INTERNATIONAL STUDENT I-20 REQUEST FORM

INSTRUCTIONS

Congratulations on your admission to Barnard College! The following information explains how to qualify for your Form I-20, which enables you to receive an F-1 student visa for study at Barnard. Please read everything carefully and complete the necessary forms as soon as possible. Once your I-20 is approved, we will mail it to you via express mail. You will then need to make an appointment with your nearest American embassy or consulate to apply for your F-1 student visa.

WHAT IS A FORM I-20, AND WHY DO I NEED ONE?

A Form I-20 is a U.S. government form by which Barnard College certifies to the U.S. government that you are eligible to be an F-1 student according to the law. It certifies that you: (1) are or expect to be a full-time student; (2) meet our admissions requirements; and (3) have documented proof that you have enough money to study and live in the United States. You need an approved Form I-20 to obtain your F-1 student visa, or to maintain a legal F-1 status when transferring or changing schools within the United States.

Note: Do not enter the United States without a visa. If you use a “B” visa to enter the United States, you could be guilty of fraudulent entry and be refused permission to stay longer than six months. Though some claim it is easier to enter the country as a visitor and change your status, this claim is not true.

All international students must document their ability to meet all educational and living expenses for the entire period of their intended study before Barnard can issue a Form I-20. Read the instructions for each part carefully. All documentation must be received by the Office of Admissions by June 15 for students enrolling in September and by January 1 for students enrolling in January.

If you have questions, please contact the international admissions coordinator by calling 212/854-2014, faxing 212/854-6220, or e-mailing admissions@barnard.edu.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE I-20 REQUEST FORM

The information below should answer some questions you may have about the I-20 request form and requirements. Please contact us with any additional questions.

What do I need to apply for an I-20?
You must be admitted to Barnard College as a full-time student, and you must complete the I-20 request and Financial Certification (Part II: Funding) forms included in your admit packet. These forms demonstrate that you, your family, or a sponsor will cover the full cost of your stay in the United States (US$240,000).

What documents will meet the requirements for Financial Certification?
All international students must document their ability to meet all educational and living expenses for their intended period of study before Barnard can issue a Form I-20. Your funds must be liquid assets, which means they can be accessed immediately, such as a checking or savings account without withdrawal prohibitions. Examples of what do not qualify include: long-term savings accounts that may not be accessed immediately, an assessment of the value of your assets (home, car, property, jewelry), or a stock portfolio report. Financial documents must be less than 12 months old when we process your immigration document.

What information should my Financial Certification contain?
• An official bank statement or bank letter on letterhead with a signature or seal is required.
• The amount of money contained in the account need not be specified, but the document must state that the account contains the minimum amount required to cover your estimated expenses.
• If the letter or statement is not written in English, an English translation must be provided.
• Please state funds in U.S. dollars. If this is not possible, please make sure that the quantity and type of currency is clearly written.
• If funding comes from an organization or individual other than your parents, a letter of financial sponsorship (Sponsor’s Affidavit of Support) is also required.

How are my funding sources categorized?
Personal funds:
• Bank account in your name
• Student loan taken out in your name
• Student job granted as part of your financial aid package
School funds:
• Fellowship or grant awarded to you by Barnard
Other funds:
• Scholarship or grant from a non-Barnard source (such as your home government, current employer, or organization)
• A family member supporting your studies at Barnard (such as your uncle, father, or sister)

Does the I-20 guarantee that I will get a visa?
The I-20 allows you to apply for a visa but does not guarantee that you will receive one. Visa approval rates vary from country to country. If the visa officer believes your intent is to stay in the United States after you finish your studies, he or she must by law deny your request for a visa.

Can I work while I am a student?
You may be able to work, depending on your visa status, but only on campus and for no more than 20 hours a week while school is in session. Also, international students do not qualify for federal “work-study” positions. These are jobs for U.S. students or permanent residents only. Limited student employment positions may be available.

