

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Check-In Booklet

(Please bring last page to check-in)

As an international student, you are required to check in at the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) **NO LATER** than 10 days after your arrival in the United States. Failure to do so may result in termination of your I-20. This booklet contains important information that you must know to maintain your immigration status. Please read this document, complete and sign the last page, and bring it along to your Check-In with your passport, visa, I-94 and I-20 to:

Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

MMC Office: SASC 230/Tel: 305-348-2421/E-mail: iss@fiu.edu

BBC Office: WUC 363/Tel: (305) 919-5813/E-mail: bbciss@fiu.edu

During your stay in the U.S., you are subject to many complex immigration laws and regulations that relate to your legal status. Advisors at ISSS are available to answer your questions about your immigration status, but it is **your responsibility to know and abide by the law in order to maintain valid legal status throughout the duration of your stay in the U.S.**

IMMIGRATION RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS

As a non-immigrant international student, you **MUST**:

1. Attend the school stated on your I-20 or DS-2019. Make sure all the information on this document is correct. Names listed on the I-20 or DS-2019 should match the name on your passport.
2. Have a valid passport at all times.
3. You should also be in possession of your I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record) that you can obtain at www.cbp.gov/I94
4. Your F-1 or J-1 visa may expire while you are in the U.S. It must be valid at the time of entry into the U.S. only. If your visa expires while you are in the U.S. you will continue to maintain status and remain legally in the U.S. as long as you are enrolled full-time and following all other F-1 or J-1 regulations.
5. Request a program extension IF you must remain in the U.S. longer than the time stated on your I-20 or DS-2019 in order to complete your program. You **MUST** process a program extension prior to the program end date listed on your I-20 or DS-2019.
6. Report any change in your U.S. address within 10 days of moving by updating your personal information in your account at <https://my.fiu.edu>. Keep ISSS informed of any other changes in your biographical information (e.g. change of legal name due to marriage, etc.). This information is reported to DHS.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

- 1- Register full-time each fall and spring semester. **Undergraduate** students must register for at least **12 credits** per semester and **graduate** students for at least **9 graduate-level credits** per semester. You are not required to register for classes during the summer unless you are **admitted for summer** or completing your degree during the summer.
- 2- Register for **no more than 3 credits** of online coursework to count toward your full-time enrollment each fall and spring semester. You may register for more than 3 online credits only if your total credits exceed the required amount. For example, an undergraduate student may take 15 credits total, 9 in-person credits and 6 online credits, but if he or she needs to drop a class it will have to be an online class that is dropped in order to maintain full-time enrollment: 9 in-person credits + 3 online credits = 12 credits).

- 3- **Registering for all online classes during your final semester is NOT allowed.** You may be able to enroll less than full-time in your final term but you may NOT take all online credits in your final term; this will put you OUT OF STATUS and ineligible to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT).
- 4- Register for at least one in-person class during your final semester. You may enroll less than full-time in your final term if you have submitted a Reduced Course Load form signed by your academic advisor. However, you may NOT take all online credits in your final term (even if you complete your program in the summer semester).
- 5- Dropping classes may put you **OUT OF STATUS**. Discuss this decision with an ISSS advisor **prior** to taking any academic action.
- 6- Maintain good academic standing per university policy and make normal progress towards completing your degree. Academic dismissal from the university due to failing grades will require you to depart the U.S. or immediately transfer to another school.
- 7- If you are transferring or starting a new degree program at another school in the U.S. follow appropriate procedures to have your SEVIS record electronically released to the other school.

TRAVELLING OUT OF THE UNITED STATES

Check your immigration documents to make sure they are in order before leaving the U.S. Please visit ISSS **at least** two weeks before traveling.

If you are an F-1 visa holder and the signature on page 2 of your I-20 is more than 12 months old, you must submit your I-20 to ISSS and request a new travel signature. If you are a J-1 visa holder and the signature on your DS-2019 is more than 6 months old, you must request a new signature.

