



BRADLEY University

Pre-Arrival Handbook F-1 International Students

**The Graduate School
Bradley University**

BASIC F-1 VISA TERMINOLOGIES

SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System)

Federal government database that holds and tracks information on F-1 students.

U.S. F-1 Visa

The F-1 visa is an entry permit that is issued by the U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad for you to enter the U.S. to begin your program. The only time you are required to have a valid visa is when you are entering the U.S. from another country. You can stay in the U.S. on an expired F-1 visa as long as you are maintaining your valid F-1 student status.

I-94 Admission Record

The I-94 record, created by Customs and Border Protection (CBP), documents your arrival and lawful entry to the U.S. The I-94 will indicate your admission to the U.S. for duration of status, shown as “D/S”, which is the period of time that you will be participating in your program (indicated on your I-20).

I-20 Form: Certificate of Eligibility

You receive the I-20 form from Bradley after you are admitted to the University. It will be mailed to you by the Graduate School. You need to present this form to the U.S. embassy or consulate in your home country to apply for your F-1 visa. This form contains your program information, start and end date of your program, and other personal information relevant to your F-1 status. **You must have your original I-20 at the visa interview and at the U.S. Port of Entry.**

YOUR NEXT STEPS

Now that you have been approved as a student at Bradley, you need to apply for a F-1 visa and a F-2 visa for any accompanying dependents.

SEVIS Fee

After receiving the form I-20, you must pay a mandatory one-time SEVIS fee and obtain a receipt BEFORE booking your visa appointment at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate. This fee may be [paid online](#). The Department of Homeland Security will issue you an official paper receipt (Form I-797) acknowledging the payment of your SEVIS fee.

F-2 dependents are not required to pay the SEVIS fee. Also, if you are a student who has transferred to a program at Bradley from another institution and already have a valid SEVIS record, you do not need to repay the SEVIS fee.

Apply for a F-1 Visa at a US Embassy/Consulate

After paying the SEVIS fee, you will need to make an appointment to apply for a F-1 visa. An in-person interview is usually required. You may visit travel.state.gov to learn more about the visa application process and to find a U.S. Embassy or Consulate near you. When making an appointment, you should ask the consulate for a complete list of documents you need.

At minimum, you will need the following documents at your interview:

- Passport (must be valid for at least 6 months beyond I-20 program end date)
- Original I-20 for you and any dependents
- Official Bradley University admission letter
- Receipt for payment of the I-901 SEVIS fee
- Proof of financial support
- DS-160 visa application and fee

Additional requested documents may include evidence of any of the following:

- The purpose of your travel
- Your intent to depart the United States after your travel
- Your ability to pay all travel costs

Attend Your Visa Interview

During your visa interview, a consular officer will determine whether you are qualified to receive a visa and which visa category match travel purpose. You will need to establish that you meet the requirements under U.S. law to receive a F-1 visa. Ink-free, digital fingerprint scans will be taken as part of your application process. You will be informed by the consular officer if further processing is necessary for your application.

Purchase Health Insurance

Before you arrive on campus, you must purchase health insurance. You can find options for health insurance that we accept on [our website](#). You must have health insurance coverage for your entire student program based on the start and end dates on your I-20.

Entering the U.S.

A visa allows a foreign citizen to travel to a U.S. port-of-entry and request permission to enter the United States. A visa does not guarantee entry into the country. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials at the port of entry have authority to permit or deny admission. You can learn more about procedures for entering the U.S. on the [CBP website](#). You are not permitted to enter the U.S. earlier than 30 days before your program start date.

PROGRAM COSTS

F-1 students are required to pay several expenses directly to Bradley University. It is essential that you know what costs your sponsor or home institution will cover, if any. The following is a list of costs that students are likely to incur. Specified costs are valid as of January 2019.

