

Important Information about F-1 Status

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Entering the U.S. (I-20 and F-1 Visa)

You will need a U-M I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant F-1 Student Status, a valid F-1 visa (the visa stamp in your passport) issued by the U.S. embassy/consulate overseas, a valid passport, and your SEVIS fee receipt. To enter the U.S. as an F-1 student, Canadian citizens do not need U.S. visas. Please be advised that **you may not enter the U.S. more than 30 days prior to the start date in section 5 on your I-20** (refer to “Travel”, later on this page). When you enter the U.S., you will receive either an admission stamp in your passport marked “F-1” and “D/S” (duration of status) or a small white I-94 card with the same notation.

Mandatory Immigration Check-In at the University of Michigan

You are **required** to attend a mandatory two-hour immigration check-in program at the U-M International Center. The immigration check-in is required by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Failure to attend the mandatory immigration check-in program will cause your academic program to be terminated automatically and end your lawful immigration status. For more information about this check-in, including how to schedule for a check-in and documents required at the check-in, please see our [check-in page](#) [1].

Maintaining Legal F-1 Status

As an F-1 student, you must meet certain obligations in order to maintain legal immigration status. Maintaining status is necessary in order to receive the benefits of F-1 status such as employment and program extension, and can be crucial to a successful application for a change or adjustment of visa status in the future. Failure to maintain your non-immigrant status can result in serious problems with immigration and could lead to deportation from the U.S. Due to the complexity of U.S. immigration

regulations, we recommend that you consult with an International Student and Scholar Advisor (ISSA) at the U-M International Center for details.

To maintain lawful status, an F-1 student must:

- Attend the mandatory immigration check-in program at the U-M International Center.
- Attend the university you are authorized to attend.
- Complete immigration school transfer procedure when necessary.
- Be in good academic standing and make progress towards an academic program.
- Extend your I-20 prior to its expiration date if you are unable to complete your academic program by the original expiration date.
- In the event of change of academic program or level, update your I-20 in a timely fashion in accordance with immigration regulations.
- Maintain full-time enrollment during the academic year.
- Undergraduate students must enroll 12 credit hours per term while graduate students must enroll for 8 credit hours (or number of credit hours defined by the specific graduate program) per term. During any given term in which you have been officially appointed by the department as a Graduate Student Research Assistant (GSRA) or Graduate Student Instructor (GSI), you may enroll for 6 credit hours.
NOTE: *The courses you take for “audit” or “visit” do not count toward the full-time enrollment requirement for immigration purposes.*
- Suspension, dismissal, enrollment withheld, expulsion, or any other similar action which prevents enrollment may have effect on legal immigration status. See an advisor at the International Center.
- Limit on-campus employment to 20 hours per week during academic year.
- May not be employed without specific pre-authorization
- Keep your passport valid at all times. The passport must be valid for at least 6 months into the future on the day you return to the U.S. from a trip abroad.
- Maintain health insurance coverage.
- Complete the U-M International Center departure form if you leave your program before the end date of I-20.
- Update your current and permanent address information in [Wolverine Access](#) [2] **within 10 days of moving.**

Health Insurance Requirement

All international students and their accompanying dependents at U-M are **required to have health insurance coverage that meets the University's standards**. You must enroll in an approved insurance program at the mandatory immigration check-in program. If your government or program sponsor is providing you with health insurance, you will later have the opportunity to apply for a waiver of the mandatory health insurance. In order for a waiver to be granted, your health insurance coverage must be proven to meet U-M standards, so please bring a copy of the insurance policy with you to the immigration check in **U.S. Health insurance is not an option - it is a requirement.**

For more information, refer to [Health Insurance](#) [3].

Travel Outside the U.S. and Reentry

While studying at U-M and traveling outside the United States you need to have proper documents in order to re-enter the United States. These documents include a valid F-1 visa (the visa stamp in your

passport), passport valid 6 months into the future, and your most recent I-20 with a travel signature less than one year old.

Citizens of certain countries, returning from Canada, Mexico and the adjacent islands may be able to re-enter the US with an expired F-1 visa using [Automatic Visa Revalidation](#) [4].

For more information, refer to [Travel Advisory](#) [5].

Employment

U.S. government regulations require F-1 students to be in the U.S. for the primary purpose of attending school. In general, employment in the U.S. is restricted. The following employment possibilities exist for F-1 students:

- **On-campus employment:** Limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session and available as full time during school vacation and holidays. On-campus employment is defined as work done on the premises of the school who issued I-20.
- **Off-campus employment:** Under certain conditions you may be eligible for off-campus employment either based on economic need or practical training. You may not begin the employment unless you have received official authorization from the U-M International Center.

For more information, refer to [Employment Options for F-1 Students](#) [6].

Dependents

Dependents are defined as spouse and minor children under 21 years old of the F-1 student. Please be aware that each of your dependents will need his/her own I-20 in order to obtain an F-2 visa at the U.S.embassy/consulate and to enter the United States. F-2 status holders may not accept employment or engage in business under any circumstances.

The F-2 spouse of an F-1 student may not engage in full time study, and the F-2 child may only engage in full-time study if the study is in an elementary or secondary school (kindergarten through twelfth grade). The F-2 spouse and child may engage in study that is avocational or recreational in nature.

For more information, refer to [Dependents](#) [7].

Grace Period

When an F-1 student successfully completes their academic program or Optional Practical Training, there is a 60-day grace period during which the F-1 student and any F-2 dependents may stay in the U.S. During the grace period you may not work, or reenter the United States in F-1 status.

Taxes

In general, F-1 students must file federal tax forms every year that they are in the U.S. The deadlines to file the forms are April 15, if U.S. money is earned (this includes money earned from graduate student assistantships), and June 15, if no U.S. money is earned. For more information, refer to [Taxes and Social Security](#) [8].

Source URL: <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/f1-students/important>

Links

- [1] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/events/student-checkin>
- [2] <http://wolverineaccess.umich.edu/>
- [3] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/healthins>
- [4] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/travel-visa>
- [5] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/travel-advisory>
- [6] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/f1-students/employment-options>
- [7] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/f1-students/f2-dependents>
- [8] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/tax>