

For international students, a critical part of preparing to attend HPA is obtaining the F-1 Student Visa. The following explains the process to successfully gain entrance to the United States as a full-time student. If you have any questions, please contact the Admission Office (1-808-881-4321 or e-mail: admissions@hpa.edu).

PASSPORT

Issued by your own government, a passport is valid from one to six or more years, depending on the country of origin, and is your permit to leave and re-enter your home country. U.S. immigration laws require that your passport be valid for at least six months beyond the date that you begin your studies.

You must ensure that your passport remains valid during your enrollment at HPA. If you need to renew your passport contact your Embassy or Consulate and allow plenty of time for processing. HPA WILL NOT renew passports for students.

FORM I-20

Form I-20 is a multi-purpose government document that is used in connection with F-1 student procedures. An I-20 issued by the school proves your eligibility for F-1 status. An F-1 student is an international student approved by the U.S. government to study full-time in the U.S. An F-1 student visa gives you permission to enter the U.S.

HPA is required by law to receive the following items before issuing an I-20:

1. The completed and signed Enrollment Agreement by both parents/legal guardians.
2. The tuition deposit of \$2,500 USD.
3. A copy of the student's valid passport.
4. Documentation of sufficient financing for at least one year of study. This could be an **original** bank statement or letter from the bank (on official letterhead) certifying the family has sufficient funds to pay for the entire year of education (including tuition, cost for books and fees, travel to and from the school, and any other miscellaneous costs). We suggest that you ask for two original bank statements since HPA will need one original and you will need to show the

second original to the U.S. consulate or embassy.

After HPA receives all of the above items, the school will send you a Form I-20. When you receive the Form I-20, please have both parents and the student sign the form.

F-1 STUDENT VISA

Contact the local consulate or embassy and schedule an appointment for an F-1 Student Visa interview. Typically you can either schedule the appointment online or by phone. The consulate cannot issue the visa until 120 days before the start of school, however, to allow for visa processing and security clearance delays, a student may apply for an F-1 Student Visa earlier than 120 days before the start of school. For students attending HPA summer school, please coordinate with the admission office to receive your I-20 earlier and remember to plan early and apply for the visa so you can have it prior to arriving for the summer program in mid-June.

When you go to the consulate or embassy, you must bring the following items for the visa application:

1. Properly completed Form I-20 (with parent and student signatures).
2. I-901 Form. Families must pay a \$200 SEVIS Application Fee. SEVIS is the computer system that generates the Form I-20. After submitting payment, you will receive an I-901 form, which is proof of payment. You must show the I-901 at the consulate during your visa application interview. For more information on how to pay the SEVIS fee, visit: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/>.
3. Evidence of financial ability to meet all educational expenses for the year. You should use the second original bank statement showing sufficient funds to cover all expenses for the year.
4. Evidence of intent to depart the U.S. after completion of studies. This typically is referred to as the "Strong Ties" clause. The F-1 Student Visa is a non-immigrant visa and so the student must prove that he/she does not intend to immigrate or live in the U.S. permanently. Students must show strong ties to their own country that will cause them to return home after studying

at HPA, university, graduate school, etc. Strong ties differ from country-to-country, city-to-city, individual-to-individual. "Ties" are the various aspects of a person's life that binds them to their country or residence. With younger applicants who might not have had an opportunity to form many ties, consular officers might look at the applicant's specific intentions, family situations and long-range plans and prospects within his/her country of residence. Each case is examined individually.

5. Passport valid for at least six months.
6. Form DS-160 "Nonimmigrant Visa Electronic Application" – Check with your local embassy or consulate for specific requirements. *NOTE: These forms are available at the consulate or online at: <http://travel.state.gov/visa>.*
7. Photograph(s). Please check with your local consulate for the specific requirements and guidelines and number of photographs required for the visa.
8. Payment of F-1 Student Visa fee. Fees charged for processing and issuing an F-1 Student Visa vary from consulate to consulate.
9. If asked, applicants also should be prepared to provide: their HPA acceptance letter, transcripts from previous institutions attended, and scores from standardized tests required by the educational institution such as the SSAT, SLEP, TOEFL, etc.

F-1 Student Visa applicants should contact the consular office where they intend to apply to inquire about specific local procedures or requirements. During the interview, the U.S. consular officer will review the documents and evidence presented, and will ask a few questions. If approved, the visa will be issued within a few hours or days of the interview.

DENIED VISA

If, during your visa interview at the embassy or consulate, you are denied the F-1 Student Visa, please ask the interviewer why the visa was denied. Immediately notify HPA at admissions@hpa.edu about the denial and the reason given. If possible, HPA will assist you in reapplying. If your visa is rejected more than two times, HPA will provide a full refund of your enrollment deposit.