- I-901 SEVIS fee \$200 one-time
- Visa application fee \$160 per applicant
- Enrollment fee \$100 one-time
- Travel expenses to and from Bradley
- Tuition (per credit hour)
- Activity and health services fees
- Housing (including rent and utilities)

- Meals (on-campus or off)
- Health insurance
- Other types of insurance—renter’s insurance, car insurance
- Internet and phone service
- Transportation outside of the Bradley campus
- Personal expenses and entertainment costs
- Child care (if applicable)

ARRIVAL TO BRADLEY

Airport

Peoria International Airport (PIA) is a 10 minute drive from campus, but many international flights come in through Chicago O’Hare International Airport (ORD), which is approximately 3 hours by bus/car to the Bradley campus.

Getting from the Airport to Bradley

You are responsible for your transportation from the airport; Bradley does not offer airport pick-up services from the airport. However, there are a number of options to get to Bradley from the airport. It is recommended that you arrange your transportation before you arrive. If arriving to Peoria International Airport, it is best to take a taxi from the airport to campus. If arriving to Chicago O’Hare, it is recommended that you book a ticket through [Peoria Charter](#), a coach bus company that picks up passengers at the international terminal.

TRANSPORTATION IN AND AROUND BRADLEY

CityLink

CityLink offers bus transportation to Bradley University and around Peoria. More information about CityLink and bus route maps can be found [on their website](#). Fares range from \$0.50 for a single student ride (with valid Bradley ID) to \$40 for an unlimited 30-day pass.

Driving in the United States

We recommend you bring both your driver’s license from your home country and an International Driving Permit (IDP) if you plan to drive a car while in the U.S. An IDP does not replace a government issued driver license, but is its official translation. You may drive in Illinois without a valid Illinois driver’s license if you are visiting or driving through Illinois with a valid driver’s license from your home state or country (found on Page 5 of [2018 Rules of the Road Booklet](#)). We recommend that you keep a copy of the [Rules of the Road Booklet](#) in your car when driving in the U.S. on your home country license.

You may apply for an Illinois driver’s license in the U.S. **only if** your I-20 is valid for at least one year and you have at least six months remaining on an authorized stay at the time of application. You may find more information about requirements [on our website](#).

Seat Belts and Car Seats

Safety belts must be worn by all passengers even if the vehicle has air bags. It is the responsibility of the driver to see that all front seat passengers [obey this law](#).

Buying a Car

You may buy a new car from an automobile dealer or a used car from a dealer or private individual. Financing may be obtained from the dealer or a bank. You must obtain a Certificate of Ownership from a car dealer or a Certificate of Title from an individual. The car must be registered immediately in the new owner's name. A Certificate of Title must be registered with the Illinois Secretary of State and transferred to the name of the new owner when the car is paid for. Illinois law requires you to purchase car insurance.

Campus Parking

If you will be parking on campus, you must purchase a parking permit from [Bradley's Parking Office](#) in Swords Hall or online.

OPENING A US BANK ACCOUNT

Checking accounts allow you to deposit and withdraw money frequently and are a great way to pay your monthly bills. When you open a checking account, it usually comes with checks and a debit card and allows you to use them to make purchases and pay bills. Often there are minimum monthly balances and service fees which vary by the type of account you open.

Savings accounts are for long term deposits for earning interest. The interest, minimum balances, and service fees vary from bank to bank.

Banks usually do not charge extra fees when you are using your bank's **ATM** (Automated Teller Machines). If you use an ATM in a store or at other banks, you may be charged a transaction fee.

Banks offer many different financial services and you are not required to open an account. Compare the services and costs of several banks before choosing one. Find one with a branch office close to campus.

GETTING A CELLULAR PHONE

Some mobile plans may require that you have a Social Security number (SSN) to set up a contract. Pre-paid plans (when you pay your monthly bill in advance) are available from most providers and do not require a SSN. You have several options to set up service:

- Purchase a sim card from a provider to access cellular service.
- Purchase a new phone and sim card from a provider and sign a contract (usually for at least one year) for service through that provider.
- Purchase a "go phone" and purchase minutes and data as you need them from a retailer such as Target or Wal-Mart.

