

## **F-1 IMMIGRATION RESPONSIBILITIES**

As an international student, you have an obligation to comply with the immigration laws and regulations of the United States. It is illegal to violate U.S. federal immigration laws and regulations for any reason whatsoever. Being a student with F-1 status, you are responsible for learning, understanding, and complying with the U.S. laws and regulations that apply to you. If you fail to do so, you could be deported from the United States and barred from returning for an extended period of time, thereby jeopardizing your academic career. It is extremely important that you read and fully understand the following information.

### **Arrive and Depart the U.S. within Appropriate Timeframes**

U.S. federal regulations [8CFR214.2(f)(5)(i)] stipulate that students may enter the United States no earlier than 30 days before the report date on the Form I-20. An F-1 student who has completed his or her academic program will be allowed a 60-day period to prepare for departure from the United States. An F-1 student who has been authorized to withdraw from classes prior to completing his or her academic program is allowed a 15-day period to prepare for departure. Students who withdraw without the prior approval of the international student advisor must depart the U.S. immediately [8CFR214.2(f)(5)(iv)].

### **Report Address or Name Changes**

U.S. federal regulations [8CFR214.2(f)(17)] require you to report any address or name change to the International Student Advisor at TCC within 5 days of the address change directly to the international student advisor. This includes address changes of any of your dependents as well. To notify the ISA of your name or address change, complete a TCC STUDENT DATA CHANGE FORM and submit to ISS.

### **Enroll in a Full Course of Study (Full-Time) and Attend Classes Regularly**

U.S. federal regulations [8CFR214.2(f)(6)] require you to pursue a full course of study consisting of at least 12 credit hours at TCC and a final grade other than “W” or “X”. Students who are admitted for English Language Study must be enrolled in 12 credit hours of ESL each semester. Students who are admitted for Curricular Studies must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours each semester and attend classes regularly. You are allowed to deviate from this full course of study only with PRIOR authorization of the international student advisor, and only under very limited circumstances. Students who stop attending classes regularly are subject to being withdrawn from the class by the instructor and assigned a grade of “W.” Audited classes do not count towards full-time enrollment.

### **Limit Online/Distance Education**

F-1 students must limit enrollment in classes for credit to no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per semester if taken on-line or through distance education in a course that does not require the student’s physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion to the class. No on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward classroom hours or credit for ESL students. [8CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G)]

### **DO NOT WORK WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION**

A student may be authorized for off-campus employment under certain circumstances: Any off-campus employment must be recommended in SEVIS by the DSO, or be adjudicated and approved by USCIS, which issues an EAD card evidencing the employment authorization. A student cannot begin the off-campus employment until he or she receives authorization either from the DSO or from USCIS. [8 CFR [214.2\(f\)\(9\)\(ii\)](#) - [\(iii\)](#)]

### **Report Early Departure Date and Reason**

For a variety of reasons, students may leave school early or unexpectedly. Some of these reasons include early graduation, leave of absence, suspension, or expulsion. U.S. federal regulations [8CFR214.3(g)(3)] require you to inform the international student advisor if you plan to leave the school earlier than the program end date listed on your Form I-20, and your reason for doing so.

### **Request Extension Prior to Program Completion**

You must pay close attention to the program completion date indicated on your I-20. Your F-1 status will end on the program completion date unless extended by the international student advisor. In order to qualify for a program extension, you are required by U.S. federal regulations [8CFR214.2(f)(7)(iii)] to make request before your program completion date; program extensions can be requested at any time during your academic program.

### **Adhere to Transfer Procedures**

For immigration purposes, transfer simply means that a student is leaving one school’s “I-20 program” for another school’s “I-20 program”. This can happen, for example, when a student completes his or her academic program and then goes on to an undergraduate or graduate program at a U.S.-based college or university. Students who wish to transfer must be in contact with

two schools: the current school and the new “transfer” school. Both of these schools must be authorized to enroll international students by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. To transfer, regulations [8CFR214.2(f)(8)(ii)(C)] require that you:

- Apply for admission and be admitted to the new “transfer” school;
- Inform your current school as soon as possible after admission and, no later than the last day of your academic program;
- Inform the new transfer school of the expected transfer date (usually the last day of your academic program); and,
- Complete the process at the transfer school no later than 15 days after the first class day at the school.

Careful attention to the last date of the academic program at the current school and the first day of classes at the transfer school is very important; failure to complete the transfer process in the prescribed timeframe [8CFR214.2(f)(8)(i)] will cause you to violate your immigration status.

### **F2 Dependent Requirements**

F-1 students are eligible to bring dependents (spouses and children under the age of 21) into the U.S. in F-2 status. F-2 dependents may not enroll in a full course of study, but may enroll part-time in courses that are avocational or recreational in nature [8CFR214.2(f)(15)(ii)]. F-2 dependent children are allowed to attend elementary and secondary school on a full-time basis. F-2 dependents who are currently enrolled full-time must submit a change of status to F-1 on or before March 11, 2003. F-2 dependents are not permitted to work [8CFR214.2(f)(15)(i)].