If your F-1 or J-1 visa will have expired at the time you return to the U.S., you will need to renew your visa while abroad so you must request an updated I-20 or DS-2019 before leaving. You must also submit new funding documents at this time.

- 1- Your passport must never expire and it should be valid at least six months into the future at the time you re-enter the U.S.
- 2- If you are traveling for less than 30 days to Canada, Mexico or certain Caribbean nations (the “adjacent territories”), you may re-enter the U.S. with an expired student visa, as long as you retain your original I-94. However, you should not attempt to do this without first consulting with an ISSS advisor about what documents you will need and obtaining a special memo from ISSS which you should have with you when you travel.
- 3- Review more information about international travel in the ISSS online workshop Travel: **What to Know Before You Go** at <http://iss.fiu.edu/workshop.htm>.

EMPLOYMENT

- 1- Limit on-campus employment to 20 hours or less per week during the fall and spring semesters. You may work up to 40 hours per week on campus during summer semesters and during school breaks. You may NOT work on campus after the last day of classes of your final semester (regardless of what program end date is stated on your I-20). You may NOT work during the grace period following the completion of your program.
- 2- Obtain proper authorization before engaging in any paid or unpaid employment off-campus. This employment must be authorized either by an ISSS advisor or by USCIS. F-1 students should review additional information about policies and procedures for obtaining employment authorization, both on and off campus, in the ISSS F-1 Employment Online Workshop at <http://iss.fiu.edu/workshop.htm>.

COMMUNICATION WITH ISSS

You should respond **IMMEDIATELY** if ISSS contacts you for any reason (check your FIU email account regularly). If ISSS has contacted you, there may be a problem with your SEVIS record or the documents in your file, or you may have done something to jeopardize your status. There may be a limited time to solve the problem before USCIS must be notified so do not wait to take action.

If you have any questions on any aspect of immigration law and regulations related to your status, you should meet with an advisor at ISSS. Bear in mind that you may be given inappropriate advice by other uninformed individuals or sources (including academic advisors, friends, websites) but whenever the matter pertains to your immigration status, you should verify the information you receive with ISSS.

PLEASE KEEP THESE TWO PAGES FOR YOUR RECORDS

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR
 MAINTENANCE OF LEGAL IMMIGRATION STATUS
 FOR STUDENTS IN F-1 OR J-1 STATUS
 (Please bring this page to check-in)**

1. Role of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS). The role or purpose of ISSS in relation to regulations of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is to use our best efforts to provide you with information, counseling, advice, and assistance so that **YOU** can maintain your legal immigration status.

2. Limitations of ISSS. While the staff attempts to provide the most professional and competent assistance possible, they are neither employees of DHS nor attorneys specializing in immigration law. You have the right to consult an immigration officer and/or attorney specializing in immigration law at any time.

3. Responsibility for Compliance with Federal Laws and Regulations and for Maintenance of Legal Immigration Status. You and **only** you are responsible for (a) fully and properly complying with all laws and regulations of the U.S. government and its agencies including DHS and (b) maintaining your legal status and ensuring that any necessary documents are forwarded to DHS in a timely manner.

*By my **initials below**, I verify that I have read these sections of the document and understand the information.*

IMMIGRATION RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS _____ ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS _____
 TRAVELLING OUT OF THE UNITED STATES _____ COMMUNICATION WITH ISSS _____

*By my **signature** below, I further verify that I have attended ISSS International Student Session and/or have read the information in this document and the ISSS Website, which summarize my rights and responsibilities as an F-1 or J-1 non-immigrant. Because it is my responsibility to maintain my legal status, I hereby release Florida International University, faculty, staff, agents or employees from any responsibility for consequences resulting from my failure to maintain proper legal immigration status.*

 Student's Signature

____/____/____
 Date

 Last Name

 First Name

 Panther ID#

Country of Citizenship: _____

PLEASE BRING THIS PAGE TO YOUR CHECK-IN