



QUINSIGAMOND
Community College

F-1 Visa

International Students Guide



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INTRODUCTION

The International Students' Guide to QCC provides information about government and academic regulations that pertain to students on an F-1 visa. Strict observance of these regulations is extremely important for all F-1 international students so that they can continue their studies in the United States and avoid deportation. As an international student, one of your main priorities is to make certain that you remain in-status. You must abide by the many immigration rules and regulations in order to do this. If you have further questions about these regulations, you should contact the International Student Advisor.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISOR

Your International Student Advisers/DSOs are located in the Admissions Office. They are here to advise all F-1 students about staying in status, program extension, transferring to other schools, obtaining work permits, how to obtain social security cards and driver's licenses or additional needs. If you are on an F-1 visa and wish to set up an appointment with your International Student Advisor/DSO, please contact the Admissions Office, email admissions@qcc.mass.edu or call 508.854.4262.

For academic advising you must make an appointment with an Admissions DSO located in the Harrington Learning Center, room 201. There are specific rules that F-1 students must adhere to when choosing classes.

For more information about the international student application visit: www.qcc.edu/int

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

In the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the United States has introduced new immigration regulations and become stricter in enforcing existing regulations. Therefore, it is very important for international students to make sure they maintain status as an F-1 student while at QCC.

The United States immigration law classifies international students in the United States as temporary non-immigration aliens (“aliens” means any person not a citizen or national of the United States). As an international student, you are in the United States on a non-immigrant visa.

The following information is meant to make you aware of your rights and responsibilities as an international student. It is not meant to be a complete listing of all government regulations as they pertain to you.

Maintaining Status

The responsibility for maintaining your visa status lies with you. Being out of status can have serious consequences for your academic plans. There are several important steps you must follow to maintain your status:



1. **Keep your passport valid.** Your passport must be valid for a minimum of 6 months into the future.
2. **Do not work off-campus without approval from the International Student Advisor**
3. **Maintain full-time enrollment and normal progress toward your degree.** To remain in status, you must carry a full course of study each semester (12 credits) except for summer terms. For valid educational or medical reasons, you can be allowed to carry a reduced course load, per approval of the International Student Advisor. Permission must be obtained prior to enrollment for a

reduced course load. Additionally, F-1 students can only enroll in one online class per semester.

4. **Follow the F-1 reporting requirements.** You are required to complete the SEVIS Immigration/Address Change and Emergency Contact Information Forms when you arrive as a new student or immediately whenever there are any changes in your programs of study, address, phone or email. ***Failure to comply with any reporting requirements will cause your status to be terminated in SEVIS.*** If you are completing Optional Practical Training (OPT), you are still considered an F-1 student and must still report any address changes to the International Student Advisor.
5. **Attend the school you are authorized to attend.** You should be attending the school the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) last authorized for attendance (see the USCIS stamp in the upper right corner of the I-20) – or the school that processed a transfer with the USCIS.
6. **Complete program before your end date.** The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regulations refer to the date you complete all requirements for a program of study (not to the date you participate in graduation ceremonies) as your end date. The service ignores your graduation date because it realizes that many students may complete requirements for a degree any day during the year. This means that the last day of an academic term may not be the date you complete degree requirements. Your lawful F-1 status expires 60 days after the date you complete degree requirements and you are expected to leave the country by that date unless you:
 - a.) Previously file an application for optional practical training (OPT).
 - b.) Request and are granted an Extension BEFORE your end date.
 - c.) Make other arrangements to lawfully remain in the United States.
7. **Notify an international student advisor if you change your major**
8. **Follow the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) procedures for transferring from one school to another.**
9. **Limit on-campus employment to 20 hours per week while school is in session.** Full-time on-campus employment is

permitted during vacation periods, such as summer, as long as you are enrolled full-time the term before and intend to be full-time the following term.

Department of Homeland Security

With the creation of the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS), 22 different agencies and government organizations all come under the same department. The primary objective of the DHS is to protect the United States against terrorist attacks, but it also exists to enhance public service. Three major Bureaus under DHS are charged with the areas formerly under Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS).

