

You might be an expert physician, but can you take that specific knowledge and apply it to different standards?

Getting a United States residency isn't just about your medical skills and knowledge. It's about learning the US approach to medicine. Our courses are designed to shape your knowledge and experience and show you how to implement it to different standards. They're created with the international path specifically in mind.

Learn more about the USMLE Steps: [Step 1](#), [Step 2CK](#), [Step 2CS](#) and [Step 3](#).

What is a non-immigrant visa?

A non-immigrant visa is an immigration document that allows temporary admittance of foreign citizen into the U.S., and regulates what a non-immigrant is permitted to do while in the U.S. There are various types of visas, which one you need depends on your purpose for coming to the U.S. For example, those who want to enter the U.S. for full-time study should get an F-1 (student) visa. For more information about gaining a visa, please visit the [US Department of State website](#).

OBTAINING AN I-20

What is an I-20?

The I-20 is the official document you need when planning to study in the US. It authorizes you to apply for a student visa at your local embassy. Kaplan provides this if you are going to be a full-time student with us and meet all the necessary requirements for approval.

What documents do I need in order to obtain an I-20?

In support of an individual's application for an F-1 visa, Kaplan is authorized to issue a Form I-20 A-B, Certificate of Eligibility for Non-immigrant (F-1) Students for students that have been accepted into our USMLE Complete Prep programs.

How much time does it take to get the I-20?

This varies per person, based on if you submitted a complete application and how long it takes to receive the required documents. Once we have received all the necessary documents and payment, it takes about 2 weeks to issue the I-20. Make sure you keep this time in mind if you want to apply for your visa as soon as possible.

What is Kaplan's application deadline?

There are no precise deadlines since Kaplan has rolling admissions, but for students who want to enter the U.S. on an F-1 Visa you have to choose a start date at least 2 months in the future to make sure all your paperwork is in order before traveling.

Why is an I-20 important?

The I-20, also known as a "Certificate of Eligibility", verifies that a non-immigrant has been accepted to a U.S. school that is allowed by the U.S. government to enroll non-immigrants. The Designated School Official (DSO) at the school the students intended school of study issues the I-20, which is required by the U.S.

Embassy/Consulate to apply for F-1 visa status. F-1 students in the U.S. have to maintain a valid I-20. To remain legal, an F-1 student must be studying full-time in the country after their start date and communicate regularly with their DSO to make sure they keep up legal status while in the U.S.

Can I extend my I-20 if I need more time to study?

I-20 extensions are not common and require you to meet very specific criteria in order to be granted. If you are not getting on in your program fast enough and need additional time to complete your studies you can see if you qualify for an extension by speaking to your DSO. Since extensions are seldom allowed, it is important that you make sure you meet your academic goals in a timely manner in order to complete your studies with Kaplan by the end date specified on your I-20. Please be aware that all requests for I-20 extensions must be made to your DSO before your last day of study. I-20 extensions won't be granted if requested after your last day of study. There are absolutely no exceptions to this policy.

How will I receive my I-20?

Your I-20 will be mailed to you and you will be provided with a tracking number.

Can I change my start date after receiving my I-20?

You may request to change your start date only before entering the U.S. You will need to contact Kaplan to confirm your new start date as soon as you know about the date change. If the date alteration is accepted then, at that time, Kaplan will mail you an updated I-20 to show your new course dates. If you fail to notify Kaplan about these changes you may experience problems at the Port of Entry and/or U.S Embassy. You cannot delay your start date once you enter the U.S. There are no exceptions to this policy. Please be advised that in order to change your start date, payment in full may be required. More details can be found on the application.

Can I change Kaplan center locations after receiving my I-20?

If you have not received your F-1 visa, you can change your Kaplan location. In order to do so, you must contact Kaplan to confirm the new location. You will then be mailed a new I-20 from the new location and your original I-20 will be cancelled, so you should not use your original when you are at the U.S. Embassy or Port of Entry. You can change locations if you have received your F-1 visa, but you may need to get a new visa before entering the U.S. In accordance with American law, the name of the school on your I-20 must match the name of the school on your visa in order to gain successful entry to the U.S. That means you may be denied entry into the U.S. if the names do not match because you changed center locations after getting your visa. Make sure you check with your local U.S. Embassy/Consulate to see if a new visa is required prior to travelling to the U.S.

OBTAINING AN F-1 (STUDENT) VISA

What is an F-1 (student) visa?

An F-1 visa is an immigration document that allows a foreign citizen to come to the US and study full-time for a limited period of time.

Does Kaplan issue F-1 visas?

No. All visas are issued by the U.S. Department of State at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate abroad.

How do I get an F-1 visa?

First, you must apply to Kaplan. If eligible for admission, Kaplan will issue an "Initial Attendance" Form I-20. Once you receive the Form I-20, you will have to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee. This can be done online at www.fmjfee.com. The SEVIS I-901 fee subsidizes the system that tracks students to make sure they keep up their visa status while in the U.S. After you pay the fee, you will need to visit the U.S. Embassy/Consulate in your home country to obtain an F-1 visa.

Which Embassy do I visit?

In general, you are expected to visit the U.S. Embassy/Consulate in the country for which you hold citizenship (i.e. the country that issued your passport). If your country does not have a U.S. Embassy/Consulate or if you are currently located in a different country to the one that issues your passport, you should contact the closest U.S. Embassy to see if they can accept your application for an F-1 visa. To learn more about your local U.S. Embassy, visit [US Department of State website](#).

What documents must I present to get an F-1 visa?

For more information regarding visa appointment, and to see a list of needed documents, please see the US Department of State website [here](#).

How long does it take to get a visa?

