
F-1 IMMIGRATION BASICS

Maintaining valid status as an F-1 student requires that you follow specific US laws and University policies that apply to full-time students in your academic program. Failure to follow these rules and regulations can unfortunately have serious immigration consequences, now and in the future. The University of Rochester is your immigration sponsor under the F-1 category and the International Services Office (ISO) is here to help you understand and meet these requirements!

ALWAYS...

- [register full-time](#) every required academic term; no more than 1 class/3 credits online per term may count towards meeting the full-time enrollment requirement
- report changes of address within 10 days of moving, via the [Address Reporting tool](#) in URcompass
- notify ISO of [changes](#) to your academic program, enrollment status, contact details, or immigration status
- update your immigration documents as needed (see below); prior to its expiration, request an extension to your I-20 if you will not complete by the program end date listed
- adhere to any applicable [grace periods](#) following the completion or termination of your F-1 program
- comply with [US tax reporting](#) requirements

NEVER...

- work off campus without [documented and active authorization](#) from ISO or USCIS
- work more than 20 hours per week [on campus](#) while school is in session
- take a [leave of absence](#) or [drop below full-time](#) enrollment without authorization from ISO

It is also important to maintain valid immigration documents during your time in F-1 status:

- PASSPORT:** Your passport should be valid at least 6 months into the future at all times while you are here. If it will expire soon, you can renew it during a trip home or often at your embassy within the US.
- F-1 VISA STICKER:** The F-1 visa sticker in your passport works like an *entry ticket* — it must be unexpired at the time you [request entry to the US](#) in F-1 status. If your visa expires while you are already in the US, you can stay in the country so long as you are maintaining status. If you leave the US when your visa is expired, you must [renew](#) it before you can re-enter as an F-1 student. Short-term travel to Canada, Mexico, or other nearby islands is sometimes permissible with an expired visa; see [Automatic Revalidation](#) for more information. [Canadian](#) and [most] [Bermudian](#) citizens are not required to obtain an F-1 visa sticker.
- FORM I-20:** Your I-20 is an official document issued by ISO that outlines your academic program. It contains information such as your program start and end dates, your major/degree program, and any additional work authorization you have been granted. If any of these change, you will probably need a new I-20 from us. You must keep ALL I-20s that are issued to you during your F-1 program. The second page of your I-20 includes a travel signature that must be less than one year old any time you request F-1 re-entry to the US; be sure to request an updated I-20 in URcompass in advance of any travel where you need this travel signature renewed.
- I-94 ADMISSION RECORD:** Your I-94 is a record that documents you were legally admitted to the US in a specific nonimmigrant category. The I-94 will be updated by CBP every time you re-enter the US. You can look up your [new I-94](#) online after every entry from any computer (you just need your passport) and print it or save it as a PDF. Make sure that your I-94 shows “F-1” as your non-immigrant status and “D/S” as your expiration date, and notify ISO if the information is not correct.