

## Introduction

It is your responsibility to understand and comply with the terms of your immigration status during your stay in the United States. A violation of the immigration regulations (for example, failure to maintain a full-time credit load) could jeopardize your F-1 status and legal stay in the U.S. Review this information carefully and the International Program Director if you have questions.

## What is F-1 “Status?”

“Status” is your nonresident category officially granted by an immigration official. To be in F-1 “status” means that you are legally in the U.S. and have benefits and restrictions specified in the immigration regulations for the F-1 visa category. You gain F-1 status either by entering the U.S. with F-1 documents or, for people already in the U.S. in a different status, by applying to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for a change of status.

## Period of Authorized Stay

Your admission to the U.S. is for “**duration of status**,” meaning the length of your F-1 status.

### F-1 status covers the period when:

- You are a full-time registered student making normal progress toward completing your program at King’s Schools.
- **You are in your 60-day “grace period”** to prepare to depart the U.S. or change to another status; the grace period starts when you complete your Program of Study. Your length of authorized stay within the U.S. is not related to your F-1 visa expiration date. Your length of authorized stay depends on you following the F-1 rules.

## Documents

Federal law requires you to always carry “registration documents”, including your I-20 and passport. We suggest that these documents be kept in a secure location such as a bank safe deposit box, and you should carry photocopies. However, if you are traveling outside the Seattle area you should carry the original documents with you. If you are traveling by air, train, bus, or ship, you may be required to produce these documents before boarding. Keep photocopies of all your documents in a separate location in the event your documents are lost or stolen.

## Passport

Your passport must be valid at all times. Keep your passport and other important documents in a safe place, such as a bank safe deposit box. Report a lost or stolen passport to the police because your government may require a police report before issuing a new passport. To renew or replace your passport, contact your country’s consulate in the U.S.

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## Visa

The visa is the stamp that the U.S. consular officer **places** on a page in your passport. The visa permits you to apply for admission into the U.S. as an F-1 student, and does not need to remain valid while you are in the U.S. **The F-1 visa is specifically for entry into the U.S. After you are in the U.S., the F-1 visa might expire before your status expires, or your status might end before your visa expires.**

**If your visa expires while you are in the U.S., the next time you travel abroad you must obtain a new F-1 visa before returning to the U.S. Visas can only be obtained outside of the U.S. at a U.S. consulate.** Exceptions to this rule exist for short trips to Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean islands.

## I-20 Certificate of Eligibility

Issued by the King's Schools International Program Director/PDSO, this document allows you to apply for an F-1 visa if you are outside the U.S., apply for F-1 status within the U.S., enter and reenter the U.S. in F-1 status, and prove your eligibility for various F-1 benefits. The I-20 indicates the institution in which you are permitted to study, your program of study, and the dates of eligibility. The I-20 must remain valid at all times. Allowing the I-20 to expire before you complete your academic program is a violation of F-1 status.

## I-94 Arrival & Departure Record

The I-94 is the record of your entry to the U.S. Most I-94 records are now electronic and can be accessed online.

You might need a printout of your electronic I-94 information to apply for various benefits such as a Washington State ID card or a Social Security Number. You can obtain a printout of your I-94 record on the I-94 Website.

## Events That Require You to Update Your I-20

Many kinds of updates must be reported to the Department of Homeland Security through SEVIS and must be changed on your I-20. Notify the International Program Director/PDSO of the following changes and request an updated I-20. Keep every I-20 for your permanent record, even after you graduate. Do not discard the old ones, even from previous schools.

King's International Student files are archived and destroyed after several years, so it is your responsibility to keep your I-20s in case you need them to apply for future immigration benefits.

## Changing Schools

You must register full-time at King's Schools since the International Program Director/PDSO issued your I-20 and oversees your SEVIS record. If you decide to transfer to another school, contact your International Program Director/PDSO prior to completing your final Term at King's.

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## **Full-time Registration Requirements and Exceptions**

In general, F-1 students must be registered **full-time**.

**Do not register for fewer than the required number of credits or withdraw from a course without first receiving permission from your International Program Director/PDSO.**

## **Making Normal Progress**

To maintain status, an F-1 student is also required to “make normal progress.” Making normal progress includes, but is not limited to, enrolling in the proper courses required for program completion, maintaining satisfactory academic progress, and continually meeting all institutional enrollment requirements.

## **Change of Address**

Any change of address must be reported to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) within 10 days. Update your local address by meeting with your International Program Director/PDSO and advising of your new address. Please NOTE: your local US address must be your physical address, not a P.O. Box. To update your permanent foreign address, which must be a non-U.S. address, please contact your International Program Director/PDSO.

## **Graduation or Completion of Your Program**

The end of your academic program affects your F-1 status. After you graduate or complete your program, you have a 60-day grace period to either be transferred to another school/university or go back to your home country where your visa was issued.

If you do not complete your educational objective (for example, if you withdraw from your program), you are not eligible for the 60-day grace period and you must leave the U.S. immediately or within 15 days from withdrawing from your program.

## **Loss of F-1 Status**

If you violate the immigration regulations, you will lose your F-1 status.

Students may be able to regain valid F-1 status either through a reinstatement application to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or through travel and reentry with a new I-20/new SEVIS record. The appropriate option will depend on your individual circumstances; We strongly recommend that students in this situation consult with an experienced immigration attorney.