F-1 Student Immigration Responsibilities

Please read this document thoroughly and keep it for your records.

The staff members of the International Students and Scholars office are committed to assisting international students to achieve the educational goals they are pursuing at Cornell University. We want you to be able to be successful and to complete your studies at Cornell. Unfortunately, your failure to be aware of and to comply with U.S. immigration regulations could jeopardize your academic plans. It is extremely important that you read the following requirements carefully and that you fully understand your responsibility to maintain valid immigration status.

F-1 Students must comply with the following requirements:

- **Report to the ISSO No More than 30 days after the Start Date on your I-20**
  It is **REQUIRED** that you come to the International Students and Scholars Office no more than 30 days after the start date of your I-20 (listed in Item 5 of your I-20) if you are entering the U.S. to begin a program of study. If you are transferring your immigration status to Cornell from another U.S. institution, once you check in at the ISSO, we will then register you in the SEVIS database and complete the transfer process.

- **Always Enroll Full Time**
  F-1 students must maintain full-time student status EVERY fall and spring semester. For undergraduate students, full-time means you must register and complete at least 12 credits each semester; as a graduate student, you must simply be registered. There are some rare exceptions to this regulation however; **YOU MUST talk to the ISSO staff BEFORE you drop below full time enrollment** or take a leave of absence. In addition to registering full time, you must register at Cornell NO LATER THAN 30 days after the start date on your I-20.

- **Update Your Local Address**
  The immigration regulations require you to update your local residential address within 10 days of moving within the U.S. You must do this by updating your local address in “Just the Facts” AND notifying the ISSO. You are required to use a physical residential address and not a PO Box or a Cornell department address. You can update your address on our website at: [http://www.isso.cornell.edu/about/addresschange.php](http://www.isso.cornell.edu/about/addresschange.php)

- **Keep Your Passport Valid**
  You should keep your passport valid for at least six months in to the future while you are studying in the U.S. Consult your country’s consulate or embassy in the U.S. to renew your passport. You can find the contact information for your consulate at: [http://travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

- **Apply for an F-1 EXTENSION at the ISSO BEFORE the end date on the I-20**
  The end date of your immigration status is written on your I-20 as the "completion of studies" date, in item #5 (not the end date of your visa stamp). If you are unable to complete your course of study by that time, **you must apply for an extension BEFORE the I-20 completion date**. If you do not complete the extension before that date, you will be out of status. Pick up an F-1 Program Extension packet from the ISSO to begin the process.

- **Change of Degree Program or Level**
  If you continue on to a new degree program within Cornell University, you must apply for a new I-20 from the ISSO no more than 60 days after you graduate from the first degree program.

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Discuss plans to go on to another U.S. college or university with an ISSO advisor
If you plan to transfer to another school, OR to go on to another school after you graduate from Cornell, the ISSO will need to begin the immigration transfer procedure no more than 60 days after you graduate from Cornell. Come in to the ISSO to discuss the transfer process.

Never Work Off-Campus Without Prior Authorization from the ISSO
U.S. immigration law restricts the employment authorization of international students. In general there are two types of employment authorization: on-campus and off-campus employment.
On-campus Employment: Enrolled F-1 students are permitted to work on campus for 20 hours per week during academic year and 40 hours per week during summer and winter breaks.
Off-campus Employment: Off-campus employment is any type of work or services performed in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, food or any other benefit that is not on the Cornell campus. A work permit is required BEFORE any off-campus work is allowed. See the staff in the ISSO for advice and assistance.

Notify the ISSO when you Leave the U.S. Permanently or when you Change your Visa status
You must notify the ISSO when you leave the U.S. permanently, especially if you leave the U.S. before the end date of your I-20. You also must notify the ISSO when you change your visa status so that we can update that information in our records and the SEVIS system.

Traveling Outside of the United States
To re-enter the U.S., after a temporary absence you need to have the following documents:
- valid passport (except Canadians unless entering from outside the Western Hemisphere)
- valid F-1 or F-2 visa stamp (except Canadians)
- current I-20 with a valid signature from ISSO advisor within the last 12 months
- proof of financial support (bank statements and/or scholarship, financial aid or TA/RA letter)
- proof of enrollment (certificate of enrollment or transcript). You can download a certificate of enrollment from the registrar’s web site at: http://certification.cornell.edu
- If you are traveling abroad, and you need to renew or obtain a new F-1 visa stamp at a U.S. Consulate abroad, come to the ISSO at least a week before you travel for an Advisor to check that you have the appropriate documents. The F-1 visa stamp does not have to be valid if you remain in the U.S. in F-1 student status – you only need a current visa stamp for re-entry.

Stay Informed!!!
These immigration regulations are subject to change and it remains your responsibility to stay informed regarding new regulations. The ISSO sends out emails informing you of important immigration related deadlines as well as any new regulations that go into effect. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to read the information we send you and to comply with the regulations.

ACTIVATE and USE YOUR CORNELL EMAIL ACCOUNT! You must activate and regularly check your Cornell email account. All students are automatically signed up for the ISSO-NEWS-L which is the ISSO list serve set up to notify you of important immigration issues. If you think you may not be signed up for this important service, contact us so we can add you to the list serve. Immigration updates are also posted on the ISSO website at: http://www.issocornell.edu.

We also suggest that you make photocopies of your immigration documents and keep the copies and originals in a safe place. Photocopy:
- the passport pages with your personal information and picture
- the passport page containing the U.S. visa stamp
- both sides of your I-94 Form
- your I-20, pages 1-3

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I have read the information stated in the “F-1 Student Immigration Responsibilities” sheet explaining the immigration regulations pertaining to maintaining my F-1 student status in the U.S. I also understand that the regulations are subject to change and that it is my responsibility to stay informed by reading any emails and information sent to me by the International Students and Scholars Office. I accept full responsibility for maintaining my immigration status for the duration of my studies at Cornell University.

____________________  ____________________
Student Signature           date

____________________
Print Name Clearly