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

The primary functions of ICE are:

- Customs investigations
- Customs air and marine interdiction
- Immigration and customs intelligence
- Detention and removal



U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

As a single unified border agency, BCBP is responsible for border patrol, customs service and immigration inspection at the points of entry (land borders, airports, and harbors). When you enter the United States, your first contact will be with an agent from this agency.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

Most adjudication of immigrant and non-immigrant benefits will be done by USCIS either at the local USCIS Office or by mailing applications to the USCIS Service Center. As a student, you might be filing an application for change of status, for Optional Practical Training, or for reinstatement. These are all examples of application adjudicated by USCIS.

Passport

Before coming to the United States, you were issued a passport by your government, allowing you to leave and re-enter your own country. Your passport must always be valid for a period of six months longer than you expect to stay in the United States. If necessary, your own consulate or embassy in the United States will extend your passport. Consult them to learn what forms and fees are required. If you have a valid United States visa in an expired passport, you can still use the visa as long as it is presented at the port of entry together with a new and valid passport.



Visa

The United States visa is the label placed by the United States consular office on a page of your passport. It indicates that the consular office has determined that you are qualified to apply for admission to the United States in a particular immigration classification. A valid visa does not ensure an alien's entry into the United States. An immigration officer at the port of entry makes this decision.

A visa contains the following information:

- A visa number
- The location of the issuing consular post
- A visa classification (F-1, J-1, etc)
- The date of issuance
- The expiration date
- The number of applications for admission to the United States for which it is valid (In some cases, an indefinite number of applications for entry to the United States are allowed during the visa's validity period. If this is the case, you'll see the word "multiple" or the letter "M").

The expiration date on the visa does not have any relationship to the length of time you can stay in the United States. It only indicates the length of time it is valid to present to immigration when applying for entry to the United States. The duration of your legal stay in the United States will be noted on your **Departure Record**, also known as **Form I-94**.

Form I-94

Form I-94 records your arrival date in the United States and should remain in your passport until you leave the country again. It also indicates the type of visa you hold and your expected date of departure from the United States. F-1 and J-1 visa holders will get a notation, Duration of Stay (D/S), meaning duration of status.

You can obtain your I-94 at this website: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov> . Follow the instructions on the form and on the website.

With the latest changes in the immigration regulations, it has become very important that you maintain your status! Failing to do so can have serious consequences, such as being denied entry to the United States.

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRAIRA)

The provisions of IIRAIRA affect all non-immigrants, and in some cases, even immigrants (green card holders). As an F-1 student, you need to know, as a minimum, the following about IIRAIRA: **Unlawful presence in the United States can result in up to a 10-year bar from re-entering the United States.** For the purpose of this regulation, you are unlawfully present when an immigration judge or a USCIS officer determines that a status violation has occurred.

F-1 Visa Regulations

If you were issued an I-20 form in order to obtain your US visa, you are on an F-1 visa. Any accompanying family members will be on an F-2 visa, unless they are full-time students as well. The following is a very brief overview of F-1 regulations.

Duration of Status (D/S)

Form I-20 should have D/S written on it. Duration of status is defined as the period of time necessary to complete a full course of study in any educational program. This also includes any authorized period of practical training following completion of that program plus 60 days in which to depart the United States. The term “duration of status” is NOT an indication that you can stay in the United States indefinitely as long as you are enrolled at a university.

I-20

The I-20 is your student permanent record of non-immigrant F-1 student status in the United States. The I-20 is used to record work and practical training. It should remain with your passport and should not be surrendered when leaving the United States.

Leaving the US Temporarily and Re-entering

If you are returning to the United States from a temporary absence of five months or less, you may be re-admitted to the United States upon producing a properly endorsed I-20 ID.



- 1. You must alert your International Student Advisor/DSO before you leave in order to get your leave of absence approved.**
- 2. You must have at least 6 months on your F-1 visa and your I-20 must be current to re-enter the United States of America.**

F-1 visa holders need the following documents to re-enter the US after a temporary absence:

1. A valid I-20 form endorsed by the International Student Advisor/DSO. (Note: A new form I-20 is only required if there has been a change in your field of study, degree program, or in the source or amount of funding if all lines of endorsement are completed).
2. Valid passport and United States visa.
3. Verification of adequate financial support.
4. We also recommend that you carry with you an official copy of your transcript or current class schedule.

