

## 8. What is I-20?

The I-20 is a U.S. government form used to certify that an international student is eligible to attend an educational institution in the United States. Here's a brief overview:

**Full Name:** Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status"

**Issued By:** U.S. schools (universities, colleges, etc.) that are certified by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) to accept international students.

**Purpose:** The primary purpose of the I-20 form is to convey that:

A student has been admitted to a full-time study program at a SEVP-certified school.

The student has proven to the school that they have sufficient financial resources to study and live in the U.S.

The school has provided the student with the necessary details about their study program and financial details in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

**Usage:**

An accepted international student receives the I-20 form from the U.S. school they plan to attend.

This form is then used by the student to apply for an F-1 (academic) or M-1 (vocational) student visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate.

It's also used as proof of eligibility to enter and reside in the U.S. for the duration of their studies.

**Important Features:**

It contains the SEVIS ID number, which starts with an 'N' followed by a series of numbers.

The form has details about the student's program start and end dates, the latest date by which the student must report to the school, and financial information.

It provides details about the school, including contact information.

Validity: The I-20 is valid as long as the student is enrolled and maintaining their F-1 or M-1 status at the school. If there are significant changes, like a major change or funding change, a new I-20 might be issued.

Importance: The I-20 is crucial for international students in the U.S. They need to keep it safe, as it's required for various processes like applying for a driver's license, Social Security Number, and proving their legal status in the country. If an international student plans to leave and re-enter the U.S., they should get the I-20 signed by their Designated School Official (DSO) to ensure they can re-enter without issues.