

F-1 Advising for Beginners

Ronda Dowell

University of North Georgia
International Student Services Coordinator

Nicole Maddox

University of North Georgia
International Student Services Coordinator

Slides adapted from Charlie Hammond with contributions from Ashley Johnson, Marie Goodwin,
Mike Townsend, Brett Reichert, Ronda Dowell, and Nicole Maddox

GIFs from international.tumblr.com

Who's in the room?

- Do you have access to the NAFSA manual?
- How long have you been in the field? How long have you been a DSO?

Obtaining F-1 Status

Before arriving in the US:

I-20 Issuance – Obtaining F-1 Status

From the Student:

- Student is accepted to your university/college or specialty program



From the DSO:

- Verify that the student is accepted
- Verify student's financial documents
- Create SEVIS record and issue the "initial" I-20
 - Must issue I-20 form within the U.S.



8 C.F.R. § 214.3(k)

SEVIS ID: N0000148174

SURNAME/PRIMARY NAME	GIVEN NAME	CLASS
PREFERRED NAME	PASSPORT NAME	F-1
COUNTRY OF BIRTH JORDAN	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP JORDAN	ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE
DATE OF BIRTH 24 OCTOBER 1976	ADMISSION NUMBER	
FORM ISSUE REASON INITIAL ATTENDANCE	LEGACY NAME	

Student's **SEVIS** number

SCHOOL INFORMATION

SCHOOL NAME State University of New York at Binghamton State University of New York at Binghamton	SCHOOL ADDRESS International Student & Scholar Services, Binghamton, NY 13902
SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL Director of International Student & Scholar Services	SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE BUE214F20000000 22 OCTOBER 2010

Level of education that the student is pursuing or will pursue in the U.S., as well as major field of study.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

EDUCATION LEVEL DOCTORATE	MAJOR 1 Industrial Engineering 14.3501	MAJOR 2 None 00.0000
NORMAL PROGRAM LENGTH 72 Months	PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Required	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES Student is proficient
PROGRAM START DATE 23 JUNE 2015	PROGRAM END DATE 31 MAY 2018	

Normal program length; program start date and end date.

FINANCIALS

ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR: 12 MONTHS		STUDENT'S FUNDING FOR: 12 MONTHS	
Tuition and Fees	\$ 14,200	Personal Funds	\$ 5,524
Living Expenses	\$ 13,200	Assistanship-Tuition Scholar	\$ 27,876
Expenses of Dependents (0)	\$ 6,000	Funds From Another Source	\$
33400	\$ 0	On-Campus Employment	\$
TOTAL	\$ 33,400	TOTAL	\$ 33,400

Estimated average costs (left)
Student's funding information (right)

REMARKS

SCHOOL ATTESTATION

I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X	DATE ISSUED 23 June 2015	PLACE ISSUED Binghamton, NY
SIGNATURE OF: Director of International Student & Scholar Services		

STUDENT ATTESTATION

I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of any extension of stay. I certify that all information provided on this form refers specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full program of study at the school named above. I also authorize the named school to release any information from my records needed by DHS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.3(g) to determine my nonimmigrant status. Parent or guardian, and student, must sign if student is under 18.

SIGNATURE OF:		DATE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X			
NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN	SIGNATURE	ADDRESS (city/state or province/country)	DATE

Before arriving in the US:

Paying the SEVIS (I-901) fee



Purpose of the SEVIS fee:

The SEVIS fee is mandated by Congress to support the program office and the automated system that keeps track of students and exchange visitors and ensures that they maintain their status while in the U.S.

The fee is used to:

- Maintain and update SEVIS
- Hire and train SEVIS Liaison Officers
- Staff and manage the SEVP office
- Maintain enforcement oversight

Who needs to pay?

- All prospective F-1 students needing admission at a U.S. POE
- Any nonimmigrant in the U.S. applying for a change of nonimmigrant status to F-1 status
- An F-1 applying for reinstatement
- An F-1 student who has been absent from U.S. for more than 5 months and wishes to re-enter in F-1 visa status

Who does not need to pay?