Dependents

Your spouse and/or children may enter the United States on an F-2 visa provided they have evidence of adequate financial support.

- A person on an F-2 visa may NOT be employed under any circumstances. A separate I-20 form must be issued for the spouse/child.
- Spouses are NOT allowed to take classes in a program of study.
- Children are allowed to study full time up to twelfth grade.

Termination

If you are out of compliance with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) rules for F-1 students, you are subject to termination on the SEVIS database. **Termination means that you are no longer in legal status as an F-1 student and could be subject to deportation.** If you are terminated, you may also have difficulty re-entering the US in the future. To stay in status with USCIS and avoid termination, follow the rules outlined in this International Student Guide. If you are unclear about a situation, please see your International Student Advisor/DSO in the Admissions Office. If you are terminated and wish to file for reinstatement, see your International Student Advisor/DSO immediately.

Reinstatement

If you discover that you have violated one of the provisions of the immigration laws pertaining to international student status, contact your International Student Advisor/DSO immediately. The rules on reinstatement are very complex and time will be of the essence.

Reinstatement is not available to all international students – certain violations of these immigration laws pertaining to international students make you ineligible for reinstatement.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS



F-1 students must be enrolled full-time during the entire academic year to maintain their international student status. Full-time enrollment is 12 or more credits for each academic semester.

In your final semester of study, you may enroll in less than full-time credit hours if those are the only credit hours you need to graduate. You will still be considered a full time student for immigration purposes.

After you graduate, you have 60 days to prepare to travel back to your home country.

If you fail to maintain full-time student status, immediately contact your International Student Advisor/DSO.

Failing/dropping a class

What happens if I fail a class?

If you fail a class, even though you might not earn the credit towards graduation, you are still considered to be a full-time student for immigration purposes.

What happens if I drop a class?

If you drop a class and fall under 12 credit hours, you will most likely no longer be considered a full time student and fall out of status. This would

terminate your VISA in SEVIS. You must contact your International Student Advisor/DSO in Admissions Office before you decide to drop or even change your classes. If you skip this step, you will be considered an illegal alien, subject to deportation, from the day you drop the course. You will not be able to easily reenter the US in the future.

Summer Vacation

During the summer, you can still stay in the United States. You are considered to be in status if you are eligible and intend to register for the next semester.

Illness or Medical Condition

If you have an illness or other medical condition it may be possible to interrupt or reduce a full course of study and still be considered in status. You must immediately notify your International Student Advisor/DSO and you must have a doctor or a licensed clinical psychologist explain the need for a less than full-time course load and submit a Medical Excuse Form signed by the health care provider. This privilege can only be granted up to 12 months and you must resume a full course of study upon recovery.

Changes in Study or Degree

If you are planning to change classes, change majors, or finish one degree and start another, you must report these changes to your International Student Advisor/DSO.



At that time, your International Student Advisor/DSO will issue you a new I-20 Form which will be sent to USCIS.

Concurrent Enrollment

You may be enrolled in two different approved schools at one time as long as the International Student Advisor/DSO approves this and as long as the enrollment in both schools amounts to a full time course of study. The

school from which you will earn your degree should issue and update your I-20. You must fill-out a **Concurrent Enrollment Form** authorizing you for concurrent enrollment. This form must be submitted to the International Student Advisor/DSO within the first two weeks of the semester with documentation verifying registration in the other school's course(s), such as a tuition payment receipt or a course registration receipt.

Distance Education

No more than the equivalent of **one** online/distance education class (or three credits per session) may be counted towards the "full course of study" requirement.



Reduced Course Load

You may study less than full time and have a reduced course load (carry half a course load or more) if you:

1. Are in your first semester in the US and there is initial English language difficulty or there is unfamiliarity with American teaching methods or improper course placement.
2. Have a documented medical reason.
3. **OR** if you are in your last/final semester of your degree program.

