

International Student & Scholar Office (ISSO)

3rd Floor

Towson, MD 21252-0001

Tel: 410-704-2421 Fax: 410-704-6040

www.towson.edu/isso

MAINTAINING LEGAL F-1 STUDENT STATUS

F-1 student visas are issued to students in the United States for the purpose of being full-time students. As an international student, your presence in the United States is a privilege and is only allowable in accordance with strict immigration rules. Participation by students in non-academic activities (e.g. employment) is considered to be a privilege and is only allowable in accordance with strict immigration rules.

When you enter the United States, you will receive an I-20 and an entry stamp. This means that you are allowed to remain in the U.S. for as long as you "maintain legal F-1 student status," NOT for the length of time indicated on your visa or in item #5 of your Form I-20.

Please note that it is your responsibility to be informed about immigration rules and any rule changes which may affect your presence in the U.S. Penalties for violation of immigration laws can be severe, including becoming ineligible for re-entry to the U.S. for up to 5 years and having your visa and I-20 annulled. It is extremely important for you to understand your legal responsibilities. The International Student & Scholar Office (ISSO) is not the student, not the university, who is ultimately responsible for maintaining legal F-1 student status.


by clicking the link www.towson.edu/isso or by calling the International Student & Scholar Office (ISSO) [410-704-2421](tel:410-704-2421) within ten days of any move. Please

If you transfer to another school, you must **follow immigration transfer regulations**. (You will need a new I-20 from that school and report to your new school's international student advisor to complete the transfer within 15 days of the start date of your new I-20.)

Have an **unexpired passport** at all times. Your new passport will be processed before it is issued. You should obtain a passport before you begin the process. Contact information for all the embassies in Washington, D.C., can be found on the web at: <http://www.candian.org/embat.html>. Canadian citizens are exempt from the passport requirement.

U.S. students must be **enrolled in a full-time program of study** at the time of their arrival in the U.S. and must be **enrolled in a full-time program of study** at the time of their arrival in the U.S. and must be **enrolled in a full-time program of study** at the time of their arrival in the U.S.

Receive authorization for any and all off-campus employment.

Complete a U.S. tax return, as required.

Immigration requirements: (a) obtain a new Form I-20 for a new school or program within 60 days after completion of your program and attend the next available semester within 5 months of your program completion date; (b) apply to change to another immigration status within 60 days after completion of your degree or program; (c) apply for optional practical training work permission prior to completion of your degree or program, if applicable; or (d) depart from the U.S. within 60 days after completion of your degree or program. (If you do not complete a degree or academic program, you must consult with an ISSO advisor and depart within 15 days.)

You should contact an ISSO advisor if you have difficulty meeting any of these requirements **before** you have a problem. However, if you do make a mistake, please remember that we are here to assist you in reviewing your options and making wise decisions. The ISSO staff does **not** work for the Department of Homeland Security or the federal government; they are employees of the university who want your success.