

Students authorized to study in the United States using an F-1 visa must abide by the rules and obligations associated with maintaining status as an F-1 visa student at all times. Violations of such rules could lead to immediate termination of the F-1 visa, the student's authorized stay in the United States, and the student ability to continue his/her studies at Eastern Florida State College.

It is the F-1 student's responsibility to be knowledgeable of and take the proper actions to comply with the rules and obligations associated with maintaining his/her valid F-1 visa status.

## Rules for Maintaining F-1 Visa Status

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### 1. Report to and maintain contact with International Student Services (ISS)

F-1 visa students must report to International Student Services upon their arrival to the United States and no later than the program start date listed on the Form I-20. F-1 visa students are also required to check-in with an ISS advisor at the beginning of each semester.

### 2. Keep visa documentation valid

- I-20 has to be valid at all times. A student holding an expired I-20 is out of status in the U.S. If you have any concerns regarding your I-20, you must contact ISS.
- I - 94 card should be marked as "F1" and "D/S" (D/S stands for Duration of Status).
- Passport has to be valid six months into the future at all times unless the passport is issued by one of the countries listed on the website of the Department of State: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/104770.pdf>

### 3. Maintain accurate personal contact information on file at all times

F-1 visa students are required to have a valid local mailing address and permanent foreign address at all times (P.O. box addresses are not valid). Any changes to this information must be reported no later than 10 days after the change occurs.

- **Local Address:** must be a valid, residential address in Brevard County area where you will be residing during your F-1 program at EFSC. This address cannot be an address outside of the U.S., outside of Florida, or an academic department address (P.O. Box addresses are not valid)
- **Permanent Address:** must be a valid, residential address outside of the United States (P.O. Box addresses are not valid).
- **E-Mail:** Your Titan email address will be the primary method of communication that EFSC will use to contact you. Please make sure that you log in and check it regularly.

### 4. Maintain full- time enrollment - 12 credit hours per semester – at all times

U.S. immigration regulations require F-1 visa students to register for and complete a full course load each semester. At the beginning of each term, EFSC International Student Services is required to confirm that all international students are registered and maintaining full-time enrollment. Student enrollment will be monitored throughout the semester.

**Students who drop below full-time enrollment without approval from EFSC International Student Services must be reported to the Department of Homeland Security via SEVIS. As a result, the SEVIS record will be terminated and the student will lose lawful F-1 status**

- **Online Coursework – ONLY 3 hours towards full time enrollment**  
Immigration regulations limit the number of online courses a student can count towards the 12 credit full-time requirement. Only one course or three online credit hours can be counted towards the full-time requirement. Please meet with an International Student Advisor if you have questions regarding courses offered online.
- **Summer Enrollment** - Summer enrollment is generally not required for continuing students (that is, students who enrolled full-time for the spring semester and intend to enroll full-time for the fall semester). However, there are two important exceptions which require summer enrollment.
  - i. Students arriving from abroad to begin a program of study or resume studies after a break in status are required to enroll full-time during the summer. Full-time enrollment: 6 credits.

- ii. Students graduating during the summer term are required to enroll for on-campus credits. Full-time enrollment is not required; rather, students are to take the credits required to complete. To remain in the US while finishing degree requirements and, in order to be eligible to participate in post-degree completion work opportunities, final credits may not be on-line/distance learning.

**5. Obtain PRIOR authorization from an ISS Advisor (if eligible) BEFORE dropping below a full course of study, withdrawing from classes, or taking a leave of absence.**

**6. Make normal progress toward degree completion**

F-1 visa students are required to make normal progress towards completing their program of study by the program completion date listed on the Form I-20. Making normal progress includes, but is not limited to, enrolling in the proper courses required for degree completion, maintaining satisfactory academic progress, and continually meeting all institutional enrollment requirements. Students must complete a minimum of 24 credit hours per academic year (fall and spring semesters) with passing grades and maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher. Class grades of W (Withdrawal) do not count toward the full time 12-credit requirement.

**7. Report any changes in major or field of study**

F-1 visa students are required to pursue degree completion in the program of study listed on their I-20. An F1 student who wishes to change major or field of study must contact ISS and complete the necessary steps for issuance of a new I-20.

**8. Provide proof of health insurance**

EFCS requires all F-1 international students to have health insurance coverage that meets the College's standards. You must show proof of insurance at the mandatory semester check-in meeting. **Health insurance is not an option – it is a requirement.** Students who do not show proof of health insurance will not be allowed to register for classes or continue enrollment.

**9. Do not engage in unauthorized employment**

F-1 visa students are restricted in employment activities that they may engage in, including: on-campus employment, Curricular Practical Training, and Optional Practical Training. Different eligibility requirements exist for each area of authorized employment and students interested in such opportunities must meet with an ISS advisor.

**10. Request proper travel endorsement before leaving the U.S.**

F-1 visa students traveling outside of the U.S. must have a valid travel authorization signature endorsed on page 3 of their EFSC I-20 to re-enter the U.S. in valid F-1 status. Each travel authorization signature is valid for **6 months** from the date of endorsement and must be valid at the time of re-entry to the U.S. If you are planning on traveling outside of the U.S., you must [schedule an appointment with an ISS Advisor](#).

If you leave the US without completing your program of study, complete your program early or change to another non-immigrant status, you must notify the ISS so that your record in the DHS data base accurately reflects your current situation

**11. Do not remain in the U.S. beyond allowable F-1 visa duration of stay and grace periods**

F-1 visa students are eligible to remain in the United States for the time required to complete their program of study, any authorized post-degree completion activities, and applicable grace periods. Upon completion of your degree program, you have 60 days to:

- Prepare for departure from the U.S.
- Transfer to another school/degree program by requesting a SEVIS Transfer Out
- Change your visa status

Students may not exit and re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status during their 60-day grace period.

**12. Obtain extensions, as needed, of your permission to stay in the U.S. before your I-20 expires**

If you have valid academic or health reasons for requiring more time to complete your program than that which is authorized on the EFSC I-20, you must request a program extension through the ISS at least 30 days before the completion date noted on your I-20 in order to have enough time to obtain any necessary documents.

**International Student Services**

1519 Clearlake Road, Building 11, Second Floor, Cocoa, FL 32922  
Phone: 321.433.7341 | Email: [iss@easternflorida.edu](mailto:iss@easternflorida.edu)