

MAINTAINING YOUR F-1 IMMIGRATION STATUS

To maintain your legal status in the United States as an F1 student, you must remember these important requirements.

- 1) **Report to Student Services** no more that 7 days from your arrival in the USA and defiantly no more than 30 days after start date of I-20
- 2) **Always enroll FULL-TIME during the academic year. Full-time is 12 units or more for Undergraduate; 8 for Graduate.**
- 3) **Update your local address within 10 days of moving.**
- 4) **Keep your immigration documents VALID and CURENT:**
 - a) KEEP YOUR PASSPORT VALID
 - b) Apply for an EXTENSION at Student Services BEFORE the “completion of studies” date in item 5 of your I-20
 - c) Be sure your I-20 states the correct degree program and level in item 4.
- 5) **If you plan to transfer to another school, come in to Student Services to discuss the immigration status transfer.**
- 6) **Notify Student Services of a new degree program no later than 60 days after graduating.**
- 7) **NEVER work off-campus without PRIOR authorization.**
- 8) **Notify Student Services when you leave the U.S. or change visa status.**
- 9) If you TRAVEL outside the United States, **be SURE to have the proper re-entry documents.**
1. **Report to Student Services no more than 7 days after entering the country and definitely no more than 30 days after start date of I-20.**

It is REQUIRED that you come to Student Services no more than 7 days after you enter the country if you are a new student and definitely no more than 30 days after the start date of your I-20 (listed in Item 5 of your I-20) if you are entering the U.S. to begin a program of study. If you are transferring your immigration status to Pacific Union College from another U.S. institution, we will then register you in the SEVIS database and complete the transfer process when you check in.
2. **Always Enroll Full Time.**

F-1 student must maintain full-time student status every semester. For undergraduate students, full time is at least 12 credits each quarter; as a graduate student you must be registered for at least 8 units. There are some rare exceptions

to this regulation; however, please talk to the Student Services' staff BEFORE you drop below full time enrollment or take a leave of absence.

3. Update your Local Address.

You must do this by updating your local address Self-Serve AND notifying Student Services. You are required to use a physical residential address and not a PO Box or a Pacific Union College department address.

4. Keep your Immigration Documents VALID and CURRENT.

You should make photocopies of your immigration documents and keep the copies and originals in a safe place. Photocopy:

- The passport pages with your personal information and picture
- The passport page containing the U.S. visa stamp
- Both sides of your I-94 Form
- Your I-20, pages 1-3

a) Keep your passport valid.

You should keep your passport valid while you are studying in the U.S. Consult your country's consulate or embassy in the U.S. to renew your passport. You can find the contact information for your consulate at: <http://travel.state.gov>.

b) F-1 Extension

The end date of your immigration status is written on your I-20 as the "completion of studies" date, in item #5 (not the end date of your visa stamp). * If you are unable to complete your course of study by that time, you must apply for an extension BEFORE the I-20 completion date. If you do not complete the extension before that date, you will be out of status. Pick up an F-1 Program Extension packet from Student Services to begin the process.

c) Change of Degree Program or Level

If you are changing degree levels or programs within Pacific Union College, you must apply at Student Services for a new I-20.

5. Discuss Transfer Plans with a Student Services Advisor.

If you plan to transfer to another school, Student Services will need to complete the immigration transfer procedure. Discuss your plans at Student Services.

6. Notify Student Services of a new degree program no later than 60 days after graduating.

If you plan to go on to another program of study after graduating from Pacific Union College, either at Pacific Union College or at another school, you MUST contact Student Services and complete the appropriate immigration procedures NO LATER THAN 60 DAYS after graduating from the first degree.

7. Never Work Off-campus Without Prior Authorization.

Employment opportunities for international students in the U.S. are restricted by law and fall into types of employment:

- **On Campus Employment:** Enrolled F-1 students are permitted to work on campus for 20 hours per week during the academic year and 40 hours a week during summer and winter breaks.
- **Off Campus Employment:** Off campus employment is any type of work or services performed in exchange for money tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, food or any other benefit that is not on the Pacific Union College campus. A work permit is required BEFORE any off-campus work is allowed. See the staff in Student Services for advice and assistance.