For each of these cases, you must see your International Student Advisor/DSO who can update your SEVIS record. **The International Student Advisor/DSO is the only official who can authorize a less than full time course load.**

Program Extension

If you are unable to complete your program of studies by the end date listed on Page 1 of your I-20, you must see your International Student Advisor/DSO. Extensions are only granted due to an academic or medical reason, (such as changes of major or documented illness). If you don't apply for and receive a program extension, you will be terminated in the SEVIS system upon the end date and will not be eligible for Optional

Practical Training. Under these circumstances you **must** apply for reinstatement and/or leave the country.

Please note that not successfully passing courses is NOT an acceptable reason for a program extension under the USCIS rules.

Transfer

If you are considering transferring to another university in the United States, you need to inform your International Student Advisor/DSO once you have decided to transfer. QCC will need to enter a “release” date into SEVIS and indicate the school to which you are transferring. You are eligible to transfer to another school if:



1. You are in good F-1 status.
2. You have been pursuing a full-course of study at the school you were last authorized to attend during the term immediately preceding the transfer.
3. You intend to pursue a full course of study at the new school.
4. You are financially able to attend the proposed institution.

You must fill-out a Transfer Release Form and submit it along with your acceptance letter from the college you will be attending. Your International Student Advisor/DSO at your new school will create your new I-20. You should be certain that you have been accepted and will definitely attend the new school before you fill out this request. **A transfer request can only be made to transfer to one school.**

Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

SEVIS is a government tracking system for international students and exchange visitors who are in the United States on F or J visas. The program facilitates timely reporting and monitoring of international students and exchange visitors. All F-1, F-2, J-1, and J-2 visa holders have a permanent SEVIS ID number. All actions taken by the international student advisor, the

US Consulate issuing the initial visa, and the immigration inspector at the port of entry, are recorded in the individual's SEVIS record.

QCC is required to keep SEVIS up to date with the following information:

- Your local and home addresses
- Your program of study
- Your enrollment status
- Any employment we have authorized or recommended
- Program extension
- Dismissal from QCC
- Transfer to another school/program in the United States
- Completion of studies date



We will do everything possible to update each student SEVIS record as we become aware of your changes. However, it is ultimately YOUR responsibility to inform the International Student Advisor/DSO of any changes in your circumstances. All reporting in SEVIS must be completed within specific time frames, thus it is VERY important that you inform us immediately when you change your address, major, etc.

Furthermore, certain actions on your part require prior approval by the International Student Advisor/DSO and update in SEVIS. If you enroll for fewer than 12 credit hours, you need to see the International Student Advisor/DSO prior to enrolling. If you need an extension, you must apply for the extension prior to the expiration date on your current I-20/DS-2019.

Finally, because we have to report your enrollment status every semester, it is very important that you adhere to the enrollment dates. **You must complete your enrollment and registration no later than within the first week of classes.**

EMPLOYMENT REGULATIONS

Overview of Employment for Students with F-1 Visa

The basic requirement for all types of employment is that you must maintain lawful F-1 status. Employment is defined as work performed or services provided in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, room and/or board, or any other benefit. Whether you work on or off campus, you are protected by the same laws that protect American citizens in the workplace.



A Note of Caution

Working improperly or without authorization is a serious violation of your status. Due to several tracking systems now established in the US, the USCIS can easily trace working illegally. This tracking is often used when a student re-enters the country, applies for Optional Practical Training, or applies for a change in status (such as an H1B visa or Permanent Residency). A record of illegal employment will not only cause you to immediately lose your status, but it may lead to deportation and being barred from re-entering the US for up to 10 years. Therefore, it is essential that you consider these ramifications and carefully read over the information provided here because it is ultimately your responsibility to comply with all Immigration regulations that apply to F-1 students. Always ask your International Student Advisor/DSO for guidance if you have any questions.

Social Security Card

After you are offered a job and in order to earn money, you must have a social security card. In order to obtain a social security number, you must have a letter from your International Student Advisor/DSO, explaining that you are in status and have a job. You should then take this letter, along with your I-20 and passport, to the Social Security Office in Worcester.

