

Agreement for Maintaining F-1 Status

The United States immigration laws and regulations emphasize the importance of international students in F-1 visa classification to maintain their legal status in the United States. F-1 students should be aware of and fully comply with the following requirements set forth by the Department of Homeland Security:

- ✓ You must maintain a valid passport at all times, unless exempt from passport requirements.
- ✓ You must attend the college/university listed on the current I-20.
- ✓ You must complete an official immigration transfer whenever changing educational institutions. As an F-1 student, this includes notifying your current institution of your intent to transfer, obtaining a Form I-20 from the new institution, and reporting to the Designated School Official (DSO) at the new school within 15 days of the program start date listed on the Form I-20. To notify Florida SouthWestern State College of your intent to transfer out, you need to complete a *“Transfer Out”* form and submit proof of admission at a new school.
- ✓ You must have insurance coverage. International students will not be permitted to register or continue enrollment at Florida SouthWestern State College without demonstrating that he or she has adequate medical insurance coverage including, but not limited to, illness, accidental injury, medical evacuation and repatriation. Students should purchase insurance with no gap in coverage between terms.
- ✓ You must enroll for and complete a full course of study during Fall & Spring Semester. Full-time enrollment is defined as **12 credits per semester**. Students who need to maintain 12 credit hours per semester can only count 3 credit hours of online learning to meeting this requirement. If a student wants to take additional online or hybrid courses during this semester, it is allowable since they have met the status requirements.
- ✓ If you will not be enrolled full-time (minimum of 12 credits per semester), you must receive authorization/permission from the DSO in Academic Advising **in advance**. To request authorization, you and your academic advisor complete the *“Reduced Course Load Request”* form prior to registering for less than a full course load or prior to dropping below a full course load. If you don't have appropriate approval from the DSO, you will fall out of status.
- ✓ If you cannot complete your program of studies by the date listed on your I-20, you must apply for an **extension** of your program of study minimum of **four weeks prior to** the expiration date on your Form I-20. To request an extension, complete the **Program Extension Request** form. Requests for extensions may be submitted even up to 60 days prior to the expiration date of the Form I-20.
- ✓ You must go through the appropriate admissions procedure **before** beginning a new academic program at a new level (e.g., from AA/AS to Bachelor's) and **must obtain a new Form I-20**. In order to be issued a new I-20 you must provide updated proof of finances. You must inform the DSO of your intent of application to a new program so that appropriate changes are reported in SEVIS.
- ✓ If you decide to change your major you must discuss this first with the DSO in Academic Advising. You must complete a *“Change of Major”* form when changing your major or program of studies, have it signed by the academic advisor and submit the signed form to the **Office of the Registrar**.

The DSO in Academic Advising will issue a new I-20 after a change of major is updated in the college's student information system and SEVIS. The degree should be reflected in SEVIS and on your I-20 after the changes have been made in the system (Banner).

- ✓ You are NOT allowed to work in the United States without authorization. F-1 students are allowed to work on-campus only up to 20 hours per week when school is in session. Please see the website for more information about off-campus work authorization in the form of economic hardship, curricular practical training, and optional practical training. Students are cautioned to obtain off-campus work permission prior to accepting an off-campus internship or Curricular Practical Training or OPT. Students are not eligible for off-campus work permission until they have completed one academic year of F-1 status. Any questions regarding employment can be directed to a DSO.
- ✓ You must report any change of address or residence to a DSO within 10 days of the change. The college will then electronically notify the Department of Homeland Security of the change, via SEVIS, within 21 days, as required by the regulations.
- ✓ Remember to have a DSO sign your I-20 on page three prior to traveling outside the United States, if you intend to return. To request a signature, please provide your current I-20 to a DSO at least 7 days prior to the anticipated travel date. **Your documents: I-20, passport, visa and health insurance must be current.**
- ✓ If you wish to bring any accompanying dependents (spouse or children) to the United States in F-2 status, you should meet with a DSO to obtain a dependent I-20. You will need to provide biographical information (e.g., full name, address, country of birth, etc.), immigration information (e.g., passport information, visa information, etc.) and proof of additional funding for dependents in the amount of \$ 5,000 for spouse and \$3000 for each child.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This information is not exhaustive and is subject to change without notice. International students should contact a Designated School Official (DSO) at (239) 489-9054 to arrange an appointment to discuss any questions or concerns related to your legal status in the United States.

To remain up-to-date on changes in United States immigration law and/or changes in school policies and/or procedures, to be informed about various F-1 requirements, and much more, please check your FSW email frequently as well as contact our office directly.

I have read the information above about maintaining my legal status in the United States and understand that I must comply fully with these regulations in order to remain in legal status. I further understand that this information is not exhaustive and that I should direct any additional questions or concerns about my legal status to a Designated School Official, Tel: (239) 489-9054 E-mail: internationalstudent@fsw.edu.

Print Full Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature: _____