

Immigration Orientation: Maintaining Your F-1 Status



International Services
University of South Florida

F-1 Immigration Documents

- Passport
 - Your passport must be valid at least 6 months into the future.
 - Most governments allow renewal with their embassy in the US.
- I-94 OR I-797 Approval Notice
 - This document shows how and when you got F-1 status either by entry into the US OR change of status to F-1.

F-1 Immigration Documents

- **Visa Stamp**
 - This is a travel document.
 - It allows travel into the US as an F-1 if you also have a valid, signed I-20.
- **I-20**
 - This is your proof of F-1 status.
 - It lists your current school, level, and major.
 - Do not lose this document!!

Care of Documents

- Be sure to keep all your immigration documents in a safe place.
- Report any theft immediately.
- Report any changes to International Services.
- If you travel and get new documents, bring to IS for copying.

I-20 Level and Major

- Your I-20 should always reflect your current level of study and major at USF.
- If you change your major, contact IS to have your I-20 updated.
- If you enter a new level, check with IS to be sure you have completed all USF procedures and to get a new I-20.

I-20 End Date

- The end date on your I-20 shows the date you are expected to end your academic program and graduate.
- If you do not graduate by the end date, you will need to apply for an 'extension' or new end date.
- If you graduate before the end date on the I-20, IS will shorten your end date to the graduation certification date.

Extension of I-20

- If you cannot complete your program before the end date on the I-20, you may extend for the following reasons:
 - You changed your major
 - You lost transfer credits
 - You had research delays
- You apply to extend by completing the Extension Form at IS.

Travel Outside the US

- If you travel outside of the US (including Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and a cruise), you must have the following:
 - Valid F-1 visa stamp in your passport.
 - Be in good academic standing at USF.
 - You cannot be dismissed or on final probation.
 - I-20 signed on page three for travel
 - Signatures are valid for one semester

Full-time Studies

- F-1 students are required to be enrolled for “full-time” every Fall & Spring semesters.
- “Full-time” is:
 - 12 credit hours for undergraduates
 - 9 credit hours for graduates
- You must be enrolled full-time for the entire semester.

Online Courses

- F-1 regulations allow students to take only 3 credit hours of online courses towards the full-time requirement for Fall or Spring semesters.
- *You will need to find alternate courses since there is no waiver or exception to this US rule.*

What if I drop a course and am below full-time?

- If you drop below full-time during Fall or Spring semester without approval from IS, you will be out of status and your I-20 will be terminated.
- This would make you illegally present in the US.
- Speak with an IS Advisor to discuss your options if you need to drop a course.

How can I get approval to drop below full-time?

- Complete the “Reduced Course Load” Form and check off your valid reason:
 - Cross enrollment at another SEVIS school
 - Final semester and you are graduating
 - First semester and you have difficulty with English or US academic procedures.
 - You have a medical excuse from a US doctor.
- You may NOT drop courses because you are getting a bad grade, failing the course, or because you do not like the course.

Withdrawing from School

- If you need to return home during Fall or Spring, you may ask IS for “Authorized Early Withdrawal”.
 - This allows you to come back at a later semester as an F-1.
 - It does not allow you to remain in the US.
- Reasons for a withdrawal include:
 - You can't be enrolled for Fall or Spring semester; OR
 - You have a personal emergency.

Change of Address

- International students must report any change of address within 10 days.
- You report your change of address by updating the mailing address field in OASIS.
- This update passes to our office electronically and we notify immigration of your change of address.

On Campus Employment

- You are allowed to work on-campus up to 20 hours per week during Fall and Spring semesters.
 - You may not work a combination of jobs that total more than 20 hours per week.
 - Working more than 20 hours per week is considered **ILLEGAL** employment and will result in your leaving the US.
- You may ask for permission from IS to work up to 40 hours per week during summer.

What is an on-campus job?

