

## 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 is a government form on which Manhattanville College certifies to the U.S. government that you are eligible for F-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.

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 issue I-20s and Ds-2019s. For F-1 students, the U.S. government requires that we be absolutely sure, to the best of our ability, that you have enough readily available financial support to cover the costs of your program for one academic year (scholarships included) and a clear source for all remaining years. 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 financial statements (certificate of finances or affidavits) which clearly outline your plan to meet your financial obligations at the College. After Manhattanville receives and approves your financial documents, 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 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 provide documents to show 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. These 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 scholarships. 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 demonstrate this type of support.

**You may support yourself with funds from sponsors** such as parents, relatives, or organizations, or your government (J-1). You may have as many sponsors as you need. For purposes of establishing compelling ties to your home country, *it is highly recommended that at least part of your financial support come from a person or organization in your home country.* 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.** Some sponsors believe that the more money they promise, the easier it will be to get an I-20. In fact, the most common reason financial documents are rejected is due to a doubt that an F-1 sponsor can really afford to give as much as promised. A sponsor should promise only what s/he intends to give and only as much as can be afforded.

**Each sponsor providing cash support must submit all the following documents to prove financial responsibility. If all these documents are not received, your sponsor's support cannot 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.