What if my visa expires?
A visa is just an entry document into the United States; it allows you to present yourself at a port of entry and be considered for admission to the United States. What allows you to stay in the United States legally is your Form I-20, your I-94 card stamped D/S, and a valid passport. If your I-20 or passport expires while you are still a student, then you are out of status. A visa can expire long before you finish your studies.

Can I study on a tourist visa?
No.

What is SEVIS?
SEVIS stands for Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. It is a database through which the U.S. government tracks foreign students’ and scholars’ entry to and exit from the United States. It also tracks whether or not students are enrolled in school full-time. Universities must regularly upload their students’ academic and address information to SEVIS.

Can I qualify for Federal Financial Aid?
No, international students cannot receive federal financial aid.
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Verification of source(s) of funds:
The U.S. government requires that we be absolutely sure, to the best of our ability, that you will have enough financial support to cover the full costs of your stay in the United States. Your financial support can come from any combination of the following sources in the United States or abroad.

Note: All documents must be submitted in English. We cannot review documents that are not in English. Submit to us photocopies or faxes, not originals of documents. You will need the originals of all documents you have sent us to take to the American embassy when we send you your I-20.

The following are descriptions of the documentation required for each applicable source of funds:

1. Personal
   These are funds that come only from your own income or resources. Unless you have enough cash to support yourself for your entire program of study or can prove other sources of personal income, you will need a sponsor with an income sufficient to support you.

2. Sponsors (parents, relatives, friends, organizations)
   Sponsors may provide you with support in the form of cash and/or free room and board. Free room and board is when you live with someone and don’t have to pay for a meal plan or a room in the college residence halls. You may have as many sponsors as you need.
   All sponsors must fill out a Sponsor’s Affidavit of Support form and provide bank verification in a separate statement of account. A simple copy of a monthly bank statement with a signature will not suffice. A signed letter from the bank on letterhead with exact U.S. dollar amounts is expected. Individual sponsors should also submit any of the following to show proof of income: employer’s letter on letterhead stationery, income tax returns or receipts, investments, or income estimate by a bank or private accountant if self-employed. The income of a company is not the income of the owner of the business and will not be accepted as proof of income. You must provide an official statement of the salary paid to the owner/sponsor. If it is a company sponsor, submit the most recent “Profit and Loss” statement for the company. If there is no income source, bank statements must prove that there are sufficient funds to cover the entire program of study.
   Sponsor affidavits must be notarized (signed by the sponsor in the presence of a notary public). The notary public must sign, and the official seal of the notary public must be on the affidavit. There are notaries public at all U.S. embassies and consulates. In the United States, most neighborhood pharmacists, lawyers, and accountants are notaries. There are notaries in all countries, though the names for them may be different. They are officials licensed by the national or regional government to take sworn statements for courts of law or to witness contracts and property deeds.

3. Scholarship
   An official scholarship letter from the institution awarding the scholarship is required. The award letter must contain the name of the student, the amount of money available for each year of study, the duration of the award (including beginning and ending dates), and the degree and major field of study for which the award is tenable.

4. Loans
   An official letter from the credit institution indicating approval of the loan and the amount approved is required.

5. Government or Employer
   Please provide an official letter indicating the amount of support and containing the same information requested under “Scholarship,” above.
   Barnard reserves the right to require additional financial documentation and/or prepayment from applicants whose countries impose currency exchange restrictions or other obstacles to the transfer of currency. Students from such countries will be notified of specific requirements when they have submitted complete financial statements.

Finally, do not expect that you will be able to work in the United States to help meet your annual costs. On-campus employment is limited and competitive; off-campus employment is strictly controlled by the U.S. Immigration Service.

Make a photocopy of this completed form for your records and send it, with all necessary financial documentation, to the International Admissions Coordinator, Barnard College, Office of Admissions, 3009 Broadway, New York, New York 10027-6598 USA. If you have questions, please contact the international admissions coordinator by calling 212/854-2014, faxing 212/854-6220, or e-mailing admissions@barnard.edu.