

Cardozo Law - Yeshiva University

Maintaining F-1 Status and International Student Guide

How to Maintain Legal F-1 Student Status*

- Register full-time every required term. Do not drop below full-time without first speaking with the Dean of Students and the International Student Advisor (ISA).
- Never let your I-20 expire. If you do not believe that you will be able to complete your academic program by the end date on your I-20, please speak with the Dean of Students and the International Student Advisor.
- Never work in the U.S. without permission.
- Students changing to a new program of study at the same school or transferring schools within the U.S. need to apply for a new I-20.
- Within 60 days of program completion, an F-1 student must depart the U.S., obtain a new Form I-20 to begin another academic program, or apply for a change of status to another immigration category. (Post-completion OPT is considered part of your F-1 academic program.)
- Notify the ISA if you will complete your academic program early (more than 21 days prior to the end on your I-20), apply for a leave of absence, are approved by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for a change or adjustment of status, or discontinue your program of study early.
- Report within **10 days** any changes to your local address, academic major, financial sponsor, country of citizenship or legal name.
- Always keep a valid (un-expired) passport.
- **Students authorized for post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)** work permission are limited to 90 days of accrued unemployment, once the authorized employment start date is reached. Students must report OPT employment information (starting/stopping/changes) within 10 days of the occurrence.
- OPT employment authorization automatically ends when you transfer to a new school inside the U.S., even if there is time remaining on your EAD.
- **Keep ALL I-20s and immigration documentation for your records. You may need them in the future to apply for an immigration benefit.**

*F-1 regulations governing students: [8CFR214.2f]

Travel Information

F-1 students and their F-2 dependents are free to travel outside the U.S. at any time during your stay in the U.S., except during the 60 day grace period immediately following the completion of your program. The grace period is a time to prepare to depart the U.S. or start a new program. Students wishing to travel outside of the U.S. need to have their I-20 signed prior to leaving the U.S. The I-20 travel signature is valid for 1 year, provided that you are maintaining legal F-1 status. Only a Designated School Official (DSO) is authorized to sign an I-20 for travel. When a DSO signs an I-20 for travel, the signature legally certifies that all the information on the I-20 is still accurate. If anything has changed, such as your funding source, please mention this to the DSO when requesting the travel signature. It is very important that all students remember to have their I-20 signed prior to leaving the country. Failure to obtain a travel signature could prevent or significantly delay reentry to the U.S.

All students should carry the following documents with them to present at customs when reentering the U.S.:

- Passport with a valid F-1 visa (Except for Canadian citizens, who do not need a visa)
- Signed I-20 (within the past year) or DS-2019 (within the past 6 months)
- Transcript showing that you have been studying full-time
- Proof of funding (by law, customs can ask to see this)
- SEVIS I-901 fee receipt (by law, customs can ask to see this) [Reprint](#)

- Students authorized for post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) work authorization should also bring: I-797c approval notice, Employment Authorization Document (EAD) and job letter.
 - Students on OPT must have their I-20 endorsed for travel every 6 months.
 - **REMEMBER:** students with post-OPT authorization must report employer information within 90 days of their OPT start date. Failure to do this is a violation of F-1 status. In December, 2015, SEVIS started tracking post-OPT unemployment days. **Changes in employment must be reported within 10 days of starting work with a new employer.**
- **In case of an emergency, please carry YU's 24 hour emergency number 212.960.5200**

Automatic revalidation of visa: Most Fs and Js travelling solely to Canada, Mexico, or an adjacent island in the Caribbean, for thirty days or less, are eligible to reenter the U.S. with a valid I-94, even if their visa has expired or they were approved for change of status to F-1 inside the U.S., and their visa is still in the category in which they initially entered the U.S. There are some individuals who will not be eligible for automatic revalidation. Complete information is available online at:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/automatic-revalidation.html>

Every time you return to the U.S.: Print out an electronic I-94 number at www.cbp.gov/i94 The Form I-94 is a record of your U.S. arrival/departure. Some Canadian land borders still provide paper I-94 cards. Please print out an electronic I-94 record after each entry to the U.S. for your records, even if you receive a paper I-94. (Canadians too.)

