

A Resource Guide to Visa Acquisition

Core Resources for Student and Scholar Advisors

- ☑ **Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) - Chapter 22** - <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>
Chapter 1 of 22CFR outlines the regulations governing the State Department. Therefore, if you are interested in looking up the regulations pertaining to visa documentation, visa issuance, and other areas overseen by the State Department, you will want to start here. (*Hint: If not sure where to find the information you are looking for in 22CFR, look up the issue in the NAFSA manual and you will always find the specific CFR citation you need.*)
- ☑ **U.S. Department of State Visa Website** - <http://travel.state.gov/visa>
A comprehensive website maintained by the Department of State, this is the definitive resource that provides information about everything from visa application forms, links to Consulates worldwide, detailed information about each visa class, cables sent to Consulates worldwide, and much, much more. Some highlights from this page include:
 1. *Average wait times for appointments and for visa issuance at each Consulate* http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors_wait.php
 2. *Reciprocity Tables for each country detailing maximum length of visa issuance and, if applicable, additional application fees* <http://travel.state.gov/visa/reciprocity/index.htm>
- ☑ **Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM)** - <http://www.foia.state.gov/REGS/Search.asp>
This is the manual used by Consular Officers to inform their understanding of different visa classifications. Advisors can use this resource to better understand what information is available to the Consular Officer when they interview the student or scholar. Title 9 of the FAM provides specific details about visas, and Section 41 (9 FAM 41.0) includes the information Consular Officers refer to when processing F & J visa applications.
- ☑ **SEVIS Fee Information** - <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm>
Given all new F, M and J visitors to the United States must pay a SEVIS fee before a visa can be issued, it is important to understand the SEVIS Fee when discussing visas. This site not only links to the website where the SEVIS Fee is paid, but also includes resource information such as frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the SEVIS fee, including information about who pays and how to get a refund for a fee paid in error.
- ☑ **NAFSA Website** - <http://www.nafsa.org/>
Available to members and nonmembers alike, the NAFSA website includes many resources to help understand visa issues. To access this information, click on the “Knowledge Community Networks and Resources” navigation link on the left hand side of the main page. You will then have access to either the “International Student Advising Network” or “International Scholar Advising Network”. Both networks include a variety of resources, including a guide entitled “10 points to Remember When Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa”.
- ☑ **NAFSA Manual, Chapter 10: Nonimmigrant Concepts & Procedures**
This chapter provides an excellent overview of the entire visa application process, and includes detailed discussions about important visa concepts such as reciprocity and nonimmigrant intent, as well as advanced concepts such as Security Clearances.
- ☑ **NAFSA Manual, Chapters 3 (F-1), 4 (J-1), 5 (M-1) & Others**
Each chapter in the NAFSA manual outlines specific visa application procedures for that visa class. Whereas ‘Chapter 10’ provides an overview and in-depth discussion on a variety of visa issues, these chapters only review issues specific to the visa class highlighted.

Resources to Provide Students and Scholars

- ☑ **Education USA (maintained by DOS) - <http://educationusa.state.gov/>**
This is a student specific site that provides very basic information about student visas and studying in the United States.
- ☑ **Overview of J-1 Program (DOS website) - http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1267.html**
This site provides an overview of the J-1 Program, including information about the 2-year home country residency requirement (commonly called 212(e)).
- ☑ **Student Visa Information (DOS Website) - http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html**
This site provides a general overview of the F and M student visa classifications.
- ☑ **Student Visa FAQ - http://beijing.usembassy.gov/visa_faq.html**
While this specific FAQ has been posted on the website of the U.S. Consulate in Beijing for visa applicants at that post, it provides very practical information aimed at helping students better understand and prepare for their visa application.
- ☑ **Student Visa Denial / Overview of 214(b) - <http://beijing.usembassy.gov/denials.html>**
While this article has been posted on the website of the U.S. Consulate in Beijing for visa applicants at that post, it provides a very practical overview of what it means to be denied a visa based on non-immigrant intent. It is written so that students can better understand what it means to demonstrate “strong ties” to their home country.

Resources for Trouble Shooting a Visa Problem

- ☑ **Department of State (DOS) Phone Number & Email Address for Visa Inquiries**
To inquire about a specific visa application, you can call: (202) 663-1225 or email usvisa@state.gov, or to check the status of a security clearance (please allow 6 weeks for initial processing of a security clearance), you can call (202) 663-1851.
- ☑ **NAFSA’s International Student/Scholar Advising Networks - <http://www.nafsa.org/>**
Open to Everyone! NAFSA membership not required! Tap into the knowledge and experience of NAFSAns across the country by subscribing to one of NAFSA discussion forums (There are separate discussion forums for student issues and scholar issues). These forums have been set up to allow members and non-members to post questions or concerns they may have, and receive responses about any issue impacting their work. Therefore, if you have a visa issue, send a note to the list and learn about strategies other advisors have used to overcome similar problems.
To join an advising network, go to the NAFSA website. If you are not a NAFSA member, create a guest login account by clicking on the “login arrow” in the top right hand corner of the main NAFSA website page. Then, follow the prompts to create a user account. Once you have a NAFSA account, click on the “Knowledge Community Networks and Resources” navigation link on the left hand side main page. You will then have access to either the “International Student Advising Network” or “International Scholar Advising Network”. Within each of these networks, you will find information about the “Discussion Forums” by clicking on the “Discussion Forums” link.
- ☑ **NAFSA’s IssueNet - <http://issuenet.nafsa.org/>**
Advisors can report policy and regulatory concerns and issues to the NAFSA Policy and Practice Committee and NAFSA staff via IssueNet. This allows NAFSA to understand the issues impacting its members and follow-up with the State Department if necessary.
- ☑ **NAFSA’s Get Liasion Help – <http://issuenet.nafsa.org/>**
Advisors can request assistance with a visa-issuance/visa-acquisition case they are working on, as well as any immigration-related cases. Instead of being broadcast to advisors across the United States, this request is sent to NAFSAns that specialize in regulatory issues.