Employment Eligibility Verification

When you begin work, you and your employer must complete a form entitled “Employment Eligibility Verification” (USCIS Form I-9), which the employer retains. The **I-9** (at the college Human Resource Office) must be updated each time you receive a renewal of your work permission. Your I-20 will have an employment authorization on page 3. An employer does not have to meet Labor Department “Attestation” requirements when employing students under curricular practical training.

Social Security and Other Taxes

In general, F-1 students who have been in the US less than five years are exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A.) taxes. Your earnings, however, are subject to applicable federal, state, and local taxes. Students must file a tax return on or before *April 15th* each year, which will determine if any of the withheld taxes can be refunded. An F-1 student on curricular practical training does not need Social Security and Medicare taxes withheld from his/her salary.

TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT

There are four possible ways you can be legitimately employed, according to USCIS regulations. Under specified conditions, you can be employed in the following ways:

1. On campus
2. Off-campus by being granted Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
3. Off-campus by being granted Optional Practical Training (OPT)
4. Summer / Holiday employment
5. Off campus employment based on Severe Economic Hardship

On-Campus Employment

When you are issued a Form I-20 by a specific school, you may work on that campus up to *20 hours per week* when school is in session, and *20 or*

more hours per week during the weeks when classes are not in session (this includes summer).

If you have been issued an I-20 to begin a new program and intend to enroll for the next regular academic year, term, or session at that school, you may work on campus up to 30 days before your classes begin.

If you exceed 20 hours of work per week, you will automatically fall out of status and be terminated in the SEVIS system. It is your responsibility to keep track of your hours. For this reason, you should not allow anyone else to sign off on your timecard for you (this includes your supervisor). If you fall out of status, or are waiting for a pending change of status to F-1, you are not eligible to work on campus until USCIS reinstates you. *You may not engage in on-campus employment after completing a course of study.*

Off-Campus Employment

You cannot work off-campus during the first nine months as an international student. After nine months of full-time enrollment, you may only work off campus through the Optional Practical Training (OPT) program or through the Curricular Practical Training (CPT) program.

Summer / Holiday Employment

After completing your first year as a full-time student you may seek employment in the summer or holiday time. You may work up to *40 hours per week* and must follow the rules above for on and off-campus employment.

Off-campus Employment Based on Severe Economic Hardship

If you are experiencing severe economic hardship based on unforeseen circumstances beyond your control, you may be eligible to apply for

Employment Authorization from USCIS. You should see the International Student Advisor/DSO before applying.

TRAINING REGULATIONS

Practical Training

Two types of practical training are available to you if you have been enrolled as a full-time student for at least one full academic year. Part time practical training is limited to no more than 20 hours a week when school is in session.



Curricular Practical Training

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is defined as an alternative work, internship, or practicum experience directly related to the student's field of study and is an integral part of an established curriculum. Curricular practical training is the employment authorization used for F-1 students offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with QCC.

If you have been lawfully enrolled in the college as a full-time student for one academic year, you are eligible for CPT. Training that is not required by your degree program may meet the requirements for CPT if the work relates directly to what you are studying, is approved by an International Student Advisor/DSO, and you receive academic credit for the employment experience. QCC recognizes internships and co-op work experience as CPT. However, course work always takes precedence, and an internship is NOT a substitute for classes.

You **must** be receiving credits for a CPT experience and **must** have approval from the International Student Advisor/DSO. **An accumulation of 12 months or more of full time CPT will cancel your ability to have OPT.** You can apply for curricular practical training work authorization from your International Student Advisor/DSO.

Optional Practical Training (OPT), unlike Curricular Practical Training, may be used for work experience that is optional and not for credit. For more information, see the section on F-1 Optional Practical Training.

Part-time vs. Full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Part-time CPT

Employment for 20 hours or less per week while you are also enrolled full-time is considered “part-time” CPT. The employment authorization written on page 3 of your I-20 form will specify permission to engage in part-time training. You must be careful to limit your work to **no more than 20 hours per week**. You must be enrolled in classes full-time during the school year in order to maintain lawful status.