The average wait time differs from country to country. Please see [here](#) to check how long it usually takes at your local U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

For how long will my visa be valid?

Since Kaplan does not issue visas we cannot confirm how long it will be valid. Instead, you should confirm this information with your local U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

Can Kaplan help me complete the government's application for a visa?

No. Students are solely responsible for completing all government documents.

What is the likelihood that I will be approved an F-1 visa?

Since Kaplan does not issue visas we cannot confirm the likelihood of approval, but you should be aware that visa issuance is not guaranteed.

What happens if I am denied a visa?

Should your visa be denied, ask the Consular Officer the reason for denial before you leave the Embassy. You have the right to request a written form of the denial as well. If the reason for denial was caused by a n error on your I-20, Kaplan can revise your I-20 and write a support letter to assist you in obtaining your visa during a second interview. If no reason or a different reason is stated, Kaplan probably won't be to help you further. In the majority of cases, the U.S. government's decision is final and there is little Kaplan can do to change their decision. If you are still having visa issues, an alternative is to try enroll in one of our online products that allows you to study for the USMLE from anywhere you'd like.

Will I get a refund if my visa is denied?

You will be refunded according to our cancellation policies.

[ENTRY INTO THE USA](#)

When can I enter the U.S.?

You can enter the US up to 30 days before the start date listed on your I-20.

Can I enter the U.S. after my I-20 start date?

If you travel to the U.S. after your I-20 start date, you will most likely face problems at the Port of Entry, since it seems you failed to meet the requirement of reporting to the Kaplan Center by your start date. To stop issues from arising at the Port of Entry, you should contact Kaplan before you travel and ask to delay your start date if you are unable to arrive before then. Once you change that, Kaplan will mail you a revised I-20 with the updated start date.

What documents will I need to show at the Port of Entry?

You must show the Port of Entry Officer the following documents. If any of these documents are missing or incomplete, you may be detained, questioned or denied entry altogether.

- A valid (non-expired) passport
- A valid (non-expired) F-1 visa with the name of the Kaplan Center you will be attending printed at the bottom
- All three pages of your I-20 issued by the Kaplan Center you will be attending (center name should match the name of the school listed on your visa.)

When you travel, make sure to always hand-carry all of your documents (such as your passport, Form I-20 and Form I-94). Do not pack any documents in your checked baggage.

For further information, please visit <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/getting-to-the-united-states>.

What happens at the Port of Entry?

To learn what you need to do at the Port of Entry visit <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/students/index.htm> and review the document called “What a Student Can Expect.”

What is an I-94 and why is it important?

The [Form I-94, “Arrival/Departure Record”](#) shows the terms of your admission, including your legal status, length of time you may stay and expected departure date.

It is important to have a copy of your Form I-94 to prove your legal visa status in the United States. If you are admitted electronically and do not receive a paper form, or if you misplace your form and need a replacement, follow the steps below to retrieve a copy.

- Go to the [U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s Form I-94 Web page](#) and agree to the terms listed.
- Once directed to the Form I-94 information page, enter your name, date of birth and passport information.
- Select “Get Most Recent I-94” or “Get Travel History.”

You can find further details [here](#).

What is Form I-515A and what do I need to do with it if I am given one at the Port of Entry?

Form I-515A is a government form given to some travellers who are missing documentation required for entry to the U.S. If you are given this form by a Port of Entry Officer, you must ask what documentation you are missing. Once confirmed, you will be required to submit that documentation to the government within 30 days after entry. If you do not meet this deadline, you will fall out of legal status and will have to leave the U.S. immediately. If you are given this form, please speak to the DSO at your Kaplan center immediately after entry.

[FAQ's](#)

When do I need to start my studies?

You are required to arrive at the Kaplan center and begin full-time studies on or before the start date listed on your I-20. If you do not meet this requirement, your I-20 will be terminated, you will fall out of legal status and will have to leave the U.S. immediately. If you are outside the U.S. and unable to travel to the U.S. before your start date contact Kaplan and we will update your I-20 by postponing the start date. You cannot change your start date once you enter the U.S. There are no exceptions to this rule.

How soon can I start my course?

If you are applying for a visa we advise that you allow at least 3 months before the desired start date of your U.S. course to make sure that your visa is finalized and you have time to organize accommodation.

I left the start date blank on my application because I want to start as soon as my student visa is approved. Is that acceptable?

No. A start date is required in order to process an application. Give yourself enough time for your visa to be processed and to secure accommodation.

I want to travel with my family. Can I do that?

Yes, but we will need to indicate on your I-20 that you are travelling with dependents. Please provide us with their full names, a copy of their passport, their date of birth and relationship to you. More details can be found on the application.

What happens if I do not meet Kaplan's full-time study requirements?

If you do not meet Kaplan's full-time study requirements, you risk falling out of legal status with the following consequences:

- Your I-20 will be terminated.
- You will no longer be eligible to study with Kaplan.
- You will not be eligible for a refund.
- You will be required to leave the U.S. immediately after termination of your I-20.

Can I work during my studies at Kaplan?

Generally, No. As an F-1 student, your main purpose for being in the U.S. must be full-time study, so that you can achieve your academic and/or career goals. You should not expect to work while studying with Kaplan. If you have more questions, they can be addressed to the D.S.O. at your center upon arrival. Please be aware, if you are found to be working without government approval and/or in a position not listed here, your employment will be considered unauthorized. This will result in immediate termination of your I-20 in the SEVIS student tracking system. If this occurs, you will no longer be eligible to study with Kaplan; you will not receive a refund and you must leave the U.S. immediately.

Can I participate in practical training or OPT/CPT while at Kaplan?

No. As a Kaplan student, you are not eligible for practical training (OPT/CPT) under any circumstance. There are no exceptions to this rule.