ABOUT PEORIA AND BRADLEY UNIVERSITY

The Bradley University campus is located in Peoria, Illinois, a major hub for agriculture, manufacturing, entertainment, shopping and fun. Bradley celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1997. In 1896, Mrs. Lydia Moss Bradley began her plans to establish an institution in Peoria, first called Bradley Polytechnic Institute. Bradley Hall, the location of the Office of

International Student and Scholar Services, was one of the first two buildings on campus. In 1920, Bradley began to offer four-year bachelor's degrees and in 1946, graduate degree programs. In 1946, the institution was renamed Bradley University.

Today, Bradley University is a leader in student engagement and enrolls approximately 5,400 students, including those in fully online degree programs. Bradley's values center around a community built upon the valued relationships we find in each other as students, staff, faculty, administrators, and alumni. Our values are student success, knowledge and discovery, inclusiveness and connectively, and excellence. We hope you enjoy the rich opportunities at Bradley that include:

[Athletic Events](#)

Bradley athletic teams include baseball, basketball, American football, soccer, tennis, and more. For information on athletic events or to purchase tickets, visit the [Bradley Athletics website](#).

[Campus Recreation](#)

Bradley also offers group fitness classes, personal training, and exercise facilities at the [Markin Center](#).

[Leadership and Service](#)

[Bradley Leadership and Service](#) provides students, faculty and staff the opportunity to apply academic knowledge, gain skills and experience, and contribute to the community. Volunteer opportunities are available throughout Peoria and within the University community.

[Musical Performances](#)

The [Department of Music](#) houses several student ensembles that perform throughout the year.

[Theater Productions](#)

The [Department of Theatre Arts](#) produces four main stage theater productions each academic year and a variety of productions run by students.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Bradley University is comprised of the following schools and colleges:

- Foster College of Business
- Slane College of Communications & Fine Arts
- College of Education & Health Sciences
- Caterpillar College of Engineering & Technology
- College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
- The Graduate School
- Academic Exploration Program
- Turner School of Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- The Charley Steiner School of Sports Communication

[Cullom-Davis Library](#)

If you are seeking a resource for entertainment or class purposes, the [Cullom-Davis Library](#) can assist. On the library website, you can access research guides, check out electronic and print resources, and access journals and special collections. The library also has individual and group research spaces.

UNIVERSITY POLICY RESOURCES

Bradley University has a commitment to provide an inclusive, safe, and welcoming environment to all faculty, staff, students, and visitors. Policies are in place to prevent discrimination and harassment and to protect everyone on our campus. You may view the following resources for more information:

[Office of Sponsored Programs](#)
[Statement on Discrimination](#)
[Title IX](#)
[University Policies](#)

MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS

Mandatory Check-in (SEVIS Registration) and Orientation

As a new Bradley F-1 student, your arrival must be updated in SEVIS. This process is called registration and must be completed as soon as possible. You are required to check-in with the Graduate School and attend a mandatory orientation upon arrival. Failure to check-in will result in automatic termination of your F-1 status in SEVIS. You are required to bring the following documents to the office for your orientation:

- Your original I-20 and those of any F-2 dependents
- Your passport and those of any F-2 dependents
- Your F-1 visa for Bradley and those of any F-2 dependents
- Proof of health insurance
- Official documentation still required for your Bradley application

Valid Immigration Documents

Your I-20 must be valid at all times. If you plan on extending your stay, you must apply for an extension at least 30 days prior to the program end date on your I-20. Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the validity of your I-20 form.

Health Insurance

Bradley University requires that all F-1 visa holders obtain health insurance that covers you during your time on campus. A registration hold will be put on your account each semester that you have not shown health insurance coverage. Once you prove coverage, the hold will be removed. The initial hold is done through the Graduate School. In future semesters, it is done through the Office of International Student and Scholar Services. You can find options for international student insurance [on our website](#) which meets our requirements.