- A dependent of an F-1 student who will be applying for an F-2 visa
- Any F-1 student with continuous F-1 status even when applying for a new visa or transferring schools.

Before arriving in the US:

Paying the SEVIS (I-901) fee

Payment Options:

- **\$350 for F-1 visa type ***Note the fee increase!**
- Country of citizenship or country of birth of Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria or Gambia must pay by money order, Western Union Quick Pay or certified check drawn from a U.S. bank.
- All others also have the option to make a credit/debit card payment on www.FMJfee.com
- SEVP will also accept third party payments; someone else can pay the I-901 for student's behalf.

When to pay?

- Must be paid at least 3 days before:
 - Initial visa appointment, or
 - Initial entry when a visa is not required (Canada/Bermuda), or
 - Before submitting an I-539 to request a change of visa status to F-1

Before arriving in the US: Applying for an F-1 visa

If you or your students have questions about the visa application process, you can visit the Study in the States website ([link on handout](#)).

F-1 VISA

The visa is issued by the US embassy.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

VISA

Issuing Post Name: NASSAU
Surname: IMA
Given Name: IMA
Passport Number: 19993505690003
Sex: F
Birth Date: 24AUG19
Nationality: BAMA
Issue Date: 16DEC1999
Expiry Date: 15DEC2004
Entries: M
Annotation: GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30332-0284
Visa Number: 31605947

Photo

**Number of entries allowed
M=Multiple**

**Visa Type/Class
R F1**

**Expiration Date
15DEC2004**

**Visa Number
31605947**

Arrival in the US:


PORT OF ENTRY



- Students may enter the U.S. no more than 30 days before the program start date on the I-20
- CBP will stamp the passport with the following information:
 - Date of entry
 - Port of entry
 - Admission status (F-1)
 - Duration of their stay (D/S means duration of status)
- CBP will also issue the student an electronic I-94 record
- Student will be asked for the following documents upon entering the US:
 - Passport with F-1 visa
 - I-20
 - I-901 fee receipt
 - Students with insufficient documents may be granted a 30 day provisional admission and issued an I-515A form

Arrival in the US: I-94

- I-94 records are now electronic
 - Accessed online at cbp.gov/i94
 - Or Google "I-94"



U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Securing America's Borders

OMB No. 1651-0111
Expiration Date: 11/30/2014

Get I-94 Number **I-94 FAQ**

Admission (I-94) Number Retrieval

Admission (I-94) Record Number: 68523424920

Admit Until Date (MM/DD/YYYY): D/S

Details provided on Admission (I-94) form:

Family Name:

First (Given) Name:

Birth Date (MM/DD/YYYY):

Passport Number:

Passport Country of Issuance: India

Most Recent Date of Entry (MM/DD/YYYY): 06/04/2013

Class of Admission: F1

► Effective April 26, 2013, DHS began automating the admission process. An alien lawfully admitted or paroled into the U.S. is no longer required to be in possession of a preprinted Form I-94. A record of admission printed from the CBP website constitutes a lawful record of admission. See 8 CFR § 1.4(d).

► If an employer, local, state or federal agency requests admission information, present your admission (I-94) number along with any additional required documents requested by that employer or agency.

► Note: For security reasons, we recommend that you close your browser after you have finished retrieving your I-94 number.

TRAVEL

TRAVEL SIGNATURES

- Travel signatures are signed on page 2 of the I-20
- Travel signatures are valid for one year
 - Best practice: Recommend that students make sure their travel signature is less than 6 months old at the time of re-entry.

