Welcome, International Students!

Fall 2020

New F-1 Student Immigration Information
F-1 Status vs. F-1 Visa

• It is very important to clarify these two legal terms in order to understand how to maintain your immigration status in the U.S.

• The terms "visa" and “status” can be easily confused, but they are different things!
Visa

- Functions as a key, or pass, to enter the U.S.
- Defines why you are coming (F-1 = student)
- Page in your passport
Status

● Ability to remain legally in the US
● At the Port of Entry you are granted a specific kind of immigration status (ex, F-1)
● Recorded on I-94
Visa vs. Status

- Example Time – Let’s Go To The Movies!
- Movie ticket = visa
- Your movie = status (can only stay for the duration of the reason you entered)
Immigration Documents

• Passport
• Visa
• I-94 record
• I-20
Your Passport

- Note Expiration Dates -- **must be valid at all times!**
- Renewal process
- Request exit/entry stamps
- Try not to carry passport around – carry a copy.
F-1 Visa Page

• Indicates you are entering the U.S. as a student
• Number of entries -- 1, 2, or ‘M’ entry
• Length of visa – Reciprocity Rule
• Expiration only affects re-entry to US
• Renewal Process (transcript)
• Almost any US Embassy outside the US
I-94 Record

• Entry/ Exit Record, Received upon entry to U.S.
• Grants specific status in US – should be “F-1 Status” (if not let us know). Different statuses have different rules.
• Also grants length of time you can stay in the U.S. - Should indicate D/S - “Duration of Status”
• Check your I-94 each time you return to the U.S., online
I-94 record

https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/

Or Google “I-94”
Most Recent I-94 Results

For:

Most Recent I-94

Admission I-94 Record Number: [Redacted]
Most Recent Date of Entry: 2017 December 26
Class of Admission: F1
Admit Until Date: D/S
Details provided on the I-94 Information form:

Last/Surname: [Redacted]
First/Given Name: [Redacted]
Birth Date: [Redacted]
Passport Number: [Redacted]
Country of Issuance: [Redacted]

GET THIS TRAVELER’S TRAVEL HISTORY

PREVIOUS PRINT
I-20

• Confirms funding, student status, major, and specific school.
• Has your **SEVIS ID** on top left side
• **Program Dates** must be valid
• Be aware of your program End Date!
• For international travel, your I-20 must have a valid travel signature on the third page
  ○ This signature is valid for one year
Interactive question time:

1. Which document assigns your immigration status when you arrive in the US?
   
   I-20 or I-94?

2. What document must not expire while you are in the US?
   
   I-20 or passport or visa?

3. What document cannot be renewed in the US?
   
   visa or I-20 or passport?
Which documents should I carry?

• Carry the following with you AT ALL TIMES:
  – COPIES of passport, visa, I-94, and I-20

• Carry if you have them:
  – Maryland Driver’s License
  – Maryland State ID
  – International Driver’s License and translation
Visa Interviews

demo with students
Visa Interview

- What kind of visa are you applying for? Why?
- How will you support yourself financially?
- What are your intentions?
  Immigrant, non-immigrant?
- Why UMBC?
- Why this major/degree?
Maintaining Status - Loss of Status

• “Loss of status” or “out of status” means you no longer have a legal immigration status in the US
• Results from breaking F-1 rules
• No F-1 benefits (employment)
• Reinstatement
• Bars to returning to the US
How can you lose your Status?

• If you do not register for a full course load
• If you let your I-20 end date expire
• If you work off-campus without authorization
• If you break the law and are arrested for more than a minor offense
Maintaining your F-1 Status:  
Course Registration

• You have to be registered at UMBC!
• Optional to register during Summer and Winter breaks - not required
• Must be registered “full time” during Fall and Spring semesters – we check!
• May take a class at another campus also (must speak with academic advisor first)
Online Courses

- Can take only one online class per semester
- Classes not classified as online but not done in person are ok!
  - Hybrid courses
  - Independent Study
- Final Semester: Can’t just take an online class to complete requirements
Definition of “Full-Time Enrollment” at UMBC

● Undergraduate students:
  ○ 12 credit hours minimum Fall and Spring semester

● Graduate Students:
  ○ 9 credits per semester in fall and spring semester.
  ○ Full-Time graduate assistants should register for at least 4 academic credits
  ○ Part-Time graduate assistants should register for at least 6 academic credits
“Reduced Course Load”

- Few exceptions to the full-time enrollment requirement:
  - Medical (physical or mental health challenges)
  - Academic (can only be approved once):
    - First Semester Academic Difficulty (English language, reading requirements, adjustment challenges)
    - “Improper Course Placement”
  - MUST be approved by IES before dropping below full-time
Brief Overview of Work Options

Employment is limited under F-1 status.

