

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR SERVICES

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## **SUMMARY OF THE F-1 STUDENT VISA REGULATIONS**

As an F-1 student, you are responsible for learning, understanding, and following the U.S. federal laws and regulations governing your visa. This summary is an overview of the *basic* regulations. More information on these rules can be found on our website, or by making an appointment with your ISSS advisor.

**CHECK IN:** All international students must check in on the ISSS website when they arrive in the U.S. to start a new program. See <http://issu.uconn.edu> > Check In.

**FORM I-20:** Your Form I-20 must list correct information about you and your academic program. Don't lose or throw away your Form I-20 (even old ones) because you must keep this form throughout your stay in the U.S. If the information on your Form I-20 changes, ask for a new one from ISSS. You will also need this form any time you travel or renew your visa.

**PASSPORT VALIDITY:** Keep your passport valid! Your passport expiration date must be at least 6 months into the future. If you get a new passport, remember to bring a copy to ISSS.

**ENTRY STAMP AND I-94 RECORD:** Each time you enter the U.S. with your F-1 visa, your entry should be recorded in two places. Make sure that you were admitted correctly in both records. Your entry is first recorded when immigration stamps your passport upon arrival. The stamp should list your date of entry, visa type at entry (F-1 or F-2 for your dependents) and your length of stay (D/S – more on this below). The second place your entry is recorded is online, through the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website. Go to <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/> to print your "I-94" arrival record. This information should also list your arrival date, visa type, and length of stay (D/S). If you entered through a land border, instead of having an online record you are given a little white card in your passport that says "I-94". *Every time you enter the U.S., you must check both places (your passport and your I-94) to make sure you were admitted correctly and bring a copy of your I-94 to ISSS.*

**LENGTH OF STAY AND 60 DAY GRACE PERIOD:** International students are granted a period of stay of "D/S", which means Duration of Status. Duration of Status means you can stay as long as you need to finish your degree, as long as you are following all of the F-1 visa rules. Once you finish your program, you may remain in the U.S. for up to 60 days. This is called your "Grace Period" and it's a time you can use to prepare for departure, travel within the U.S., transfer to another school or program, or apply to be here on a different visa type, if you are eligible. If you leave or finish your program before the program end date listed on your Form I-20, you must tell ISSS, and your Form I-20 must be updated with this information. If you withdraw from your program, or if you violate the F-1 visa rules, then you may not be eligible for the 60 day grace period.

**VISA:** The F-1 visa stamp is issued for travel to the U.S. After you have arrived, you do not have to keep a valid F-1 visa in your passport, as it is only needed for *entry* to the U.S. If you leave the U.S. with an expired visa, you will need to renew the visa to reenter. Your visa cannot be renewed within the U.S.

**REPORT YOUR ADDRESS:** You must update ISSS with your U.S. address when you arrive, and within 10 days of any move (even if you are staying somewhere temporarily). To report your address, log in to StudentAdmin and update the "Current Local" address field. This address must be where you are residing, not a P.O. Box or your academic department address. You must also keep your "Home Country" address current in StudentAdmin.  
<http://issu.uconn.edu/students/current-students/current-students-update-your-address/>

**STUDY RULES:**

- **Complete your program by the program end date listed on your Form I-20.** If, due to unexpected reasons, you cannot finish your program by this date, you must apply for an extension of your Form I-20 at least one month before the end date. After the program end date, we cannot extend your Form I-20. In order to extend your Form I-20, you must meet certain requirements, so if you think you may not complete by your I-20 end date, then you should make an appointment with your ISSS international advisor well in advance of the program end date to see if you are eligible for the I-20 extension.
- **Take full time classes toward your degree every semester.** If it is your final semester and you need fewer classes to graduate you don't have to register full-time, but you DO need to get permission from ISSS before the start of the semester.
- **Only ONE online course each semester can count toward your minimum required credits.**
- **Minimum credits each required each semester:**

Undergraduate	12 credits	JD	12 credits
Graduate with G.A.	6 credits	Exchange/Nondegree-Grad	9 credits
Graduate NO G.A.	9 credits	Exchange/Nondegree-Undergrad	12 credits
LLM/SJD	9 credits	UCAELI/ESL	22 Hours/Week
- If you have problems keeping up with the full time course load, talk to your ISSS advisor right away. You may be eligible to take fewer classes if you meet one of the following conditions:
  - If you are in your first year of study, and you are having difficulties due to English language, reading requirements or unfamiliarity with the U.S. academic culture
  - If you were placed in an inappropriate course for your level of study
  - If you have medical reasons that prevent you from studying full time
  - **Before you drop any courses below the minimum required credits, you MUST have permission from ISSS.** Otherwise you will be in violation of your F-1 student visa.

**TRANSFERRING TO A DIFFERENT SCHOOL:** If you intend to study at a school other than UConn, you must follow procedures to transfer your SEVIS record to your new school to keep your F-1 visa status valid. Always notify your ISSS advisor of your study plans and to check if you are eligible for the SEVIS transfer.

**TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE U.S.:** If you leave the U.S. during your program to go home or visit another country, you must make sure your current Form I-20 has a travel signature from an ISSS advisor that was signed within the last 12 months in order for you to return. Check the travel signature section on page 2 of your I-20 for the travel signature. **Request your travel signature from ISSS at least 2 weeks before you will leave (except for emergencies) or you may not get it in time for departure.** You must also have an unexpired visa to return from most countries. See <http://iss.uconn.edu> > International Students > Current Students > Travel Requirements for more information.

**WORKING:** You may work in on-campus positions with UConn as the employer. During the academic semester, you may work up to 20 hours per week, and during your vacation term, you may work more than 20 hours per week. International students may **apply for authorization** from ISSS and from the U.S. government to work in off-campus positions that are related to their major, or in times of unexpected economic hardship. **Working off-campus without ISSS or government authorization, or working more than the allowed hours per week, is a severe violation of the F-1 student visa rules and will result in losing your legal status.**

**F-2 DEPENDENTS:** Your spouse or children up until age 21 are eligible for F-2 visa status to stay here with you while you study. If you end your F-1 program, your F-2 dependent's status will also end. F-2 visa holders may enroll in local elementary and high schools (secondary school). Study at the University level or in other programs, like English language programs, is only permitted as part-time students. F-2 visa holders may not work.

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **UConn ID #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_