



SMU[®]

International Student & Scholar Services Office

MAINTAINING YOUR STUDENT STATUS

Obtaining a visa with a specific expiration date is not an assurance that you will be able to stay in the US and maintain your F or J status. Your right to stay in the US may be forfeited at any time if you violate the regulations of your student non immigrant status. Please place your initial by each point confirming that you understand each compliance requirement.

- ___ 1. You are required to maintain the following valid documents as well as carry the originals at all times: passport, I-94 card, I20/DS-2019 document.
If you transfer to SMU or transfer out of SMU, you are responsible for carrying the I20/DS2019 reflecting your status BEFORE classes begin.

- ___ 2. You must maintain a **full course of study** for each spring and fall semester.
 - **9 hours for most graduate students** (hours may vary by program and should be confirmed with your Academic Advisor/Dean)
 - **12 hours for undergraduate students.**
 - **No more** than one 3 hour-on line class or distance learning class per semester.
 - Summer Registration is not required unless admitted in the summer.
Obtain authorization from the DSO/ARO before dropping below full time hours.

- ___ 3. You must make normal academic progress towards the completion of your degree as indicated by the end date of your I-20 or DS2019 document.

If you need to apply for an extension, you must do so ONE MONTH before the expiration date of your I-20/DS-2019 document by completing and submitting the “Extension of F-1 or J-1 status Form.”

If you are PHD student and wish to change your program to a Master’s degree level, you must do so while you are completing courses towards the master’s degree. If you have already completed courses towards your master’s degree and you are working on course work, thesis and/or dissertation hours towards your PhD, you will not be able to request an -I20/DS-2019 for a Master’s degree.

- ___ 4. You must obtain a new travel signature on your I-20 **BEFORE** traveling out of the US.
 - Travel Signatures are valid for 6 months.
 - Our office requires three business days to process your signature.

Note: If you renew your visa, you are required to bring a copy to our office upon your return.

- ___ 5. You must receive **WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION** from a Designated School Official for the following:
 - Reduced Course Load (Medical Reasons, Last Semester less than full time enrollment, Academic Reasons)
 - Changing your degree level: Bachelor’s to Master’s etc.
 - Concurrent Enrollment: Enrollment at another Institution in order to fulfill full time status.
 - Transferring to another Institution.

- ___ 6. You must receive **WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION** from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or the ISSS Office **before** accepting any kind of employment (on/off campus) in the U.S.
 - a. You must get work authorization every time you add/change your place of work.

- b. You are only allowed to work 20 hours per week while school is in session.
- c. You are considered to be employed if you are providing any kind of services for which you are being compensated.

Note: You are not eligible to work on campus after you have completed your degree and before you have received employment authorization (EAD/OPT).

- ___ 7. You must update your U.S. Residence address or phone number in <https://access.smu.edu>. Please send these changes within 10 days from the day the change has occurred. Failure to make notification within 10 days is a violation of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations. .
- ___ 8. You must update your Home Country address with the ISSS Office by sending an email to: **iss@smu.edu** within 10 days from the moving date. Failure to make notification within 10 days is a violation of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations.
- ___ 9. You must maintain contact with the SMU ISSS Office by checking all e-mail correspondence using your official **SMU e-mail address**. Failure to check SMU ISSS Office e-mail daily could result in serious consequences.
- ___ 10. You are required to purchase and maintain the University Student Health Insurance Plan as a condition of enrollment if you are an F-1 visa holder. J-1 students must carry Health Insurance at all times as required by Department of State.
- ___ 11. You must obey all federal and state laws:
 - You will need a Driver's License in order to operate a motor vehicle.
 - You are required to purchase car insurance if you are operating a motor vehicle.
 - You cannot legally purchase or drink alcoholic beverage unless you are 21 years old.
 - **Do not drink and drive!** Driving under the influence of alcohol is considered a criminal offense and will affect your Immigration status
- ___ 12. You must leave the U.S. when:
 - Your I20/DS-2019 expires: F-1s have a 60-day grace period. J1s have a 30-day grace period. Note, you cannot work or study during your grace period.
 - You complete your program successfully (earlier than document end date)
 - You have ended or suspended your SMU program as a student.

Note: You do not have 60 or 30 days of grace period if your record is terminated due to a status violation.
- ___ 13. You must fill out the form 8843 to the IRS every year. You must submit this form even if you do not earn wages. If you have earned wages you must also submit the tax form 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ or 1040 in addition to 8843 form.
- ___ 14. You are required to comply with the University Student Code of Conduct. For more information please visit: http://smu.edu/studentlife/studenthandbook/PCL_03_Conduct_Code.asp

By signing below, I agree to comply with the requirements on pages one and two of this document. I also acknowledge that SMU is required by law to terminate an F-1 visa holder if compliance requirements are violated.

Student Name (print clearly) Student Signature Date

Department Representative Signature Date