

Maintaining Legal Status

As a student on a non-immigrant (F-1) visa, you must meet certain requirements in order to comply with the regulations for your status.

Basic F-1 rules:

- Always enroll full time.
- Never work off-campus without permission from the Center for Global Engagement.
- Keep passport valid.
- Notify the center of your current U.S. address.
- Have international student advisor endorse your I-20 before you travel.
- Seek a program extension if completion will be later than the date on the I-20 (item 5).
- Make normal progress to completing your degree.

It is very important that you seek advice from one of the international student advisors before dropping below a full-time course load or taking a term off from your studies.

You have been admitted to the United States without a definite ending date for your stay. You are here for "duration of status." This is defined as the time during which you are pursuing a full course of study or engaging in authorized practical training following completion of studies. Upon completion of the program or the end of practical training, you are allowed 60 days to prepare for departure from the United States.

If you officially withdraw from school before completing your program, without transferring to another school, then you have only 15 days to complete your preparations to leave the U.S. If you just walk away from school without doing any official paperwork, then you must leave the U.S. immediately.

If you violate the rules for F-1 status, you will need to seek reinstatement in order to gain any benefit of your status. Until reinstated, you will lose your privilege of working on campus and will not be eligible for internships, cooperative education programs or practical training. Reinstatement is a special application to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

NOTE: If you apply for and are granted OPT (Optional Practical Training) upon graduation/completion of your program, you will continue to be considered an F-1 visa holder and all above rules will continue to apply.