



INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

Glossary of F-1 Student Terms

I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility)

An official document issued to students who have been admitted to a full-time program of study in the United States, used to apply for an F-1 visa

New I-20s are issued by the International Programs office when any changes are made to your record in SEVIS. These changes can include, but are not limited to, declaring or changing your major, a change in your financial circumstances, extension of your program end date or approval/application for CPT or OPT.

You must keep all original I-20s you are issued during your period of study in the U.S. U.S. Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) may ask you to produce all I-20s you have been issued when re-entering the country. You should keep your I-20s with your passport, and **keep all documentation with you at all times when entering or leaving the U.S.**

Visa

A document issued by the U.S. consulates and embassies which permits entry into the country

Visas are entered into your passport, will contain not only your personal information and photo, but will indicate your status (F-1), the visa's expiration date and the number of times that visa may be used to enter the country prior to its expiration date.

Most, but not all, visas are issued for "multiple entries", and will allow you to enter the US as many times as you wish so long as your documents (visa, passport, I-20, I-94, etc.) are in order. **A visa is an entry document only.** If your visa has expired, you may remain in the country, but **you cannot re-enter the country.** **You must apply for a new visa to return to the U.S. if your current one has expired.** This is generally done in your home country.

Travel Endorsement Signature

Signature on the I-20 required to exit and re-enter the United States once a program of study has begun

You must alert the International Programs office any time you leave or enter the U.S. during your program of study. Either the DSO (Danielle Davis, coordinator) or the PDSO (Dr. Jeanette Barbieri, director) will sign the second page of your I-20 to authorize such travel.

Without the travel endorsement signature, you will not be permitted to re-enter the U.S.

I-94

An electronic record of your entry to the U.S. recorded at your port of entry (typically the airport at which you arrive and go through Customs)

Your I-94 indicates the date and place at which you entered the country, your visa type (F-1), and how long you may stay in the U.S. It will also list your admission (“A”) number.

Hollins University requires all international students to provide a paper copy of your current I-94 to the International Programs office to be kept on file.

A paper copy of your I-94 can be obtained at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>

DSO or PDSO

Designated School Official (DSO) or Primary Designated School Official (PDSO)

The DSO and PDSO are responsible for tracking and authorizing changes in student status, and for maintaining student records in SEVIS. You must report any changes in status to the International Programs office.

Full-Time Status

Minimum number of credits students must be enrolled in to maintain their F-1 visa

Undergraduate students at Hollins University must be enrolled in at least 14 credits each semester to remain in full-time status. Registering for fewer credits can result in the loss of F-1 status.

Graduate students must be enrolled in at least 9 credits, though some exceptions can be made for those completing a thesis.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

An opportunity for students to participate in relevant internships for academic credit

See Work Authorization for more information.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

An opportunity for students to obtain authorization for off-campus employment, typically for 12 months post-graduation

See Work Authorization for more information.

Grace Period

Amount of time students are permitted to remain in the US following the completion of their degree

Typically 60 days, the grace period is designed to give students time to prepare for their departure from the U.S. **Following the program end date recorded on the I-20, you will be able to travel within the U.S., apply for OPT, and begin a new program of study (transfer) during the grace period.**

Students cannot leave and re-enter the U.S. during the grace period. Any departures are considered permanent once the program of study has been completed.