Contact Information Reporting

In compliance with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), you are required to have a valid address during your program. **You have 10 days to update your international advisor with changes to your personal information.** Your advisor will then make updates to your record in SEVIS. While active in your program, you are required to report the following information:

1. Your **mailing and billing address** is used as your local address for immigration purposes. This is where you are living on your F-1 program. This address cannot be your home country address, out of state address, department address, office or post office box.
2. Your **permanent address** is your address in your home country. This address cannot be a U.S. address or a post office box.
3. Your **U.S. phone number**. If you do not have a U.S. number while on your program, please report this information.
4. Your **email address** that you are check regularly.

F-2 Dependents

F-1 students are able to bring dependent spouses and children (under the age of 21) to accompany them on their program. These dependents must also follow immigration regulations.

- F-2 dependents are eligible to study recreationally only. Please contact your International Advisor for questions.
- F-2 dependents are not eligible to work.

EMPLOYMENT

F-1 students are eligible, based on immigration regulations, to work up to 20 hours per week while school is in session on-campus only. F-1 students may be eligible to work off-campus after two full-time semesters of enrollment at Bradley.

Important Note: All off-campus employment must be authorized by the Office of International Student and Scholar Services before starting. If you begin an off-campus job before receiving authorization from your international advisor, you will be violating your F-1 status and your SEVIS record may be terminated.

Social Security Number (SSN)

A SSN is an identification number which is required at the time of employment that allows the U.S. government to track all employees (including U.S. citizens). F-1 students are eligible to apply for a SSN if they are offered a job. F-2 visa holders cannot work and therefore are not able to obtain a number

LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

Housing

On-campus living is convenient and available to all students, allowing them to better immerse themselves in the campus culture. Many graduate students, however, do not live in on-campus housing. More information about on-campus housing is available on the [Housing website](#). After signing the contract, you cannot change your mind and receive your money back.

Off-Campus Housing

If you wish to look elsewhere for housing, Bradley University is not able to find you accommodations. Please be sure to do the following:

- Compare prices.
- Do not sign a lease until you have inspected the apartment, house, or room.
- Ask questions of former/current tenants or neighbors if possible.
- Check the deposit policy to see whether it is refundable. Landlords will not refund a deposit if the apartment needs major cleaning or repairs at the end of your rental term.
- Check lease duration. Most rental contracts are for 12 months.
- Negotiate the terms of the lease if you do not agree with all items.
- Get everything you agree on in writing.
- Read the entire lease before you sign it.
- Follow all terms of the contract you sign.
- Buy renter or property insurance (optional, but recommended).

CLIMATE

Peoria has four distinct seasons:

- **Fall/Autumn** (mid-September to mid-December) is cool, perhaps rainy and famous for the changing color of tree leaves.
- **Winter** (mid-December to mid-March) is cold, windy and often includes snow and ice.
- **Spring** (late-March to late-May) can be very rainy and stormy but also has many sunny days with a mix of cool, warm and hot temperatures.
- **Summer** (June to mid-September) can be very hot and humid with many thunderstorms.

Bad Weather

COLD temperatures here can reach -22F/-30C. It is important that you remember to dress properly. Several layers of clothes are better than one heavy coat. You should cover your ears and fingers as they can freeze easily. In addition to a coat, wear boots, a hat, gloves or mittens and a scarf that you can wrap around your face.

ICE is dangerous to walk on and even more dangerous to drive on. Stay off it if possible. If you must walk, wear shoes or boots that have rubber grids, not smooth leather-soled shoes.

TORNADOES are storms with high winds that form a funnel cloud. These clouds can form very rapidly and do great damage in a short time. These conditions develop most often during the spring and summer. A “tornado watch” means weather conditions are right for tornadoes to develop. A “tornado warning” means that a tornado funnel cloud has been seen. Peoria has a disaster warning system that alerts you to a possible tornado. If you hear the sirens during threatening weather, take cover on the lowest floor you can away from windows. If outside, take cover face down in a ditch—do not stay in your car.

Bradley foreWarn

[foreWarn](#) is a messaging service that is used to notify faculty, staff, and student cell phones when an urgent situation, such as a bomb threat or hostile intruder. There is no cost to register for the alerts; however, standard rates may apply if your cell phone plan does not include text messaging. We highly recommended you sign up for the alerts.