

## IMPORTANT STEPS FOR GETTING YOUR F-1 VISA

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### I-20

After you are accepted to this program, you will receive your SUNY New Paltz I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for F-1 student status. Once you received your I-20, you must sign the I-20 at item #11.

### Schedule a visa interview

Contact your local U.S. Consulate or Embassy to ask about how to get an F-1 international student visa. First look at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate's website instructions to schedule an interview for your F-1 student visa. It is important to apply for your student visa as early as possible.

Ankara: <http://turkey.usembassy.gov> ; Istanbul: <http://istanbul.usconsulate.gov/>

If you would like to schedule a group interview with up to 5 classmates, please contact your program coordinator in Turkey or the SUNY Turkey office (contact information on the last page of this document). You can also find more information about the visa process at [www.suny.edu.tr](http://www.suny.edu.tr) under the heading "Ortak Lisans Ogrenci Portali".

### Visa application forms

You can download instructions and forms from your Consulate's website at: [ankara.usembassy.gov/visa\\_forms2.html](http://ankara.usembassy.gov/visa_forms2.html). The forms are also available at: [www.travel.state.gov/](http://www.travel.state.gov/)

Complete the following forms:

1. DS-156 Nonimmigrant Visa Application Form
2. DS-158 Contact Information and Work History for Nonimmigrant Visa Application
3. All students must also complete the DS-157 Supplemental Nonimmigrant Visa Application (forms online).

### Visa Fee

Pay the \$160 Nonimmigrant Visa Application Fee at any branch of Fortis Bank in Turkey. Keep the receipt and bring to the visa interview. Note that this fee is different from the \$200 "SEVIS Fee" described below.

### SEVIS Fee

You must pay a separate \$200 SEVIS fee. We recommend that you pay the fee online by following the instructions:

#### To Pay Online

- a. Find the Form I-901 at: [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com) or <https://www.fmjfee.com/index.jhtml>
- b. Complete the form online and write your Visa, MasterCard or American Express information. **IMPORTANT:** write your name exactly how it appears on your I-20 form.
- c. Print a copy of the online receipt.
- d. Make copies of your receipt, and keep it with your other important immigration documents

You must bring the receipt of fee payment with you to the interview. If you have lost the receipt, the Visa Officer should be able to view your payment history on the computer.

### The Visa Interview

Arrive at your interview early and answer all the Visa Officer's questions to you openly and honestly. Prepare and bring the following to your visa interview:

- a. **A passport valid for at least six months**
- b. **Nüfus cüzdanı and TC kimlik number** (identity card and number). If your TC kimlik number is not on the nüfus cüzdanı, you may obtain this number from the Nüfus Müdürlüğü and bring a print-out to the interview.
- c. **Form I-20 (from SUNY New Paltz)**
- d. **School admission letter**
- e. **Completed visa applications** (DS-156, DS-158 and DS-157)
- f. **Two 2"x 2" photographs** in the prescribed format (see [http://turkey.usembassy.gov/photo\\_size\\_requirements.html](http://turkey.usembassy.gov/photo_size_requirements.html) for specifications and suggested photographers)
- g. **A receipt for the visa application fee**
- h. **A receipt for the SEVIS fee.** If you have not received an official receipt in the mail showing payment and you paid the fee electronically, the consulate will accept the temporary receipt you printed from your computer. If you do not have a receipt, the consulate may be able to see your payment on the computer if your fee payment was processed at least 3 business days before your interview. Keep the receipt to show immigration officials upon entry to the United States.
- i. **Official transcript** for study completed at your Turkish university. If the transcript is not available at the time of your interview, contact your program coordinator in Turkey or the SUNY Turkey office.
- j. **A photocopy of your TOEFL score report** (not required, but recommended)
- k. **Financial documents** that show you have enough funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period you intend to study. If you have a sponsor, you must bring the support letter and bank statement of your sponsor. Please bring bank statement originals or copies stamped as true copies by a notary or Turkish university official.
- l. **Any information that proves you will return to your home country after finishing your studies in the U.S.** F-1 student status is for a temporary 'non-immigrant' stay in the United States. You may need to prove that you will return to your home country by showing personal and professional ties to your community, for example, proof of property (original documents of ownership required), or family (residing in your home country). Students may have problems documenting their plan to return home if:
  1. They have previously stayed in the United States longer than permitted.
  2. They have many close family members living in the United States.
  3. They are not able to clearly explain why they plan to study in the United States and then return home.
  4. They are from a country where many students have not returned home after studying in the U.S.

**If any of these are true for you, ask yourself the following questions:**

*What major am I planning to study in the United States?  
 How can I use the knowledge I learn when I return home?  
 What kind of jobs will be available to me when I return to my home country?  
 What personal/family ties do I have at home? Do I have close relatives, etc?  
 What other personal, professional and financial reasons do I have to return home?*

- If you have any questions, please contact **Megan Kropf** ([kropfm@zmail.newpaltz.edu](mailto:kropfm@zmail.newpaltz.edu)) at the Center for International Programs or call (845) 257-3595.
- If you are issued a visa that expires before the end of your program of study, please contact the SUNY Turkey office immediately.
- If you receive a security clearance delay, please contact the SUNY Turkey office immediately.

**SUNY Turkey office contact information:**

- Yiğit Balkaya, SUNY Program Director in Turkey: [balkaya@suny.edu](mailto:balkaya@suny.edu)
- Katie Lansford, SUNY Assistant Program Director in Turkey: [katie.lansford@suny.edu](mailto:katie.lansford@suny.edu)
- SUNY Ofisi, Armada İş Merkezi, Kat 12, Söğütözü, Ankara, Phone: 90-312-295-6234