

# HOW DO I FINANCIALLY QUALIFY FOR a VISA? (F or J)

## What Is a Form I-20? What Is a Ds-2019?

An I-20 or a DS-2019 is a government form on which Manhattanville College certifies to the U.S. government that you are eligible for F-1 or J-1 student status. It certifies that you have met our admissions requirements, have been accepted for a full course of study, and have proven to us that you have enough money to study and live in the U.S. without working illegally or suffering from poverty. You need a form I-20 to obtain an F-1 student visa and the DS-2019 is required for the J-1 visa.

If you have substantial funding from your home country government, you will most likely be coming in J-1 (Exchange Visitor) status. With documentation of that funding, you will be issued a DS-2019.

## Why do I need to give the college financial information?

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and Department of State (DoS) outline various regulations that schools must follow in order to be eligible to issue I-20s and Ds-2019s. Sometimes, we have to ask you for more evidence of your financial ability. For F-1 students, the U.S. government requires that we be absolutely sure, to the best of our ability, that you have enough financial support to cover the costs of your program for one academic year (scholarships included). We encourage students and their families to look closely at the cost of living and studying in the U.S. and make careful plans to be sure the student's needs are met. For this reason, Manhattanville College requires that you forward to us a financial statement, which clearly outlines your ability to meet your financial obligations at the College. After receipt of your financial documents and Manhattanville approves them, you will receive your I-20 form.

A similar process will be followed for issuance of DS-2019's for J-1 exchange visitors.

## Carefully Review Manhattanville College Costs

- **These requirements are not negotiable.** They represent a minimum budget, which does not allow for luxuries of any kind. You will want to have more money available if possible.
- **Expect an annual increase** in tuition and living costs of about 5%.

**U.S. law requires that you prove that you can support your minimum annual costs for every year of your program of study. You must give us documents that will convince the government that you have:**

- **Cash** to cover your first year in the U.S.A.
- Sufficient and dependable financial resources to cover every additional year

**Do Not Expect that You Will Be Able to Work to Meet Your Minimum Annual Costs** - Off-campus employment is restricted and opportunities on campus are very limited and competitive.

**All documents you submit must be less than six months old and in English. Send us quality photocopies or faxes, not originals.** You will need the originals of all the documents you have sent us to give to the American Embassy when we send your I-20.

**F-1 students can support themselves with personal funds**, which come **only** from your **own** savings and investments. They cannot be funds which are given to you by another person. Unless you have enough cash to support yourself for your **entire program of study**, you will need a sponsor with an income sufficient to support you. **You can prove your personal funds with the following documents:**

- **BANK STATEMENTS** in your name only, which state **the date the account was opened**, current balance in U.S. dollars, **average deposits and average balances**. We cannot accept statements that do not specify balances unless it is stated to be a minimum of six figures in U.S. dollars. *If your statement shows that your funds are 'fixed', meaning that they do not produce substantial income, your balance will be **divided by the number of years** in your program of study to determine the amount you will have available to you for each year of study.*

- **STATEMENTS OF LIQUID INVESTMENTS** only.

**You may support yourself with funds from this school** with a scholarship. College support does not cover all expenses, however, so you will need additional resources to meet your minimum annual costs. Provide us with a copy of your award letter or contract to prove that you will receive this form of support.

**You may support yourself with funds from other sponsors** such as, parents, relatives, or organizations, or your government (J-1). You may have as many sponsors as you need. *It is highly recommended that at least part of your financial support come from your home country for purposes of visa issuance.* Sponsors may provide you with support in the form of cash and/or room and board. Free room and board is when you live with someone and don't have to pay for your room or food.

**A sponsor should promise only as much money as s/he is able to give you.** Some sponsors believe that the more money they promise to give the easier it will be to get your I-20. THE MOST COMMON REASON FOR REJECTION OF FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS IS THAT WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE F-1 SPONSOR CAN AFFORD TO GIVE AS MUCH AS PROMISED. A sponsor should promise only what he or she intends to give and only as much as can be afforded.

**Each sponsor providing cash support must give us all the following documents to prove financial responsibility. If all these documents are not received, your sponsor's support will not be considered.**

- **AFFIDAVIT OF ANNUAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT.** This form may be photocopied for each sponsor. All questions must be answered. The sponsor in the presence of a notary public must sign ALL affidavits. The notary public must sign, and the official seal of that notary public must be on the affidavit.

*There are notaries public at all U.S. embassies and consulates. In the U.S., most neighborhood pharmacists, lawyers and accountants are notaries. There are notaries in all countries, though the names for them may be different. There are officials licensed by the national or regional government to take sworn statements for courts of law or to witness contracts and property deeds.*

- **PROOF OF INCOME.** This must be on the employer's letterhead, on income tax returns or receipts, or estimated by a bank or private accountant when the sponsor is a self-employed businessperson. The income of a company is not 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.
- **BANK STATEMENT, in the name of the sponsor only,** which states the date the account was opened, current balance in U.S. dollars, average deposits and average balances. *We cannot accept statements that do not specify balances unless it is stated to be a minimum of six figures in U.S. dollars.*

**A SPONSOR PROVIDING FREE ROOM AND BOARD** (free room and board is when you live with someone who gives you your room and food for no payment) **MUST PROVIDE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING EVIDENCE OF FINANCIAL ABILITY. Please note that with very limited exceptions, international students are required to live on campus for their first year.**

- **AFFIDAVIT OF FREE ROOM AND BOARD** fully completed and signed in the presence of a notary public.
- **PHOTOCOPY OF LEASE/DEED, DEED, and RENT RECEIPTS** in sponsor's name.
- **PROOF OF INCOME.** This must be on the employer's letterhead, on income tax returns or receipts, or estimated by a bank or private accountant when the sponsor is a self-employed businessperson.