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## MAINTAINING YOUR F-1 STATUS

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Since United States immigration laws and regulations are constantly changing and penalties for non-compliance are becoming more severe, it is critical that international students in F-1 visa classification maintain their legal status in the United States. F-1 students should be aware of and comply fully with the following compliance requirements set forth by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS):

- ☑ You must maintain a valid passport at all times unless exempt from passport requirements.
  
- ☑ You must attend the college/university listed on the current I-20.
  
- ☑ You must complete an official immigration transfer whenever changing educational institutions. As an F-1 student this includes notifying your current institution of your intent to transfer, obtaining an I-20 from the new institution, and reporting to the DSO at the new school within 15 days of the program start date listed on the I-20. To notify FGCU of your intent to transfer out, you need to complete a “*Transfer Out Request*” and “*Visa Clearance*” form and submit proof of admission at a new school.
  
- ☑ You must enroll for and complete a full course of study during the fall & spring semesters. If you will not be enrolled full-time (9 credits for graduate students; 12 credits for undergraduates), you must receive authorization/permission from International Services (ISO) **in advance**. To request authorization, you and your academic advisor must complete the “*Reduced Course Load Request for F-1 Students*” form and submit to International Services prior to registering for less than a full course load or prior to dropping below a full course load.
  
- ☑ If you cannot complete your program by the date listed on your I-20, you must apply for an extension of your program of study **prior** to the expiration date on your I-20. To request an extension, complete the “*Program Extension Request for F-1 Students*” form. Requests for extensions may be submitted up to 60 days prior to the expiration date of the I-20.
  
- ☑ You must obtain a new I-20 **before** beginning a new academic program at a new level (e.g., from Bachelor’s to Master’s level, or Master’s to Doctorate) or at a new college (e.g., from the College of Business to the College of Education). International Services will produce a new I-20 during the admission process. Graduate students who change programs that do not require a new application should speak with International Services prior to making the program change. International Services will issue undergraduate students a new I-20 after a change of major is updated in the Banner system and SEVIS.
  
- ☑ You must report any change of address or residence to International Services within 10 days of the change. International Services will then electronically notify DHS of the change via SEVIS within 21 days as required by the regulations.

☒ You are **NOT** allowed to work in the United States *without authorization*. *With* authorization, F-1 students are allowed to work on-campus up to 20 hours per week *when school is in session*. Please see the International Services website for more information about off-campus work authorization in the form of economic hardship, curricular practical training and optional practical training. Students are cautioned to obtain off-campus work permission *prior* to accepting an off-campus internship. Students are not eligible for off-campus work permission until they have completed one year of F-1 status.

☒ Remember to have International Services sign your I-20 prior to traveling outside the United States. To request a signature, please come with your current I-20 to International Services *at least* 5 days prior to the anticipated departure date.

☒ If you wish to bring any accompanying dependents (spouse or children) to the United States in F-2 status, you should meet with an International Services advisor to obtain a dependent I-20. You will need to provide biographical information (e.g., full name, address, country of birth, etc.), immigration information (e.g., passport information, visa information, etc.) and proof of additional funding in the amount of \$5,000 per dependent.

☒ If you are subject to the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), you must comply with all requirements. Comprehensive information regarding the NSEERS program is available at the Department of Homeland Security's website - <http://www.ice.gov/pi/specialregistration/index.htm>.

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**IMPORTANT NOTE:** This information is not exhaustive and is subject to change without notice. International students should contact International Services at 239-590-7925 to arrange an appointment to discuss any questions or concerns related to legal status in the United States.

To remain up-to-date on changes in United States immigration law and/or changes in International Services policies and/or procedures; to be informed about events, workshops and sessions offered by International Services; and much more; please check out announcements, bulletins and information sessions posted at: [www.fgcu.edu/international](http://www.fgcu.edu/international).

The International Services website is also an important resource for important information regarding your stay in the United States. To access the site, go to [www.fgcu.edu/international](http://www.fgcu.edu/international).

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***I have read the information above about maintaining my legal status in the United States and understand that I must comply fully with these regulations in order to remain in legal status. I further understand that this information is not exhaustive and that I should direct any additional questions or concerns about my legal status to a professional in International Services Reed Hall 122, telephone number 239-590-7925.***

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_