

## Maintaining Your F-1 Status

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As international students, most of you come to the U.S. with an F-1 student visa, marked either a single entry or multiple entries to the U.S. You are admitted to the U.S. for a limited period of time known as duration of stay (D/S). In some cases, a visa is valid by the time an intended program is completed, but sometimes it is good only for one or more years. If you leave the U.S. after the visa has expired, you must obtain a new visa to return. Note that this visa is only required when you enter the U.S. from another country; it does not determine your period of stay in America. It is legal for you to remain in the U.S. after your visa has expired. However, you must renew it if you leave the U.S. and wish to return in F-1 status.

While studying in the United States, it is important to maintain your F-1 student status. YOUR VISA IS GIVEN TO YOU ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF STUDYING IN THE U.S., THUS YOU SHOULD NOT CONSIDER ANY ACTION THAT DETRACTS FROM THAT PURPOSE.

### To Maintain F-1 Status, You Must:

1. **Maintain a passport that is valid at least 60 days** after the intended program's end date.
2. **Make sure your I-20 is updated:**
  - I-20 form indicates the period of time required to complete your program. You'll need to extend your I-20 **Form 60 days prior to the expiration date** if you are not able to graduate or transfer out within that time period. Please contact International Student Program (ISP) personnel TWO months before the expiration of your I-20 in order to process an extension.
3. Enroll at the school **full time (12 units)** you are authorized to attend.
4. Remain in the United States for **no longer than 60 days after completing** the full course of study, unless:
  - Prior to that time you have followed procedures for applying for practical training, moving educational levels, or school transfer.
5. **Report a change of address or phone** to ISP via email: [international@evc.edu](mailto:international@evc.edu)
6. **Report a change in your legal name** or dependent's legal name via email to ISP within 10 days of this action occurring.
7. **Do Not work without authorization**
  - All off-campus employment requires some form of documented authorization issued by ISP. Employment (both on and off campus combined) is restricted to 20 hours per week or less) while school is in session, but can be full-time during the break periods.
8. **Register for a full-time course load**, which is defined as follows:
  - AS: Associate of Sciences
  - AA: Associate of Arts
  - You are required to be a full-time registered student during each of the academic

terms (Fall and Spring semesters). You are not required to be a registered student during the break periods (i.e., summer or winter break).

- **If for some reason you are unable to register for a full---time (12 units) course load, or will be dropping classes that would bring you below the minimum units required, please contact ISP as soon as possible** to discuss your situation.
- **Exception to requirement for full---time enrollment during the academic terms:** If in your last academic semester you require less than the minimum units in order to graduate, you are not required to register for more units than needed for graduation. If you decide to take less than the minimum units to graduate in your last quarter, you do need to contact ISP.

**Very Important:** Please note that a student who drops below a full course of study without the prior approval of the Designated School Official (DSO) or (Alternate) Responsible Officer ((A)RO) will be considered out of status. The importance of notifying the DSO/(A)RO and obtaining permission for withdrawal from classes cannot be overemphasized. All F-1 students contemplating a reduced course load MUST see an advisor in ISP BEFORE doing so. Federal immigration regulations severely limit a student's ability to be less than full time and may **only** be possible under specific circumstances. If a student has any special circumstances, always seek the advice of one of the International Student Counselors on the maintenance of F-1 status immediately.

## Failure to Maintain Status

Failure to maintain status can affect you in a variety of ways. The first is that you would be technically out of status in the U.S. and, while very unlikely, **you could be asked by U.S. Immigration Service and Customs Enforcement (USICE) to leave the United States**. More likely, being out of status (violating your immigration service status) will cause problems for you in participating in the benefits of your immigration service status (e.g., employment) or making later changes in your plans in the U.S. (e.g., applying to change your immigration service status or transferring schools). **Once out of status, you can only be reinstated back to the active status through USCIS**. Therefore, it is imperative that you are aware of what is required of you to maintain a legal immigration service status in the U.S.

## Resources for Maintaining Status

**U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement** (ICE): ICE provides oversight and enforcement of the SEVIS program as well as the regulations governing international student status and benefits.

**U.S. Department of State:** The Department of State website contains useful information about studying in the U.S. as well as applying for a visa.

**Homeland Security:** Homeland Security's webpage "Study in the States" lists information on how to maintain visa status at different stages of your stay in the U.S.