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status
OMB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID: (F-1) NAME:

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	TYPE
EMPLOYMENT START DATE	EMPLOYMENT END DATE
EMPLOYER NAME	EMPLOYER LOCATION
COMMENTS	

CHANGE OF STATUS/CAP-GAP EXTENSION

REQUESTED VISA TYPE	REQUEST/PETITION STATUS	RECEIPT NUMBER	BENEFIT START DATE/REQUEST DATE
---------------------	-------------------------	----------------	---------------------------------

EVENT HISTORY

EVENT NAME	EVENT DATE
Registration	02 SEPTEMBER 2015

OTHER AUTHORIZATIONS

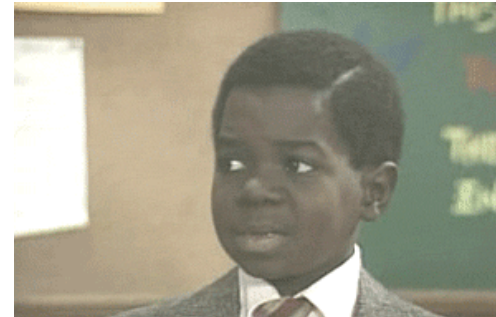
AUTHORIZATION	START DATE	END DATE
---------------	------------	----------

TRAVEL ENDORSEMENT

This page when properly endorsed, may be used for reentry of the student to attend the same school after a temporary absence from the United States. Each certification signature is valid for one year.

SCHOOL OFFICIAL	TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE ISSUED	PLACE ISSUED
		X		
		X		
		X		

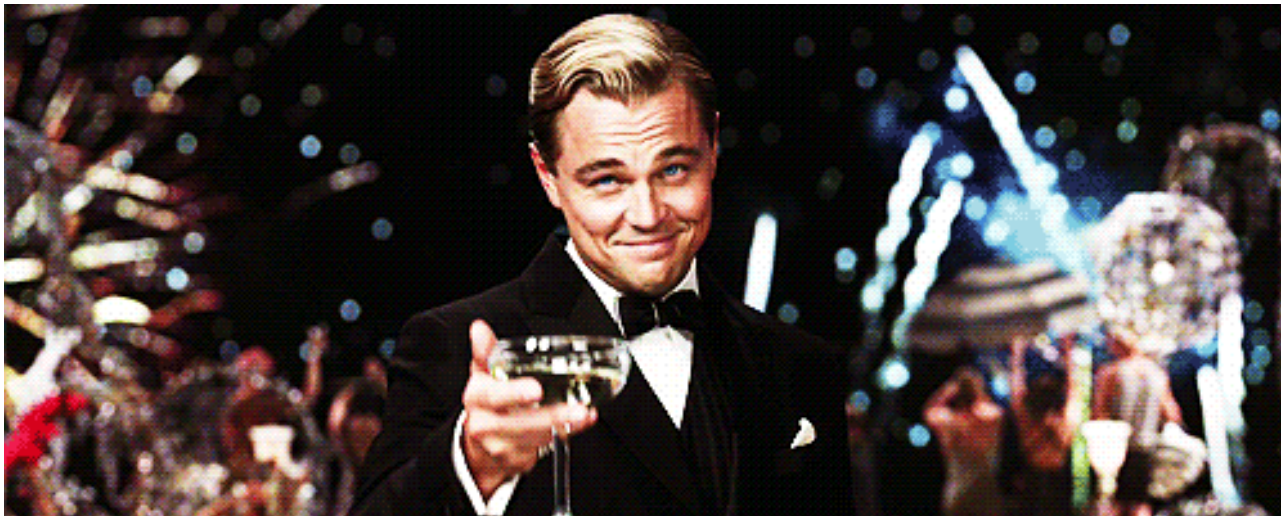
"Just this once, can my friend sign my I-20 for me?"



