COLGATE UNIVERSITY
Office of International Student Services

Canadian Citizens: Acquiring F-1 Visa Status at a U.S. Port of Entry



This information is intended only for students who are citizens of Canada.
This information does not apply to non-Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.

As a Canadian citizen, you do not need to apply for an F-1 visa at a U.S. Embassy, as other international students need to do. Instead, you request F-1 visa *status* at the port of entry. The "port of entry" is the place you enter the U.S.A., which could be an airport or a border crossing. **All other F-1 immigration regulations apply to you. You should be extra cautious when you enter the U.S.A. to be sure you enter as an F-1 student, as immigration officials at the port of entry are accustomed to admitting Canadians as visitors.** If you enter the U.S.A. as a visitor, you would need to return to Canada and reenter the U.S.A. in F-1 student status before you can study at Colgate University.

Step 1: When you receive your I-20, you will need to check the following:

- Is your name spelled correctly and according to how it appears in your passport?
- Are your date of birth, country and city of birth, and country citizenship all listed correctly?
- Is it signed by the Designated School Official (DSO) on page one? (Note: The I-20 will not be signed by the DSO on page two as the signatures on page two are only for *reentry* to the U.S.A.)

Please read the instructions on page three of the I-20 and sign page one. Signing the I-20 means that you understand the regulations of F-1 visa status.

Step 2: Pay the **SEVIS I-901 fee ($350 USD)** online at www.fmjfee.com**.** More Information on the SEVIS fee can be found at www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/. Once you pay the fee, print your receipt and keep it with your I-20.

Step 3: When entering the U.S.A. at either an airport or land border crossing, you will present the immigration officer with all of the following:

- I-20 issued by Colgate University
- SEVIS I-901 fee receipt
- Valid passport
- Proof of financial support – If you have financial aid from Colgate, you should present your financial aid letter. If you will be supported fully or partially by your own funds, or by a sponsor (parent, relative, etc.), you should bring recent bank statements.
- *For those entering the U.S. at a land crossing: Completed I-94 form (provided to you at the port of entry)*

Be prepared to answer the following questions:

- What is your purpose for entering the U.S.A.? *I will study at Colgate University.*
- Why did you choose to study at Colgate University, as opposed to a university in Canada?
- How will you support yourself at Colgate University? *Examples: I have an athletic scholarship that covers my tuition and room and board; I have received a scholarship from Colgate that covers part of the expenses, and my parents will support me as well; etc.*
- What do you plan to do once you graduate?

Office of International Student Services | 13 Oak Drive, 101 McGregory Hall, Hamilton, NY 13346 U.S.A.
+1-315-228-6131 | oiss@colgate.edu | www.colgate.edu/oiss

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