

Maintaining F-1 Student Status

F-1 students are admitted into the country for the purpose of being a full-time student. As such, there are certain responsibilities and expectations during your stay in F-1 status. This handout summarizes these requirements; however, you are welcome to speak to the Associate Director of International Students for further information or clarification on what is expected and what is allowed during your time in F-1 status.

- **Report to the Associate Director for International Students** with your passport, visa and Form I-20 upon arrival at Goucher
- **Enroll at the school that issued your Form I-20.**
- If you transfer schools, follow all **transfer regulations**.
- **Attend school full-time**, which is a minimum of 12 credit hours for undergraduate students and 9 credit hours for graduate students. “Audit” courses do not count towards this requirement. If you would like to reduce your course load for medical or academic reasons, you must **first obtain permission** from the Associate Director for International Students.
- Make **satisfactory academic progress**. Students must remain in good academic standing.
- Report any **address changes within 10 days**
- Report any **changes or errors** in your legal name, country of citizenship, program of study, or financial sponsorship to the Associate Director for International Students within 10 days.
- Have a **passport** that is valid **at least six months into the future**.
- **Do not work without authorization**. Even with authorization, you must **limit all employment** to 20 hours a week or less while school is in session. (Students are allowed to work full-time in authorized employment when school is not in session.)
- **Complete your program by the end date stated in the 3rd section of your Form I-20**. If you are unable to complete your program due to valid academic or medical reasons, you must request an I-20 extension prior to the expiration date of your current one.
- When you are **near the end of your program, do one of the following**:
 - Obtain a Form I-20 for a **new school or program** within 60 days after degree completion, and attend the next available semester, with no more than five months between programs
 - Apply for **Optional Practical Training**. Please see the handout Optional Practical Training for more information about the timing of the application.
 - Apply for **another immigration status within 60 days**
 - **Depart the country within 60 days** of your program completion.

The importance of following all of the F-1 regulations has recently become more critical as a result of the new USCIS unlawful presence policy memo that went into effect on August 9, 2018. Days of unlawful presence will now begin accruing as of the date of a violation of status, rather than after a determination by an immigration official. If a person accrues 180 days of unlawful presence and leaves the country, there would be a 3-year bar to re-entry to the U.S.; if a person accrues 1 year of unlawful presence and leaves the country, there would be a 10-year bar