



## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE

Welcome to Berkeley College! If you need assistance, please feel welcome to meet with an International Student Advisor.

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### F-1 STUDENT STATUS

The Department of Homeland Security places the responsibility on international students to obey the laws associated with their F-1 Student Status.

***Students who violate any of the laws may face serious consequences.***

### F-1 RESPONSIBILITIES

- Register as a full-time student every semester, except during scheduled breaks, approved vacations, and approved leave of absences. To pursue a full-time program of study, students must register for a minimum of 12 credits every semester.
- Report changes of address to the International Division within 10 days.
- Keep passport valid at all times.
- Complete degree requirements by the program end date listed on your I-20. If you need additional time, you must meet with an International Advisor at least 30 days before the end date.
- Meet with an International Student Advisor *before* changing your degree and/or major, transferring to another school, taking a leave of absence, renewing your visa, taking a vacation, taking online courses, changing your immigration status, dropping below full-time, withdrawing from school, pursuing and type of employment.
- Notify International Student Advisor if your documents are lost or stolen.
- Make sure the information on you I-20 is accurate at all times.
- Review your name on all official documents for consistency.

- Verify if you need to file income taxes every year while present in the USA. You will need to speak with a professional tax advisor for any tax related questions. Sprintax is an online U.S. tax prep system for international students that you may use at [www.sprintax.com](http://www.sprintax.com)

## DOCUMENTS

It is important to keep original documents in a safe location. You should always keep copies of your documents. If your documents are lost or stolen, please notify an International Student Advisor immediately.

## PASSPORT

A passport is a travel document that proves your citizenship. If you are reentering the USA, your passport must be valid at least 6 months in the future. To renew your passport, please contact your country's embassy or consulate in the USA.

## SEVIS I-20 - Certificate of Eligibility

The SEVIS I-20 document is issued by an International Student Advisor through SEVIS, a database that allows the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to receive information about international students. Students are responsible for making sure that information on the I-20 is accurate at all times.

## VISA

A visa is a document that allows a visitor to travel to a U.S. port of entry and request permission to enter the United States.

Visas must be valid upon entering the USA. There are some exceptions that allow students to travel without a valid visa. Please meet with an International Student Advisor for information.

Visas do not need to be valid after having been admitted to the USA and while you are maintaining your SEVIS I-20 status.

If you are traveling outside of the USA and need to renew your visa, it is best to meet with an International Advisor before travel.

## I-94 ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE DOCUMENT

I-94 records prove that a U.S. immigration officer has given you permission to enter the USA. Since your purpose is for studying full-time, your I-94 should indicate that you have been granted F-1 status for D/S. D/S means “duration of status”, meaning as long as you are maintaining your student status.

## TRAVEL

If you plan to travel outside the USA, please meet with an International Student Advisor before leaving. You should visit the International Office with your SEVIS I-20 for signature verification

## DEPENDENTS

The children or spouses of F-1 students may be eligible to stay in the U.S. while the F-1 student is maintaining status. If you are interested in bringing your dependent, please meet with an International Advisor.

## VACATION

In order to be eligible for vacation, students must complete at least 2 consecutive semesters. Students are eligible to take one semester off and remain in the USA after one academic year of enrollment. Students are expected to inform an International Advisor about their plans to take a vacation prior to the start of a semester.

## GRACE PERIOD AFTER PROGRAM COMPLETION

Students are expected to complete their degree requirements before the program end date listed on their I-20. Students are granted a 60- day grace period after successful completion of their program or post-graduation practical training (OPT). During this period, students can prepare to leave the USA, change to a different education level or program, or change to a different status.

## DRIVER’S LICENSE

Please meet with an International Advisor before applying.

## ID CARDS

If you do not have a driver’s license, you can apply for a NY, NJ or NYC identification card. Please meet with an International Advisor for information.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

It is very important for international students to obtain health insurance. The USA does not have a nationalized health care system. As a result, students are responsible for paying all costs associated with medical and dental care. To learn about different insurance plans, please contact an International Advisor.

## F-1 EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

### On-Campus Employment

Students are eligible for on-campus employment up to 20 hours per week while maintaining F-1 Status. Students can visit the International Office for a letter to bring with them to the Social Security Office.

### Off-Campus Employment

Students must receive approval to work legally off-campus. To learn about off-campus employment, please meet with an International Advisor.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

Only students holding F-1 status who are authorized to work in the USA may apply for a Social Security Number (SSN). A SSN is issued to track earnings over a worker's lifetime. You may visit your International Advisor for assistance with this if you are eligible to work on/off-campus.