

THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND BENEFITS OF F-1 VISA STATUS

Your visa status in the U.S. is ultimately a matter between yourself and the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS). The USCIS expects you to learn and understand the requirements and benefits of your F-1 visa status, to meet those requirements and maintain status at all times while in the U.S. You also have the responsibility to inform the International Center at Cal Poly Pomona of any changes that might affect your relationship as a student here and your ability or interest to maintain F-1 visa status.

The SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) is a mechanism to electronically transmit the required information to the U. S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) and Department of State (DOS) throughout a student or visiting faculty and researcher's stay in the United States. Schools will be required to regularly update the USCIS/DOS through SEVIS regarding quarterly enrollment, change of address, change of major or degree objective, school transfers, etc. ***Under the revised regulations, maintaining visa status and full-time enrollment is critical and regaining status with the USCIS/DOS may only be possible in limited circumstances.***

International Student Advisors are available at the International Center to help you understand your immigration responsibilities and apply for USCIS benefits. You are encouraged to meet with an Advisor in order to make informed decisions before you take any action that could result in the loss of your visa status.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Attend the school listed on your currently valid I-20.
- Enroll and complete full-time coursework (12 units for undergraduate & 8 units for graduate students) during fall, winter and spring quarters.
- Notify the International Center immediately if you change your major, degree objective or want to transfer to a different educational institution.
- Report any legal changes to his or her name, or any change of address to the USCIS, the International Center within 10 days of the change. Update your address in BroncoDirect.
- Make satisfactory progress toward completion of your degree.
- Complete your degree by the date listed on your I-20, or apply for an extension at the International Center before it expires.
- Do not work off-campus without authorization from the USCIS and the International Center and limit on-campus employment to a total of 20 hours or less while school is in session.

- Request a travel signature on your I-20 at least one week before leaving the U.S. in order to return and continue your degree program.
- Obey all federal and state laws.
- Respond completely and truthfully if the USCIS requests any information from you.
- Keep your passport valid at all times (if expired, renew at your country's Consulate or Embassy in the U.S.).
- Apply for Optional Practical Training before the end of your final quarter.

BENEFITS

- Enrolled students are eligible for immediate part-time on-campus employment, 20 hours or less per week while school is in session and full-time during vacation periods. Full-time employment is any amount of time more than 20 hours per week.
- After one academic year in F-1 status students can apply to the USCIS for off-campus work authorization if needed because of Severe Economic Hardship or for Practical Training.
- May participate in Study Abroad programs or in the National Student Exchange Program (study at other approved U.S. universities) and receive academic credit towards Cal Poly Pomona degree.
- Can stay in the US with an expired visa stamp as long as student status is maintained.
- There is no restriction on travel anywhere within the U.S.
- Can travel to Canada or Mexico for 30 days or less and re-enter the U.S. with an expired visa stamp as long as you have a valid passport, I-94 card and I-20 with a travel signature from an International Student Advisor dated within the last six months.
- Eligible to transfer to other educational institutions within the U.S. without having to leave the U.S. by following USCIS transfer procedures.
- Summer Quarter is considered vacation and USCIS regulations do not require any enrollment.
- Full-time enrollment is not required during the quarter you apply to graduate (your last quarter of enrollment at Cal Poly Pomona).
- Students have 60 days to depart the U.S. after completion of a degree or optional practical training. Can remain longer if waiting for Optional Practical Training employment authorization or to begin a new degree program at the next available term.
- A student may be authorized for 12 months of practical training, and becomes eligible for another 12 months of practical training when he or she changes to a higher educational level.