstances (e.g., securing a stronger financial sponsor, getting a job offer in India, or being able to articulate a clearer career plan) is unlikely to change the outcome.
* **Section 221(g) Refusal:** This is a temporary refusal, indicating that the application is missing necessary information or requires further administrative processing.30 The officer will provide a letter explaining what is needed, such as additional documents or information. The applicant must submit the requested items as instructed. Once submitted, the case will be reconsidered without the need for a new application or fee.

### **Pre-Departure Checklist for a Smooth Transition to the U.S.**

Once the visa is secured, the focus shifts to preparing for travel and life in the U.S.

* **Book Flights:** Ensure the arrival date is within the 30-day window before the program start date.
* **Arrange Accommodation:** Finalize on-campus or off-campus housing.
* **Pack Essential Documents:** Keep the passport, Form I-20, SEVIS fee receipt, and university acceptance letter in carry-on luggage.
* **Financial Preparations:** Arrange for the transfer of funds for tuition and living expenses, and consider carrying a small amount of U.S. currency for initial expenses.
* **Health and Insurance:** Complete any required medical check-ups and ensure health insurance coverage is in place as per university requirements.

## **Appendix: Official Resources & Glossary**

Navigating the visa process requires relying on accurate and official sources of information. The following websites are the primary, authoritative resources for the U.S. F-1 student visa application.

### **Official Government Websites**

* **U.S. Department of State - Student Visas:** The main source for visa policies and requirements.
  + https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html 16
* **U.S. Embassy & Consulates in India:** Provides country-specific information and updates.
  + https://in.usembassy.gov/visas/ 50
* **Official Visa Appointment & Information Portal for India:** Used for paying the MRV fee and scheduling all appointments.
  + https://www.ustraveldocs.com/in/ 31
* **DS-160 Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application Form:** The official portal for completing the application.
  + https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/ 28
* **I-901 SEVIS Fee Payment:** The official website for paying the mandatory SEVIS fee.
  + https://www.fmjfee.com/ 21
* **Study in the States (DHS):** A resource hub from the Department of Homeland Security for international students.
  + https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/ 18

### **Glossary of Key Visa Terminology**

* **CBP (U.S. Customs and Border Protection):** The agency responsible for inspecting travelers at U.S. ports of entry.
* **DS-160:** The mandatory Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application form.
* **DSO (Designated School Official):** A university staff member authorized to handle matters related to international students and SEVIS.
* **F-1 Visa:** A nonimmigrant visa for students pursuing full-time academic or language training programs in the U.S.
* **Form I-20:** The "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," issued by a SEVP-certified school.
* **INA 214(b):** A section of U.S. immigration law that presumes visa applicants are intending immigrants unless they prove otherwise.
* **INA 221(g):** A section of U.S. immigration law that allows for a temporary visa refusal pending additional information or administrative processing.
* **MRV Fee (Machine Readable Visa Fee):** The non-refundable fee required to apply for a U.S. visa.
* **OFC/VAC (Offsite Facilitation Center/Visa Application Center):** The location where biometric data (fingerprints and photo) is collected before the visa interview.
* **SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System):** A U.S. government database used to track international students.
* **SEVP (Student and Exchange Visitor Program):** The U.S. government program that certifies and oversees schools authorized to enroll international students.

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