Full-time CPT

Employment for more than 20 hours per week is considered full time CPT. The employment authorization on your I-20 form will specify permission to participate in full time CPT. While in full-time CPT, you need not be enrolled for classes for the summer. If you participate in 12 months or more of consecutive full-time CPT, you will not be eligible for any of your optional practical training (OPT). You are **not** allowed to take CPT **instead** of classes during the regular academic year. Your degree is the reason you are granted an I-20. CPT must be part of your curriculum.

QCC Student Eligibility Requirements for CPT

- You must be accepted into and enrolled on a full-time basis in a degree or program.
- You must have been in F-1 status for one academic year and should have maintained your status.
- The work must be related to your major field of study and should be an important part of your studies.

- You must register for an internship or practicum course and receive academic credit for the work experience.
- You are eligible to apply for full-time CPT in the summer.
- You are eligible to apply for full-time CPT during the school year only if you have taken all your courses.
- With the approval of an International Student Advisor/DSO, you may need to be enrolled as a full-time student at the same time.

CPT Checklist

- Register for the internship by filling out a course registration form. If payment is required, pay for the internship (CO-OP).
- Obtain an offer letter from your employer, which states your title, responsibilities, and beginning and end dates of employment. The letter must be on company letterhead with the company's address on it.
- Submit the job offer letter and proof of payment for the course credits to the International Student Advisor/DSO at least 5 working days before your start date.
- Your new I-20, providing you with eligibility to legally work off campus with CPT, should be ready within 5 working days.
- There is no fee to process a CPT request. You cannot start working until your CPT has been authorized on your I-20.
- You must be careful not to work beyond your end date authorized on your I-20 unless you apply for and are granted a program extension.



Optional Practical Training

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is defined as work experience directly related to your field of study and is designed to provide you with an opportunity to gain actual employment experience in your chosen profession for a maximum of one year. You are eligible for OPT after 2 full-time semesters in status. The maximum number of hours you can work per week is 20 while classes are in session. **You have 12 months of OPT for each degree level (associates, bachelors, masters).** *You can do OPT*

during or for 1 year after completion of studies. You do not have to have a job in your field set up in order to be granted OPT by USCIS). Its purpose is to “round off” or complement your academic work. **Most** students utilize OPT **after** they graduate. You can, however, take part in this training during summer vacations before you graduate.

Application Deadline

You must apply for OPT before you complete your program of study. Due to delays in processing, you should consider applying four months before the date you wish to start.

You can apply for part time OPT while school is in session (not to exceed 20 hours a week) or full time OPT after you have completed either your course requirements or after you have completed your program of study.

You may not begin your OPT until you have received your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card and have had your I-20 endorsed by your International Student Advisor/DSO. If you are completing OPT, you are still considered an F-1 student and must still report any address changes.

QCC Student Eligibility Requirements for OPT

OPT must be directly related to your major field of study and it must be appropriate for someone having your level of education. The work may be full-time or part-time, and may occur anywhere in the United States. If you were authorized for previous periods of OPT, that period will be deducted from the 12 months available, the remainder will be the amount of practical training recommended. Also, if you have accumulated 12 months or more of CPT, you are NOT eligible to apply for OPT. If you meet the following criteria you are eligible to apply for Optional Practical Training for up to 12 months after you complete your studies at each academic level:



- You have been in F-1 status for at least 2 full semesters and have not violated the terms of status in any way.
- You are completing a degree program (not necessary for OPT used during vacations).
- You have not had 12 months or more of full-time CPT authorized.
- You have not previously used 12 months of OPT at your current academic level (associates degree in another field), or you were authorized for a period of less than 12 months.

SEVIS Reporting Requirements

When you are completing your OPT, you are still considered to be an F-1 student and are therefore subject to the address/phone reporting requirements according to USCIS regulations. Please be sure to stay in contact with an International Student Advisor/DSO and let him/her know if you have any address or immigration changes.

Make a Decision Regarding Participation in OPT

Only one 12-month period of OPT is available for each degree level. You are allowed to have this type of employment permission only once for each degree level. An advanced degree allows you 12 additional months of OPT. You can break the 12 months up into sections, but have to pay the application fee each time you wish to use a section. If you obtain permission for 12 months of OPT after an associates degree, you will not be eligible for more OPT after the completion of a second associates degree. Only three types of F-1 students have OPT rights restored after those have once been used:

1. Students who spend at least 5 months outside the US and return in F-1 status.
2. Students who change from F-1 to another status, spend at least a year in the other status, and then change back to F-1 status
3. Students who are going for a second, more advanced degree in the US.