NEXUS Users: Customs officers at Deferred Inspection and JFK and Newark Liberty Airport advise F and J Nexus users to avoid using Kiosks upon entry to the U.S. Kiosk use can result in admission to the U.S. as a B-2 tourist. Instead, see a designated NEXUS customs officer upon arrival.

Social Security Numbers

A social security number (SSN) is a taxpayer identification number. International students will notice that most businesses, such as banking institutions, credit cards, housing facilities, etc., will ask applicants for a SSN. This number is not required for international students and scholars. Banks will allow a student to open a bank account without a SSN. If anyone encounters difficulty settling in, please visit the OISS. We can assist with letters to help smooth the process.

Students authorized to work inside the U.S. are required to apply for an SSN. If you need assistance contact the OISS.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) will not issue an SSN without proof of employment and a letter certifying student status from the OISS. It is advised that all individuals wait at least 10 days after their initial entry to U.S. to apply for SSN to allow Customs and Border Protection (CBP) time to enter port of entry data into their database.

Employment

F-1 student employment is a benefit of F-1 status and is strictly regulated by U.S. immigration law. The OISS offers workshops to fully inform students about their employment options. All F-1 employment requires OISS oversight and/or authorization. Never work off-campus without prior authorization. It is a violation of F-1 status.

- **On campus employment:** Initially, F-1 students are ONLY allowed to work on-campus. Work is permitted part-time (less than 20 hours per week) during the academic semester and full-time during winter and summer breaks. This benefit is only available if the F-1 student is in legal F-1 student status.
- **Off-campus employment:** Students in valid F-1 status and who have completed one academic year in the U.S. (two required semesters) are eligible to apply for off-campus employment. There are two main types of off-campus employment: Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT).
- **F-2 dependents may not work inside the U.S.**

Banking and Mobile Phones

While some banks require SSNs, many will not if you are able to show proof that that you are an international student. They will require all immigration documentation, including Form I-20, Form I-94, and a valid passport. Many will also require proof of address in the U.S. This proof can be in the form of a Registrar's letter indicating full-time student status and address on file with the school or a bill that has been received at a local address with the student's name on it.

Many mobile phone companies in the U.S. will require a SSN for a monthly service plan. This policy may be non-negotiable with these companies. They may require a large refundable deposit of \$250 to \$500 to make certain that students do not run up a bill and leave the company and the country without paying. Most mobile phone companies will allow students to start pre-paid plans without a large deposit or any hassle. These companies include T-Mobile, Cingular, Verizon, and Sprint. Shop around wisely and choose the best deal for you.

Health Insurance

Cardozo students are automatically enrolled in the Yeshiva University [student health insurance plan](#). Hospital and medical expenses can be very expensive in the U.S. and Yeshiva University is not liable for any costs incurred while students are studying. Yeshiva University's basic insurance plan is offered by Academic Health Plans (AHP). Students who have comparable insurance, usually from an American insurance carrier, can apply to have the insurance charges waived by AHP. The deadline to obtain a waiver for the fall semester is September 30 and for the spring semester February 1. For information about international student health insurance coverage and the waiver process please visit <https://yu.myahpcare.com>. Students may also contact YU's Office of Risk Management for general information about YU's plan and coverage at (212) 960-5400 x6739. Students can obtain information on other companies that specialize in International Health Insurance by doing a Google search for *International Student Insurance*.

