Timeline from Document Issuance to Receipt of Student Visa (F1, J1)

May 13, 2009

I-20/DS-2019 Mailed
1-2 weeks

Student Receives I-20/DS-2019
1 day

Student Pays SEVIS Fee

Student Makes an Appointment/Pays Visa Processing Fee
2-6 weeks

Consulate Appointment
10 min-1 hr

Consulate Checks Documents
10 min-1 hr

Biometrics Taken
15 min-2 hr

Consular Interview
5-15 min

Further Processing

Security Advisory Opinion
3-120 days

Documents Required
1-2 days

Proof of Finances
1-5 days

Transcript
1-5 days

Research Information

End of Processing

Second Interview (if needed)

Visa Denied

Visa Approved
10-30 min

Student Pays Mailing Fee
2-5 days

Student Receives Visa

Total estimated time: 10 days* to 5 months**
Average time: 4-6 weeks

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* If the student scheduled their interview in advance, arranged for express delivery of their documents, has everything in order when the I-20 or DS-2019 arrives and is not subject to additional administrative processing.

** If the student has to wait for an interview date, needs to submit additional documents or is subject to a Security Advisory Opinion. Factors involved: wait times at Consulate/Embassy where they are applying, country of origin, field of study, additional documents needed to prove they are a bona-fide student, prior travel to countries on the State Sponsors of Terror list, etc.