TRAVELING TO THE UNITED STATES

After you receive your visa, you are ready to travel to the U.S.

You must travel with your passport, I-20, and other immigration paperwork. Do not pack these documents in your checked luggage. Keep it with you on your person while traveling.

When making airline reservations, be sure that your final destination is Kona (airport code: KOA), on the island of Hawai'i. Direct flights to Kona are available from the U.S. mainland. Families flying through Honolulu (airport code: HNL), on the island of O'ahu, MUST take a 40-minute interisland flight to Kona. Please e-mail your flight itinerary to travel@hpa.edu.

The first U.S. airport you land at (this could be the mainland U.S., Honolulu, or Kona) will be your Port of Entry (POE) and you must disembark the plane and go through Immigration and Customs.

• IMMIGRATION

You will go through Immigration first. When you meet the immigration official you will be required to present the following documents for admission to the U.S. in F-1 status:

1. Passport valid for at least six months from date of entry to the U.S.
2. F-1 Student Visa in passport. For students entering the U.S. as an F-1 student for the first time, the name of the school (Hawai'i Preparatory Academy) on the F-1 Student Visa must match the name of the school on the Form I-20. For a student who has F-1 student status at a school in the U.S., but has transferred from another U.S. school to HPA, the name of the new school (Hawai'i Preparatory Academy) does not need to be on the student's visa, only on the Form I-20.
3. Evidence of financial support, including the same financial support information used when applying for the F-1 visa at the consulate or embassy.
4. Form I-20, properly signed by the school, parents, and student.
5. Proof of having paid the SEVIS fee also might be required in some cases. Please keep your I-901 receipt with your passport.

Upon being admitted to the U.S., the immigration officer will issue you the departure portion of Form I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record), marked with the date and place of entry, your status as an F-1 student, a unique 11-digit admission number, and the period of admission known as "duration of status," indicated by the notation "D/S."

It is important that you keep the I-94 card with your passport and Form I-20 at all times! When you leave the U.S. for school vacations, you must surrender your I-94 card.

• CUSTOMS

Next, you will go to a special baggage claim room to retrieve your luggage and go through Customs by submitting the customs form you completed on the airplane. Next, proceed through one of two exits (Declare or Nothing to Declare). If you have a connecting flight to Kona, go to the luggage check-in and give back your checked luggage. Verify that your luggage is checked all the way to the Kona International Airport (KOA).

When you arrive in Kona, an HPA representative will meet and transport you to campus (45 minute drive). Returning students who are familiar with the travel process typically take a taxi directly to HPA and do not require an escort. When you arrive on campus, be sure to give your passport, Form I-20, and I-94 card to the Business Office to be held in a fireproof safe until needed for your next flight departure. You may check out your passport anytime but are required to keep it in the Business Office for safekeeping.

EMERGENCIES DURING TRAVEL

If you need to contact HPA while you are traveling due to a flight change, delay, emergency, immigration problem, etc., please call 1-808-881-4363. If you do not have a mobile phone, please ask an operator for assistance to make a collect call.

OTHER TRAVELING

Whenever you leave campus for a school break or after graduation, especially if you fly outside of the state of Hawai'i, you will need to have all of your updated immigration paperwork

with you. A few days before you leave campus, go to the Business Office and check out your passport, Form I-20, I-94 card, and any other included paperwork. Go to the Admission Office and ask to have your Form I-20 signed.

NOTE: There only are a few individuals on campus (called Designated School Officials or DSOs) who are authorized by the U.S. government to sign the form. Anytime you plan to leave the country, a DSO must sign your Form I-20, which certifies that you still are a student at HPA.

Take your passport and all other immigration paperwork when traveling and keep them with you at all times. If you are traveling within the U.S., you might be asked to present the information as proof that you are in the U.S. legally. If you are traveling outside the U.S., you will need to surrender the I-94 card to the immigration official before boarding the plane.

When you return to the U.S., be sure to present all the documentation listed in the "Traveling to the United States." You will receive a new I-94 card at immigration—keep the new card with your other documents. Please return all documentation to the Business Office when you arrive on campus.

STAYING "IN STATUS"

Remaining "in status" as an F-1 non-immigrant visa holder is the responsibility of the student. Always check your passport, visa, or other documentation for expiration dates, etc. When traveling back to your home country you might need to schedule an appointment with the consulate to renew your visa. You also might need to apply for a new passport through your own government. *You should never discard any immigration documentation, even when expired.* Keep all old Form I-20s or other forms you receive from immigration officials. These documents provide a record of your immigration history.

GRADUATION

If you will be attending a U.S. college or university after graduating from HPA, your I-20 must be transferred to your new school prior to leaving HPA. Providing a copy of your acceptance letter to the Admission Office will start this process.