### **Passport Validity**

F-1 students must maintain valid passports at least 6 months into the future for the duration of their study at TCC and in the U.S.

### **School Reporting Requirements**

U.S. federal regulations [8CFR214.3(g)(3)(ii)] require the international student advisor to report through SEVIS within 21 days of occurrence the following events:

- A student who has failed to maintain status or complete his or her degree program,
- A change of the student or dependent’s legal name or U.S. address,
- Any student who has graduated early or prior to the program end date listed on SEVIS Form I-20,
- Any disciplinary action taken by the school against the student as a result of the student being convicted of a crime; and,
- Any other notification request made by SEVIS with regard to the current status of the student.

In addition, federal regulations [8CFR214.3(g)(3)(iii)] stipulate that every term and no later than 30 days after the deadline for registering for classes, all schools must report through SEVIS the following information:

- Whether the student has enrolled at the school, dropped below a full course of study without prior authorization of the DSO, or failed to enroll;
- The current address of each enrolled student; and,
- The start date of the student’s next session, term or semester.

### **TCC Health Insurance Requirements**

All F1 students enrolled at Tidewater Community College are required to carry continuous health insurance for themselves and their dependents in F2 status as a condition of their standing at TCC. Documentary evidence of your continuous insurance coverage for the entire semester that meets the minimum standards set by the International Student Services office must be submitted to ISS no later than the last day to drop/add courses. Evidence of continuous health insurance for yourself and your dependents must be submitted each and every semester that you continue your studies at TCC. Failure to maintain health insurance policy will prevent you from registering for courses, obtaining a refund or requesting transcripts.

I have read and understand this information, and I knowingly accept full responsibility for maintaining my status as an international student during the duration of my studies.

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**Student Signature**

**Print Name**

**Date**

SEVIS was established as part of ICE's objective to restore integrity to the immigration system. By more effectively managing status information on international students and exchange visitors in the United States, SEVIS plays a key role in ICE's homeland security mission while ensuring that all eligible international students and exchange visitors can experience the benefits of America's exceptional schools, educational programs, and cultural opportunities.

SEVIS's ongoing improvements begin with your comments and suggestions. Please contact the SEVP office with your concerns and feedback.

*By email:* SEVIS.Source@dhs.gov

*By phone:* 1.800.892.4829 for the SEVIS Help Desk

*By mail:* ICE/SEVP  
800 K. Street, NW  
Suite 1000  
Washington, D.C. 20536



[www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov)

SEVIS Help Desk  
1-800-892-4829



**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**

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# SEVIS Fact Sheet

Maintaining Your Immigration Status  
While A Student Or Exchange Visitor



**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**



*The United States welcomes international students and exchange visitors who come to study in our nation. While you're enjoying your time in America, it is very important that you understand and comply with the requirements governing your stay to ensure that you don't jeopardize your immigration status.*

By maintaining immigration status and keeping school administrators and sponsoring officials well informed, students and exchange visitors residing in America have the opportunity to benefit from the outstanding academic and cultural programs of the United States.

Failing to maintain your status could result in serious consequences and may affect your ability to remain in or return to the United States. If you're an international student or exchange visitor studying in the United States, know your responsibilities.

## Register With The Student And Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

SEVIS is the computerized system that collects and maintains information on the current status of non-immigrant students, exchange visitors, and their dependents during their stay in the United States.

Work with your designated school officials or exchange visitor responsible officers to ensure that your data in SEVIS is accurate and updated. In addition, these officials can help you better understand the requirements governing your immigration status and help you avoid making choices that might jeopardize your status.

## Understand The Importance Of Maintaining Your Status

It's important for students and exchange visitors to understand the concept of immigration status and the consequences of violating that status. Being aware of the requirements and possible consequences will make it more likely that you can avoid problems with maintaining your status.

Every visa is issued for a particular purpose and for a specific class of visitor. Each visa classification has a set of requirements that the visa holder must follow and maintain. Those who follow the requirements maintain their status and ensure their ability to remain in the United States. Those who do not follow the requirements violate their status and are considered "out of status."

Failure to maintain status can result in arrest, and violators may be required to leave the United States. Violation of status also can affect the prospect of readmission to the United States for a period of time. Most people who violate the terms of their status are barred from lawfully returning to the United States for years.

## Recognize And Avoid Status Violations

By violating the requirements that govern your immigration status, you may jeopardize your ability to remain in the United States as a student or exchange visitor. Examples of violations include the following:

- Failure to enroll by the date specified by your school or exchange visitor program.
- Unauthorized employment during your stay.
- Failure to leave the United States following completion of your course, exchange visitor program, or program-related employment.
- For academic students (visa category F-1): Failure to maintain a full course load without prior authorization for a reduction from your designated school official.

Please note that this is not a complete listing of potential status violations. Check with your designated school official or exchange visitor responsible officer for more information.

**Note:** Non-immigrant students or exchange visitors who fall out of status for reasons beyond their control may be eligible to apply for a reinstatement of status. The student or exchange visitor must work with the school or program official to determine if reinstatement is an option.