Employment After Graduation

If you would like to be employed after you graduate, make sure to apply to OPT while you are still enrolled. Once you graduate, it is too late to apply. After graduation, you have one year of OPT available unless you used up your OPT earlier.

TRAVEL/REENTRY INTO THE US

F-1 Travel

If you wish to visit your home country of citizenship or permanent residence, or wish to travel to a third country (one in which you are not a citizen or permanent resident), you should be in possession of the following documents:



- Valid passport and visa for reentry into the US. If you have completed a Change of Status within the US, you will need to go to your home country consular office in order to obtain a new, valid visa. Please see section below on visa revalidation.
- I-94 card
- Sufficient funds for the duration of your stay outside of the US, particularly if you're traveling to a third country.
- An original SEVIS I-20 form or properly endorsed I-20 form (page #3) recently signed by an International Student Advisor/DSO.
- Depending on the country that is to be visited, you may be required to obtain an entry visa. Visas may be obtained through consular offices located in Boston and New York City.
- Proof of registration in courses.
- Any previously issued I-20s. The first I-20 with the seal in the top right corner is of most importance.
- A letter of support from an International Student Advisor/DSO.
- A recent transcript/course schedule.
- The Financial Support documents you showed the college for your admission to obtain your visa.

Visa Revalidation/Renewal

To re-enter the US, you must be in possession of a valid F-1 visa stamp in your passport. It is not possible to obtain an F-1 visa inside the United States. If your visa has expired and you need to reenter, or have been absent more than 5 months, you must apply for another visa at a US consulate.



While it is possible for you to secure an original or renewal in a foreign country other than your own, you face more stringent requirements than those imposed by US consular officials in your home country of residence. In addition to proving eligibility for an F-1 visa, you may have to convince the consular official that there is legitimate reason for making the application outside your home country. In many instances, the consular official will deny these applications. You should be aware that if your visa application is denied, you will not be able to return to the United States. You are advised to return to your home country for visa renewals.

The documents needed for revalidation include:

- A valid passport
- A current photograph
- A valid I-20 form or an endorsed page #4 of an I-20 form
- Proof of financial support
- A letter of support from the International Student Advisor
- At the discretion of a consular official, further documentation may be required, such as an I-539 form, if you have completed a change of status.

F-2 Travel

A person with an F-2 visa traveling without his or her spouse needs the following documents:

- I-20, which is endorsed and shows his/her name and other information on the back
- Page #3 of the I-20 (dependents entering the U.S.) must be signed by an International Student Advisor
- A valid F-2 visa
- A valid passport
- Evidence of current financial support
- A letter from the International Student Advisor stating that the spouse (F-1) is in good status
- Copies of the spouse's I-20, passport information page, I-94 card, and visa

Requirements to Bring a Parent or Guest to the US

Currently admitted or registered students who wish to have their parents or a guest (typically a family member) join them in the US should prepare the following:

1. Invitation letter in the native language – You should write a letter in your own native language inviting your parents or guest to visit you in the US. In this letter, you should give a reason why you are inviting them (i.e. – graduation, birth of a child, long separation from parents, children miss grandparents, want to give parents a vacations in the US while still here, etc.)
2. Letter from an International Student Advisor/DSO – You may ask an International Student Advisor to write you a certification letter. This letter will state your name, major, and expected completion of study date. This letter certifies that you are a full-time student in good academic standing at Quinsigamond Community College.
3. Financial Verification – You and your parents or guest must prove to the US Consul officials that you have sufficient funds for their stay in the US. A bank statement showing that you have enough money would be helpful to share with US Consul officials. Your parents or guest can also show a letter from their bank. It should

be notarized and indicate that the money can be accessed from the US.

4. Copy of your I-20, you should make a copy of your I-20 and send it to your parents or guest. They should have this with them when they travel.

Notes

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