

Maintaining Your F-1 Student Status

Under U.S. law, **you are fully responsible for abiding by the rules governing your F-1 student status.** The Tompkins Cortland Community College Designated School Officials (DSO's) will help you understand these rules, but you are required to follow the Requirements and Responsibilities of F-1 Student Status explained below.

Listing of Campus P/DSO's:

Karen Miller – Room 248
Merryn Clay – Room 248

Maria Barrero – Room 248
Barbara Thayer- Room 225

REQUIREMENTS OF F-1 STATUS:

The campus DSO's in The Global Initiatives Office (Global Office- Room 248), are required to report to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in SEVIS when an F-1 student does not fulfill the following requirements of status.

1. Always be enrolled in a full-time course load

- All students on F-1 visas must register for and **maintain a full-time** course load each semester (12 credits or more). **NOTE:** A reduced course load is possible if fewer courses are needed to complete your degree requirements in your **final** semester.
- If you are considering **on-line classes**, please note that you may only take one on-line course toward the fulfillment of your full-time course load, per semester.

2. Obtain permission to be less than full time BEFORE you drop, withdraw or stop attending

- If you do not believe you will be able to be full time for any reason, contact the Global Office before you drop, withdraw or stop attending class.
- There are a few limited exceptions to the full time requirement for which you might qualify if you obtain permission **in advance**. *Authorization form available in the Global Office.*

3. Only work as authorized

- F-1 students may work on-campus up to **20 hours per week when school**, is in session and full time during official school breaks.
- These 20 hours include the work you do for an assistantship (i.e. RA position) if you have one. In order to work off-campus, you must get permission from the Global Office and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.
- **Never work without authorization.** Get information in the Global Office about how F-1 students can apply to work on and off campus.
- **Note this:** Tompkins Cortland Community College limit for full-time enrolled students is 15 hours per week.

4. Complete your program of study no later than the completion date on your Form I-20

- You are required to complete your program of study by the completion date on your I-20.
- If you feel that you will not complete your program by the completion date on your Form I-20, you must apply for a **program extension before the completion date expires** and get an updated Form I-20.
- See our *F-1 I-20 Extension Form* for more information and instructions and talk to a DSO. *F-1 form and instructions are available in the Global Office or our website.*

5. Obtain a SEVIS transfer to attend another U.S. school

- If you plan to attend another U.S. school, college or university, you must notify the Global Office and be "Transferred Out" in SEVIS before your F-1 status ends.
- There is a transfer request form that requires your acceptance letter from your new institution.
- See the Global Office for this request form **within 60 days** of your degree completion date, **or** before the next required academic term starts if your completion date includes the next academic semester.

6. Changing Degree Programs

- If you have changed the degree program that is listed on your Form I-20, your SEVIS record must be updated. You need to fill out The **F-1 Data update Form** available in the Global Office or on our website and submit it in to one of our DSO to update your I-20.

7. Depart the U.S. within 60 days of your program completion date or Optional Practical Training end date

- If you have completed your program of study you must depart the U.S. within 60 days.
- If you have completed your Optional Practical Training after completion of your studies and have no further plans to study, you must depart the U.S. within 60 days of your EAD card's end date.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES OF F-1 STUDENTS**1. Keep your passport valid at all times. You must have a valid passport at all times.**

- If your passport will expire, contact your country's embassy or consulate in the United States to renew it.

2. Notification of Data Changes- You must notify your DSO of any changes to:

- Name change (must be documented in your passport)
- Change of address (notify your DSO within 10 days of the address change)
- Change of degree program
- Intent to return home, apply for off-campus employment, or plans to transfer to another college or university (there may be forms that also need to be completed as stated above).

There is a F-1 Data update form available from the Global Office and our website.

4. Get a travel endorsement on your Form 1-20 every term to return to the U.S.

- If you plan to leave the U.S. for any reason (winter/spring breaks, summer vacation, etc.), you must have Page 2 of your SEVIS I-20 Form signed by one of the College's DSO's.
- Failure to have your I-20 signed will result in difficulties when trying to re-enter the U.S. For the same reason, please make sure that your I-20 and I-94 are valid at all times.
- Students planning to travel to Canada should consult the following application to determine whether or not a Canadian Visa is required: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/tourist.asp>

5. Income Tax Forms:

- ALL international students who were in the U.S. during the last academic year are required to complete [Form 8843](#) at the **beginning of each spring semester** whether you earned income or not. We will send more information on this in early Spring semester.
- This form is completed beginning January each year and the deadline date to **file it*** is usually around April 15 of each year. **NOTE:** If you were employed, you will also need to complete additional federal and N.Y.S. income tax forms.

****Completed form should be mailed here:***

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service
Austin, TX 73301

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES:

- 1. Registration:** In order for us to register your status each and EVERY semester in the SEVIS system, you need to be enrolled and completing at least 12 credits (must include a minimum of 9 credits of courses. **We complete this registration on the last day of the add/drop period.**
- 2. Transferring to another college:** We must complete your transfer in SEVIS within **60 days of your completion date on your I-20**. After that point you will be seen as a having completed your program and will need to begin the process of paying for a new SEVIS fee and consulate appointment if your travel visa has expired.
- 3. Optional and Curricular Practical Training (OPT and CPT):** For additional information on how to work legally outside the college on OPT or CPT, please come by the Global Initiatives Office for handouts and the application materials or on our website. This process needs to be done a **MINIMUM of three (3) months before you intend to begin working**. Also, you need to have completed an academic year's worth of full-time, compliant coursework in order to be eligible for this F-1 benefit.
- 4. Traveling reminder:** You have **60 days to travel** within the United States after your completion date on your I-20. Remember to get your 2nd page travel authorization page of your I-20 signed by a DSO **WELL** in advance of traveling while you are still on status.

Questions? Concerns? Come by the Global Office (248) and make an appointment with a DSO
Email Maria Barrero - meb@tompcorkortland.edu