

Maintaining F-1 Status While You Are in the United States

This document is intended to provide some basic guidance and reminders related to F-1 status. Students on F-1 student visas admitted to the United States must comply with guidelines set by the Department of Homeland Security. Such compliance is referred to as “maintaining status.” Consequences for an F-1 student who fails to maintain legal status can be serious and could lead to termination in SEVIS, deportation and even a ban on reentering the U.S. ***It is your responsibility*** to make sure that you remain in status and communicate regularly with the Office of International Programs for guidance on immigration issues. You can visit <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/> and our [MyW&J pages](#) for more information.

How to maintain your F-1 status

1. [Report a change of contact information](#) (address, email, phone number) to the Office of International Programs within 10 days. The Office of International Programs must record this change in SEVIS.
2. Maintain a full course of study each semester unless prior approval is given by the Office of International Programs. Full time is considered 12 academic credits for W&J students. If you think you may want to drop below this limit, take a Leave (for medical or other reasons) or withdraw from W&J, you must talk with our office first BEFORE moving forward as this could impact your status.
3. Report any changes in major or minor program to the Office of International Programs within 10 days. You can always send an email to studyabroad@washjeff.edu. We will typically issue you a new I-20 showing this change,
4. Refrain from **ALL** off-campus employment or business of any type without authorization by the Office of International Programs. This includes internships, practicums, and volunteer work. You must receive prior authorization before engaging in any off-campus training or work experience (paid or unpaid). Ask if you are unsure. View our [employment pages on My W&J](#) and [Study in the States](#) to learn more.
5. F-1 students are eligible to work **on-campus** 20 hours or less per week when classes are in session (full-time on-campus employment is permitted during the winter, spring and summer vacations if the student was enrolled the previous semester and will be enrolled full time the upcoming semester).
6. Maintain good academic standing for the duration of your enrollment. If you begin to experience problems with your course work, talk with your academic advisor and the Office of International Programs.
7. Abide by all campus, local, state, and federal rules and regulations. Students are required to disclose fully and truthfully all information requested by the Department of Homeland Security’s immigration bureaus. If the school takes disciplinary action against a student as a result of the conviction of a crime, the school is required to report this information in SEVIS.
8. Remain in the U.S. no longer than your grace-period after completing a full course of study, unless you are on Optional Practical Training or have been admitted into another academic program in the U.S. The grace-period for degree-seeking students is **60-days**; for exchange students, it is **15-days**.
9. Keep your passport valid at all times. If your passport expires, you may experience difficulties and delays in immigration benefits or the ability to travel.
10. Attend only the school noted on your I-20.

Other Important Information

1. Remember to obtain proper signatures and documents from the Office of International Programs *before* you travel abroad. Allow 10 business days for a signature, though we can often do this more quickly.
 - a. If you will be traveling abroad, make sure you research and have the required entry documents (visa) to that country, if applicable.
2. Do not depend solely on the opinion and advice of your friends or family when it comes to immigration matters. Always consult the Office of International Programs on campus before making decisions that will affect your immigration status. More immigration information is available at <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/> **Immigration requirements are always changing.**
3. Health insurance is required of all international students at W&J. We automatically enroll students. See our [webpage](#).
4. Check all e-mail that is sent to your **campus e-mail** address by the staff of International Programs and other departments. Important, time-sensitive information will be distributed to you in this manner.
5. Make sure that you keep ALL previous immigration documents. Keep all current immigration documents in a safe location. These documents include your passport, I-20, and I-94 form. Never throw these documents away.
6. If you work and earn income, you are required to file taxes at the end of the year. Check with the Office of International Programs for particulars starting in late January. The deadline for filing taxes is April 15 each year. All students whether they work or not must file the 8843 form.
7. If you are considering taking a leave of absence (for medical or other reasons), you **MUST** consult our office first. Taking a leave of absence from the College can impact your status.
8. **WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK; WHEN IN DOUBT, DO NOT ASSUME.**

For more information, please contact:

Office of International Programs
The Hub
studyabroad@washjeff.edu