

How to Maintain Your Status

Maintaining your F1 status is crucial for legally staying in the United States and successfully completing your language studies.

Follow these guidelines to comply with the regulations and maintain your status.

Full-Time Enrollment

- **Enroll Full-Time:** You must be enrolled as a full-time student each term.
 - For language institutes, full-time status typically requires attending 18 hours of classes per week.

Make Normal Progress

- **Attend Classes:** Regularly attend and participate in your classes.
- **Good Academic Standing:** Maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by your language institute. Avoid being placed on academic probation or dismissal.

Employment Regulations

- **On-Campus Employment:** You can work up to 20 hours per week during the academic term and full-time during breaks and vacations, but **ONLY** on campus, either Main or Avon Williams Downtown.
- **Off-Campus Employment:** Not allowed for language institute students.

Keep Your Documents Valid

- **I-20 Form:** Keep your I-20 form updated. If you change your program or need an extension, notify your Designated School Official (DSO).
- **Passport:** Your passport must always be valid for at least six months into the future.
- **Visa:** While your F1 visa can expire in the US, you need a valid passport to re-enter the US from abroad.

Report Changes to Your DSO

- **Address Changes:** Report any change of address within 10 days.
- **Program Changes:** Notify your DSO of any changes to your program of study.
- **Transfer Schools:** If you transfer to a new school or program, work with your current and new DSOs to transfer your SEVIS record.

Traveling Abroad and Re-Entry

- **Travel Signature:** Ensure your DSO signs your I-20 before traveling outside the US. The travel signature is valid for one year.
- **Documents for Re-Entry:** When re-entering the US, carry your I-20, valid passport, valid F1 visa, and proof of financial support.

Grace Periods

- **Completion of Studies:** After completing your program, you have a 60-day grace period to prepare to depart the US, transfer to another school, or apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) if you are eligible.
- **Authorized Withdrawal:** You have a 15-day grace period if you obtain permission for a reduced course load or need to withdraw from your program.

Avoid Unauthorized Activities

- **Unauthorized Employment:** Working without proper authorization is a severe violation.
- **Failing to Maintain Full-Time Enrollment:** Dropping below a full course load without DSO approval can jeopardize your status.

Health Insurance

- **Health Coverage:** Maintain adequate health insurance coverage as required by your language institute and to protect against unforeseen medical expenses.

By following these guidelines, you can ensure you maintain your F1 status and enjoy a successful language-learning experience in the United States.

If you have questions or need further assistance, contact the DSO at the IEC (Office: 615-963-2183) or the PDSO at the Office of International Affairs (Office: 615-963-5639).