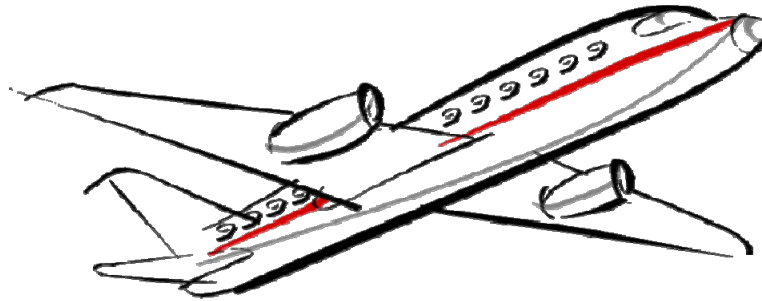
Travel Signature

Date Signed

**“I DON’T NEED A TRAVEL SIGNATURE, BECAUSE I
DIDN’T HAVE ONE THE LAST TIME I CAME BACK TO THE U.S.”**



TRAVEL



Documents required for travel:

- I-20 with valid travel signature
 - Travel signatures are valid for 12 months
- Valid Visa
 - Except for visa waiver and automatic visa revalidation
- Valid Passport
 - Passport must be valid for at least 6 months into the future at the time of return to the U.S.
- Students on Post-Completion OPT should also bring:
 - EAD
 - Proof of employment (job offer letter)
 - I-20 with valid travel signature

Length of Absence

- Temporary Absence: 5 months or less
 - Exceptions:
 - Enrolled for study abroad or research abroad
 - Approved leave of absence
- Non-Temporary Absence: 5 months or more
 - Requires a new initial I-20 for re-entry

MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS

“BUT MY FRIEND TOLD ME”



CHECKLIST

MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS

- Maintain a valid passport
- Attend authorized school
- Complete a full course of study
- Make 'normal' progress
- Update addresses within 10 days
- No unauthorized work
- Obey state & federal laws

TO DO LIST

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

- File timely requests if any program edits are needed:
 - Extension
 - Transfer
 - Change of education level
 - Change of status
- Depart U.S. in a timely manner
 - Complete program – 60 day grace period
 - Authorized Early Withdrawal – 15 day grace period
 - No grace period if there is a violation of visa status

Enrollment & Reporting Requirements



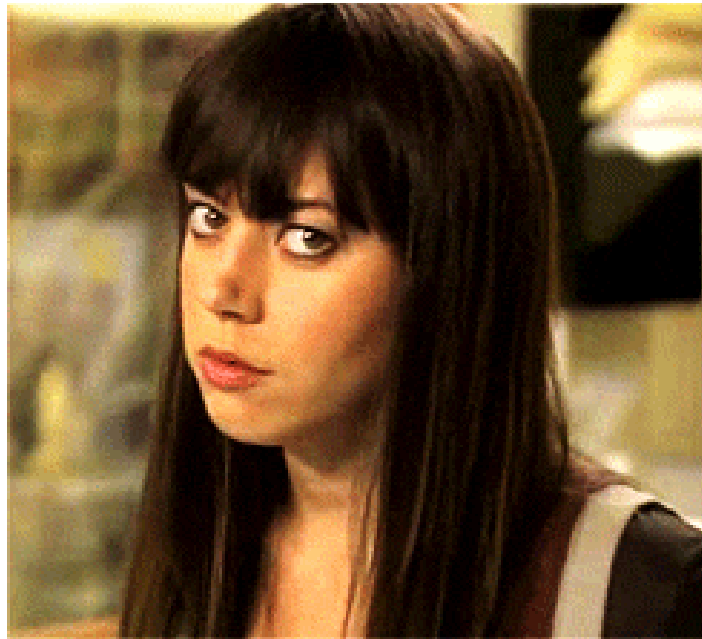
SEVIS TERMINATIONS

- A DSO needs to terminate a student's SEVIS record when the student is in violation of the terms of their status or are no longer in their program due to authorized circumstances
- It is important to clarify the facts as much as possible before terminating a student's record and keep documentation for everything
- If a student's record has been terminated, the student may be able to apply for reinstatement

Common termination reasons used by the DSO:

- No show - manual termination
- Otherwise failing to maintain status
- Suspension
- Transfer student no show
- Unauthorized drop below full course of study
- Failure to enroll
- Authorized early withdrawal
- Unauthorized withdrawal
- Change of status approved (this is usually updated by USCIS)