Immigration Terms and Definitions

- SEVIS** Student and Exchange Visitor Information System: a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) online database that is used to track U.S. non-immigrants in F, J, and M status.
- DSO** Designated School Official – a school employee appointed by a SEVIS approved school and authorized by the U.S. government to advise and report on F-1 students in SEVIS, on behalf of the school.
- ARO** Alternate Responsible Officer – similar to a DSO, advises and reports on J Exchange Visitors.
- Form I-20** The Form I-20, also known as: *Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status – For Academic and Language Students*, is a U.S. government document on which Yeshiva University certifies to the U.S. government that an individual is eligible for F-1 Student Status. It certifies that an individual has met our admission requirements, have been accepted for a full course of study and has proven to us that they have enough money to study and live in the U.S. without working illegally or suffering from poverty.
- Form DS-2019** *Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status* is the basic document used in the administration of the exchange visitor program. This form permits a prospective exchange visitor to seek an interview at a U.S. embassy or consulate in order to obtain a J visa to enter the U.S. The Form DS-2019 identifies the exchange visitor and their designated sponsor and provides a brief description of the exchange visitor's program, including the start and end date, category of exchange, and an estimate of the cost of the exchange program. Individuals with a temporary academic or research appointment at Yeshiva University will most likely receive a DS-2019.
- Electronic I-94** *Arrival/Departure Record (Electronic I-94)*: An electronic record issued to nonimmigrants when admitted to the U.S. Nonresidents can access their record at www.cbp.gov/i94. Prior to April, 2013, the U.S. government issued the Form I-94, a white card that was attached to the passport upon arrival. Some Canadian ports of entry are still issuing the white card.
- Visa** Travel document issued by a U.S. Department of State Consulate or Embassy to an individual seeking admission to the U.S., which indicates the purpose of their visit. Some types of visas include visitor, student, employment visa, etc. Canadian citizens do not need a visa to enter the U.S., although a SEVIS I-20 and a valid passport are required. A visa is like a house key, once you are here, the visa is no longer necessary and may expire. Because the only purpose of the visa is to apply for entry to the U.S., one can only apply for a visa outside of the U.S. Fs and Js with an expired visa will need to apply for a new one prior to returning to the U.S. [Visa processing and appointment wait times](#)

- Status** Immigration status is legal permission to remain in the U.S. to pursue a specific activity as defined by a visa document, for an authorized period of time. Status = activity + time. Status begins when upon entry to the U.S. or when U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) approves a change of status application inside the U.S. Status ends when a visitor completes the objective of their visit and leaves the U.S. or if a visitor violates any of the regulations governing their immigration status.
- D/S** Duration of Status – Fs and Js are admitted to the U.S. to pursue their academic or research objective for D/S, meaning the amount of time it takes to complete the program objective. This amount of time it takes the average student or EV is noted on the Form I-20 or DS-2019.
- DHS** [U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#) is the federal agency that authorizes non-immigrants or students to be in the U.S. There are three agencies under DHS that students should be aware of:
- ICE** [Immigration and Customs Enforcement \(ICE\)](#): ICE enforces immigration law inside the U.S. The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is under ICE, and is responsible for student immigration regulation and policy, overseeing SEVIS approved schools, and the SEVIS database.
- SEVP** [Student Exchange Visitor Program \(SEVP\)](#) SEVP is under ICE. SEVP manages schools, nonimmigrant students in the F and M visa classifications and their dependents. SEVP utilizes SEVIS to track and monitor schools; exchange visitor programs; and F, M and J nonimmigrants while they visit the United States and participate in the U.S. education system.
- CBP** [Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\)](#): these are the officials at U.S ports of entry who decide who is admitted to the U.S. They are the “gatekeepers.”
- USCIS** [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services \(USCIS\)](#): this is the agency that grants benefits to non-immigrant inside the U.S., such OPT employment authorization and change of status to H-1B.
- DoS** [U.S. Department of State \(DoS\)](#): while not under DHS jurisdiction, DoS works closely with DHS under a memorandum of understanding to issue visas.

Student Resources

- [Education USA](#): DoS network of over 400 student advising centers around the world.
- [Study in the States](#): Students can learn about the process and rules for studying in the U.S.
- [J-1 Exchange Visitor Program](#): Learn about the J Exchange Visitor Program
- [Yeshiva University Pre-Arrival Information for Prospective Students](#)
- [One to World](#): organization offering all types of programming and networking opportunities for international students and scholars in the greater New York City area.

Office of International Student and Scholar Services (OISS)

[Jennifer Golden](#), Director, Office of International Student and Scholar Services
 Yeshiva University – Manhattan Campuses
 500 West 185 Street, Furst Hall, Room 114A
 New York, NY 10033
 646.592.4203 Phone
 646.685.0394 fax
<http://yu.edu/student-life/resources/international/>

[Cheryl Johnson](#), Executive Assistant
 Wilf Campus – 646.592.4203

[Betty Kam](#), Executive Assistant
 Beren Campus – 646.592.4127
 215 Lexington Avenue at 33rd Street

Cardozo Law Office Hours and Location:
Jennifer Golden
Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Room 533