- On-campus jobs are any job that pay with a USF paycheck.
- Also considered on-campus are businesses that provide essential services to students, such as Aramark (Food Service) or Barnes & Nobles (Bookstore).
- Moffitt Cancer Center is not USF.

Do I need permission to accept on-campus employment?

- You do not need permission.
- If you do not have a Social Security Number (SSN), you will need to apply for one before you can work.
- To apply for an SSN, you need:
 - Letter of offer from employer
 - Letter from International Services

When can I go get my SSN?

- If you have the job offer and letter from IS, you may apply for the SSN:
 - 10 days following your arrival in the US
 - 48 hours after checking in with IS

Can I get an SSN without a job?

- No. You must have a job offer at USF to qualify for an SSN.
- Although the SSN is used for credit checks, it is not required to rent an apartment, open a bank account, or get a driver's license.

Off-Campus Employment

- After 1 year of studies in the US, F-1 students are eligible to apply for OPT: Optional Practical Training & CPT: Curricular Practical Training
- See workshops on website for information, eligibility requirements, & procedures.

Exit Grace Periods

- F-1 students are given 60 days to exit the U.S. after completing (graduating) a program of study.
- You may not re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status if you exit during grace period.

Adding Dependents

- You may request an F-2 I-20 for your spouse or children under the age of 21.
- To request the F-2 I-20, IS needs:
 - proof of marriage
 - biological page of their passport
 - additional finances \$5000 each



NSEERS

- The NSEERS program is special registration for some internationals.
- If you are subject to NSEERS, you received a “FIN number” when you entered the US.
- NSEERS students must follow special exit procedures explained in the NSEERS packet.
- If you have questions, come see an advisor.

Change of Level

- If you are accepted into a new level of study, you must obtain a new I-20 that shows the new level of study.
- If you move down a level, you should see IS to obtain the new I-20.



Transfer to another School

- If you are accepted to another school and decide to leave USF, you will need your SEVIS record “transferred” to the new school.
- To request a SEVIS transfer, you will need to complete a Transfer Out form and include a copy of acceptance letter.
- Transfers occur at the end of a term.

Advisor-on-Duty Hours at IS

- No appointment needed 15 minute meetings.
 - Tuesdays 9:00 – 11:00am
 - Thursdays 2:00 – 4:00pm
 - Fridays 2:00 – 4:00pm
- What to ask?
 - General questions
 - I-20 signature requests
 - Letters—enrollment, expense, invitation,

Other Services

- Ask questions by e-mail.
- Make an appointment 813-974-5102
- Drop off requests for letters, travel signatures, I-20 updates, extensions, or transfers to be processed in 5 days.
- Check our website for the latest information
www.global.usf.edu

Notices about Events!

- Join the [International Services Fan Page](#) on Facebook.
- All students are put on the email listserv. We send emails about upcoming events, workshops, and immigration updates.

Your Next Steps at USF

- Visit the Marshall Student Center to get your USF ID card.
 - For more information go to:
<http://it.usf.edu/services/usfcard>
- Activate your Net ID online at <http://it.usf.edu/services/netid> .
 - If you do not have an SSN, you need a special code. You must go in person to IT located on the 6th floor of the Library.

More Next Steps

- All international students must have health insurance. Students must submit a compliance form to Student Health Insurance.
 - For the forms and more information:
<http://www.shs.usf.edu/insurance/insurance-forms.aspx>
 - SHS is located next to the USF Bookstore. For location on map:
http://www.shs.usf.edu/userfiles/files/Visitor_Map_2008-09.pdf

More Next Steps

- Register for Courses before the end of the first week of school!
- Take the Bull Runner Shuttle Bus and/or the public bus. It's free with USF ID.
 - http://usfweb2.usf.edu/parking_services/bullrunner.asp
 - http://usfweb2.usf.edu/parking_services/transportchoices.asp

Check-in Completion

- To complete your check-in process please go to <http://global.usf.edu/iss/CheckinF1.php> and follow the online instructions.