

International Students Fast Fact Sheet

Failure to comply with the following will cause you to be placed in “out of status” (make your stay in the U.S. illegal)

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.

1. Make sure your I-20 issued by SwCC was “activated” by the Border Patrol officer when you entered the US. Your I-20 should state the date of entry, your status (F-1), and D/S (duration of status). The I-20 indicates your status as an F-1 nonimmigrant here for the sole purpose of full-time study.
2. Make sure your passport is always valid. It must be valid at least six months in advance anytime you re-enter the US. Contact your nearest consulate or embassy for passport renewal questions.
3. Always have an I-94 card that is marked F-1 and D/S. Upon entry to the US, the border patrol officer processes the I-94 (arrival/departure record) and returns part of the small white card to you. You should keep this with your passport at all times.
4. Attend required orientation / registration meetings on the specified date at the beginning of each new semester. You will not be registered in SEVIS OR at Southwestern Christian College without physically appearing to the DSO and completing the registration data sheet.
5. Make sure all information on your I-20 remains correct. If anything changes, you are responsible for notifying the DSO within 21 days of the change (changes include name, US address, citizenship, major, source/amount of funds).
6. Make sure you contact the DSO if you will complete your program *earlier or later* than the program end date listed on your I-20. If you need longer to complete the program, you must visit the DSO at least one month before the completion date listed to apply for an extension.
7. Register for and remain enrolled in at least 12 credit hours every semester. You must be enrolled as a full-time student every semester; one exception is the semester you graduate, for which you must apply in advance to drop below a full course load. See DSO for other exceptions based on illness or specific academic difficulties.
8. DO NOT GET SUSPENDED OR EXPELLED
9. DO NOT WORK OFF CAMPUS under any circumstances without legal authorization. Any off-campus work must be applied for in advance and then authorized by the DSO and the Department of Homeland Security. Engaging in unauthorized employment will not only put you “out of status” but may also lead to other serious consequences, including deportation.
10. Contact the DSO *before* you transfer to another school or take a leave of absence.
11. On-campus work must be limited to 20 hours per week except during official school breaks.
12. After completion of your program, you have a 60-day grace period during which you may

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- * remain in the US to prepare for departure
- * transfer to another school or degree program
- * apply for a change of status
- * *NOT* travel outside the US and re-enter using your I-20 from LC
- * *NOT* be employed (unless OPT has already been authorized)

13. A student who has failed to maintain status may apply to be reinstated to lawful F-1 status (to be decided by USCIS based on sufficient evidence). Consult with the DSO if you require reinstatement.

14. In order to re-enter the US after a temporary absence, you need a valid passport (good for at least 6 more months), a valid, unexpired, multiple-entry F-1 visa, and a valid I-20 with a current DSO travel signature. When traveling to Mexico, Canada, or Caribbean islands for less than 30 days, do NOT give up your I-94 card at the departure port. Your visa will be automatically revalidated upon return.

15. If you have children or a spouse accompanying you (those in F-2 status), their requirements are as follows: maintain separate I-20's (their Duration of Status is same as yours); may travel abroad and re-enter without you but must obtain travel signature from DSO; must have health insurance; may NOT be employed within the US; may NOT enroll in a degree program; may enroll in part-time study for recreational, non-credit purposes only (i.e. continuing education classes, lessons, hobbies, etc.).

16. Always read emails and notices from the DSO to ensure you are up-to-date on federal regulations and campus policies regarding international students. It is your responsibility to maintain status, and you will be held accountable.

FAQ for F-Nonimmigrant's: Traveling - Entry and Exit

- Students should consult their Designated School Official (DSO) prior to traveling. Your DSO generally works in the International Student Office. You must have a current SEVIS Form I-20 endorsed for travel and your DSO needs to be able to verify that your SEVIS record is accurate and up-to-date.
- **What are the basic requirements for an F-1 to reenter the United States after traveling abroad on pleasure or personal business?**
 - A SEVIS Form I-20, endorsed for travel and signed by your DSO
 - You have been out of the United States for less than five months
 - A current passport valid for at least six months after the date of your reentry or, if you are from one of the countries listed below, a passport that is current through the date of entry
 - A valid, current visa or you traveled to contiguous country or adjacent island for less than thirty days
 - Financial information showing proof of necessary funds to cover tuition and living expenses

Bringing your most recent I-94, Departure Card, will facilitate your reentry, if reentering through a land POE. If you are flying, the airline

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will collect your I-94 prior to departure and you will complete a new one upon reentry.

Social Security Numbers

- Social Security numbers are **only** assigned to people who are authorized to work in the United States. Social Security numbers are used to report your wages to the government and to determine eligibility for Social Security benefits. Social Security **will not** assign you a number just to enroll in a college or school or because you think you need one.
- Please see your schools designated official for further questions

Other Important Documents and Forms (may be read and viewed at www.swcc.edu)

- Application for New I-20
- F-1 Student Update Form
- F-1 Travel and Re-entry Issues
- F-1 Student registration Data Sheet
- F-1 Student transfer-out instructions and form
- SwCC International Student Statement of Finances
- SwCC Application for Reduced Course Load (RCL)
- SwCC Application for I-20 Extension of Program
- Regulations for employment for F-1 Students
- Social Security Information (specific detailed information)
- Canadian Student Information