8. Notify Student Services When You Leave the U.S. or Change Visa Status.

When you finish your program and leave the U.S. permanently or you change to another visa status (for instance if an employer plans to do an H1B visa application for you after you graduate or finish your OPT), come to Student Services or email us to notify us of your plans.

9. Traveling outside the United States/ Re-entering the U.S. after a Temporary Absence.

To re-enter the U.S., you need to have the following documents:

- Valid passport (except Canadians unless entering from outside the Western Hemisphere)
- Valid F-1 or F-2 visa stamp (except Canadians)
- Current I-20 with a valid signature (see I-20 Endorsement)
- Proof of financial support (bank statements and/or scholarship, financial aid or TA/RA letter)
- Proof of enrollment (certificate of enrollment from the Student Services' website)

Traveling to Canada

Before traveling to Canada, come to Student Services to check visa requirements and to pick up a Canadian visitor visa application if one is required (or on the web at <http://cicnet.ci.gc.ca>). You can re-enter the U.S. from Canada with an expired U.S. Visa stamp if ALL of the following apply to you:

- You have a valid passport with an expired non-immigrant visa stamp, a valid I-20 or DS-2019, and entering Canada
- You do NOT apply for a U.S. visa stamp while in Canada
- Your visit to Canada will be less than 30 days
- You do NOT apply for a U.S. stamp while in Canada
- You are NOT a national of one of the following countries: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Cuba, or North Korea.

Renewing Your Visa Stamp

If you or your dependents need to renew your visa stamps in order to re-enter the U.S. you will need to contact your embassy or consulate abroad. Applicants are normally required to submit the following documentation:

- Valid passport
- Current passport-size photographs
- Valid Form I-20 (complete three page form)
- Proof of financial support (bank statements and/or scholarship, financial aid or TA/RA letter)
- Proof of enrollment (certificate of enrollment from the Student Services' website)

I-20 Endorsement

You need to have a valid signature from the Student Services staff on your I-20 in order to re-enter the U.S. The signature is valid for 12 months.

I-20 Endorsement for Canadians or students on OPT

Canadian and students on Optional Practical Training need a signature from Student Services staff within the last six months to be valid for re-entry to the U.S.

F-2 Dependents

The Spouse or child of an F-1 student enters the U.S. in F-2 status. Any student wishing to bring a spouse and/or child to the U.S. should visit Student Services to have the necessary documents prepared. People in F-2 status are not eligible for employment and may not enroll in a course of study. For traveling and re-entering the U.S., F-2 dependents need all the same documents as the F-1 would need as outlined above including an I-20 that is produced with the F-2's biographical information.

**Notes on Visa Stamps and Immigration Status

Visa Stamp

The visa stamp in your passport was obtained at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad and is used for entering the U.S. The visa stamp functions as a key to enter the U.S. Once you are here in the U.S., you do not need to keep your visa stamp current. It is only when you are leaving the U.S. and need to return that you must be sure that you have a valid U.S. visa stamp to re-enter the U.S. [Note: Canadian citizens are not required to have a passport (if entering the U.S. from within the Western hemisphere) or a visa stamp, but they must show their I-20 and proof of Canadian citizenship at the U.S. port of entry.

Immigration Status

Immigration status is granted at the U.S. port of entry. Most of you have an F-1 student status. In most situations your visa type and immigration status are the same unless you have changed your immigration status after entering the U.S. For instance, some F-1 students have changed their status to F-2 (the dependent of F-1) or to another temporary immigration status. To maintain your legal status in the U.S., check your I-20 (not the visa stamp in your passport). For F-1 students, the "completion of studies" date under item 5 on your I-20 Form is the end date of your immigration status.