The employment rules are very strict and must be followed carefully.
Types of Employment:

- On-Campus Employment
- Practical Training (off-campus)
  - Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
  - Optional Practical Training (OPT)
- Need-based employment (off-campus)
  - Severe, Unexpected, Documented Economic Hardship (USCIS processing fee of $410)
On-Campus Employment

• Must be at UMBC campus ONLY – BW Tech Park, for example, is NOT on campus. **Paid by UMBC.**
• May work **no more** than **20** hours per week during semesters
• May hold more than one job on campus so long as total hours are no more than 20.
• May work full-time (**More than 20 hours per week**) outside of semesters
On-Campus Employment

Find an on-campus job:

- The Career Center website – UMBCWorks
- Career Center guidance on documents (CV, cover letter); best practices
- Apply in person
- Network!
Off-Campus Employment: CPT

CPT: Curricular Practical Training

- Paid internships while a current student
- **Eligible after 2 academic semesters in US**
- Must be authorized by IES, noted on I-20
- Must be related to your degree program, and noted on transcript
Off-Campus Employment: CPT

Find an internship:

● Career Center!!
  ○ Review their communications
  ○ UMBCWorks
  ○ Events
  ○ Guidance

● Academic Department
● Network with other students
Office Campus Employment: OPT

OPT: Optional Practical Training

- Usually after graduation
- 1 Year of work authorization
- Can work for any employer/change employer, work has to be related to academic field studied at UMBC
- Requires application to USCIS, plan for 3-4 months processing time
Off-Campus Employment: STEM OPT Extension

- STEM Extension – possibility of 24 months additional OPT
- STEM-eligible degree completed
- Requires E-Verified employer, I-983 Training Plan
- Can change employers
Off-Campus Employment: Economic Hardship

• For students in unexpected financial hardship
• Have to prove source of unexpected difficulties
• Not often approved, have to make a very strong case
• Application to USCIS costs $410
• Don’t rely on this option!
Employment Quiz!

1. You’ve graduated with a PhD in Biology, and got a job offer in a bio lab.

2. You are offered a position to shelve books in the UMBC library.

3. You are an Engineering major and want to work as an Uber Driver.

4. You are a 2nd semester Computer Science major and get an offer for a summer internship in California to work for Google!
But where can I find a job?

- Again, the **Career Center** is a great place to start
  - Career Center events
  - Career Center Services
  - UMBCWorks
- ALL available at [careers.umbc.edu](http://careers.umbc.edu)
Summary

● On-campus work (immediate)
● Off-campus work:
  ○ CPT (after 2 semesters)
  ○ OPT (after graduation)
  ○ STEM OPT Extension
● Career Center
Other IES Services: Social Security Number (SSN)

Purpose

• Required to get paid
• Tracks income for tax purposes

Application Process

• Receive job offer
• Visit IES office during walk in hours (M - Th, 1pm - 4pm)
• See the IES website for more details: ies.umbc.edu/ssn/
Other IES Services: Annual Income Tax filing

Tax returns are filed every year to summarize how much tax money you have paid on your income, and if you owe more or are due a refund back.

• Annual Tax Returns are due each year around April 15 - we provide free software (Sprintax)

• ALL students are required to file income tax forms whether you earn any income or not.
Other IES Services: Driving License/State ID

• Foreign license valid only for **THREE MONTHS** before you are required to obtain a U.S. license.

• IES office has Drivers Handbook copies; more information is on our website

• MVA (Motor Vehicle Administration) also offers State ID Cards
Maintain Your Status!

- Register full-time
- Keep I-20 current
- Follow employment guidelines closely
- Don’t break U.S. laws
- Keep in touch with the IES Office
Remember…

Your immigration status is your responsibility!

We are here to assist you in maintaining it so that your experience in the US is enjoyable and fruitful.
Questions?

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