**“CAN I TAKE SPRING TERM OFF BECAUSE IT’S
TOO COLD HERE?”**



REDUCED COURSE LOAD: ACADEMIC REASONS

Academic Exceptions to a Full Course of Study

The DSO may authorize an F-1 student in advance to engage in less than a full course of study in the following academic situations:

RCL options due to Academic Difficulties

- Initial difficulties with the English language
- Initial difficulties with reading requirements
- Unfamiliarity with American teaching methods
- Improper course level placement

Restrictions on RCL due to Academic Difficulties

- Can only be used once per program level
- Usually only used in first semester
- Students must receive PRIOR APPROVAL



RCL during the final semester

Students in their final semester are eligible for RCL if they have less than a full course load remaining in their program

Restrictions on RCL during the final semester

- Applies only to students in degree programs
- “0” hour enrollment is not an option
- Must be enrolled in at least one course with physical presence requirements
- Students must receive PRIOR APPROVAL

REDUCED COURSE LOAD: MEDICAL REASONS

Medical Exceptions to a Full Course of Study

A DSO may authorize an F-1 student to engage in less than a full course of study if an illness or other medical condition justifies an interruption or reduction in a full course of study.

Restrictions on RCL due to medical conditions

- Must be based on the recommendation of a licensed US healthcare provider (MD, Doctor of Osteopathy, Clinical Psychologist)
- May not exceed 12 months per degree level (cumulative)
- Students must receive PRIOR APPROVAL



OTHER UPDATES TO A STUDENT'S RECORD

PROGRAM EXTENSIONS

Extensions

- Student must apply prior to program end date on the I-20
- Student has “continually maintained status”
- DSO can certify the delay in completion is “caused by compelling academic or medical reasons”
 - **Examples:** changes of major or research topics, unexpected research problems, or documented illnesses
- Student must show new financial documents – documents showing the student’s ability to continue financing studies for the period of the extension
- SEVIS reporting: new end date and explanation
- Issue a new I-20 with the extension of up to 12 months
 - Multiple 12-month extensions can be done back to back if necessary

Extensions can not be granted when the student is not completing on time due to poor academic performance

TRANSFER OF A SEVIS RECORD

- Must be transferring from/to a DHS approved school
- Classes at the transfer-in school must begin within 5 months of completing classes at the transfer out school or ending OPT employment
- Student must be fully accepted and SEVIS release completed within the 60-day grace period
 - It is good practice to request documentation of admission before releasing SEVIS record
- Some schools will not assist with reinstatement application
 - Check with transfer-in DSO before releasing the SEVIS record of a student who violated status.



EMPLOYMENT

ON-CAMPUS JOBS

F-1 students are permitted to work on campus; no special authorization is needed

Restrictions:

- The job must take place on campus
- The job must be paid by the school OR be a service which is directly provided to students
 - For example, a company contracted by the university to run the university bookstore
- Students may work on campus up to 20 hours/week while classes are in session
- During official school breaks, full-time on-campus employment is permitted **IF permitted by your institution**

Any **off-campus** work or training must be specifically authorized before employment begins.

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)

- CPT employment authorization is granted by the DSO and reported in SEVIS
 - Noted on the second page of the I-20
- CPT is used in cases where the employment is an “integral” part of student’s program of study
 - Used during (not after) the student’s academic program
 - Each institution has different policies for what is considered “integral” to the program of study
- CPT is appropriate for
 - Internships
 - Co-ops
 - Training required for the student’s degree program



OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

OPT employment authorization is recommended by the DSO and then **requires further adjudication by USCIS** (submission of I-765 application)

- OPT employment must be related to the student's major
- Pre-Completion OPT (C-3-A)
 - Used before the student graduates from the academic program
 - Limited to 20 hours/week or full-time during breaks
 - May require multiple applications and fees (student needs to re-apply for Post-Completion OPT)
- Post completion (C-3-B)
 - Used after the student graduates
 - Must be at least 20 hours/week, paid or volunteer
 - Cap-Gap OPT extension:
 - Used when an H-1B is filed for the student before OPT EAD expires
 - Successful cap-gap extension is documented with new I-20



