

Maintaining your F-1 Status

As an F-1 student, you were admitted into the United States for the “duration of status”. This means you are permitted to stay in the U.S. as long as you maintain your status by fulfilling the requirements of being an F-1 student. **It is your responsibility to maintain your F-1 status.** Keep in mind that there is an important difference between an F-1 visa and F-1 status.

An F-1 visa is a stamp placed in your passport by U.S. Department of State and is granted for entry purpose only. F-1 status is granted when you enter the United States and is regulated by the Department of Homeland Security. Even if your F-1 visa is valid, you can lose your legal F-1 student status if you do not comply with immigration regulations. Below is an overview of government regulations you must follow in order to maintain your legal status:

- Always maintain a valid passport unless exempt from the passport requirement.
- Maintain full-time status every academic semester (minimum of 12 credits for undergraduate programs, 9 credits for graduate programs and 4 classes for ESL program) and make normal academic progress towards degree completion. Only one online course (3 credits) is allowed towards the full-time status requirement every academic semester. If you need to go below full-time status, please make sure to contact our office immediately before dropping your class. Failure to do so will result in automatic termination of your status.
- Report changes to your personal information (i.e. name, address, phone number, email) immediately to the Office of International Programs within 10 days of the change.
- You must notify our office whenever you make a change in degree level, major, program or add minor. You will need to receive an updated I-20 form reflecting these changes.
- You must request a travel signature on page 2 of the Form I-20 from our office before leaving the United States for re-entry purposes.
- On-campus work is limited to part-time (20 hours or less per week) during the semester. During official school breaks you are allowed to work full-time on-campus. Prior approval from our office is required before starting your on-campus work.
- If you are looking to work off-campus (i.e. internships, externships, clinical and field placements), you must receive prior authorization from our office, Engaging in unauthorized employment off-campus will result in automatic termination of your status, Even unpaid employment required prior authorization.
- If you need additional time to complete your degree from the program end date of your Form I-20, you must apply for a program extension at least 30 days prior to the program end date on your I-20. It is the student’s responsibility to request this extension.
- Once you complete your program, you have 60 days from the program end date on your Form I-20 to apply for post completion OPT, depart the United States, transfer to another program or change your status, After the 60 days grace period, your F-1 status is automatically completed.
- If you have any questions regarding your F-1 status, please reach out to the Office of International Programs by walking in, making an appointment, calling us at 973-761-9072 or emailing us at oiip@shu.edu

By signing this document, I certify that I have read and understand my legal responsibilities as an F-1 student.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____