STEM OPT EXTENSION

Extension of Optional Practical Training (C-3-C)

- Must currently be on approved period of post-completion OPT
- Extends employment authorization for 24 months
- Limited to specific majors
- Must complete a new application to USCIS for the STEM extension

Specific STEM Requirements

- I-983 Training Plan
- 6- and 18-month Employment Verification
- Annual Self-Evaluations
- Submit I-983 as evidence in SEVIS

For more information, see: studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub

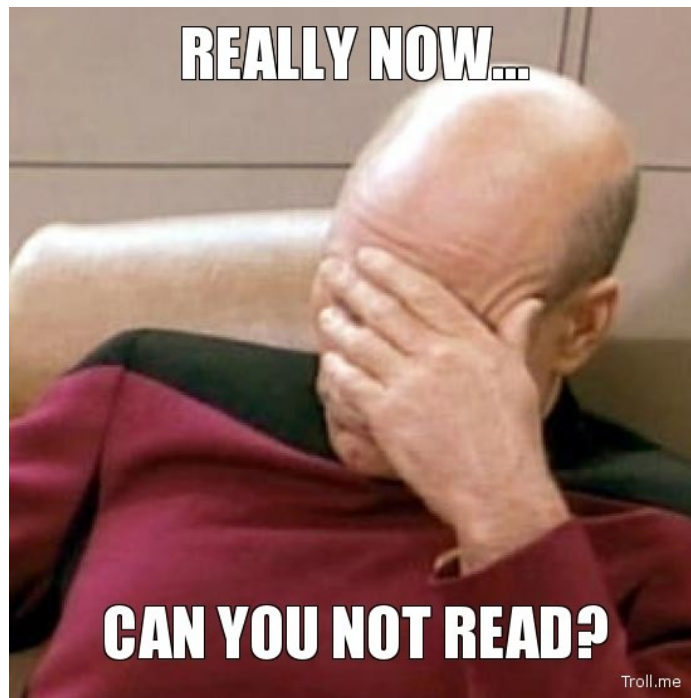
OPT REPORTING

Standard Reporting:

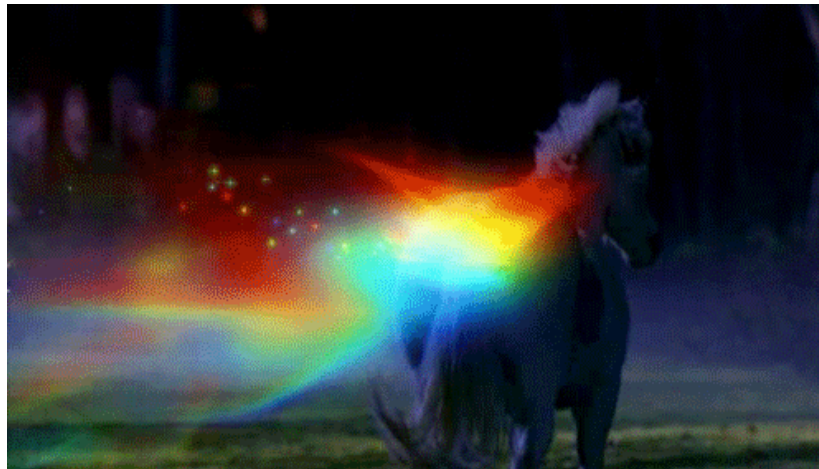
- Report any change of address within 10 days
- Report any gain of or change in employment within 10 days

All reporting requirements are the responsibility of the student

When students ask you what they need to do to apply for OPT after you have just given them a detailed list.



Yes, I totally have control to have
your OPT expedited.



When a student reports their OPT employment at a gas station...



QUESTIONS?

