

chatham UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Maintaining F-1 Status While You Are in the United States

Students on F-1 student visas admitted to the United States must comply with guidelines set by the Department of Homeland Security. Such compliance is referred to as “maintaining status.” Consequences for an F-1 student who fails to maintain legal status can be serious and could lead to deportation and even a 10-year ban on reentering the U.S. ***It is your responsibility*** to make sure that you remain in status and communicate regularly with the Office of International Affairs for guidance on immigration issues.

HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR F-1 STATUS

1. Report a change of address to the Office of International Affairs immediately. The Office of International Affairs must record this change in SEVIS within 10 days.
2. Maintain a full course of study each semester unless prior approval is given by the Office of International Affairs. Full time is considered 12 hours for undergraduate students and 9 hours for graduate students (depending on the program).
3. Report any changes in major or educational level (from undergraduate to graduate).
4. Refrain from **ALL** off-campus employment or business of any type without authorization by OIA. This includes INTERNSHIP, PRACTICUM, or CLINICALS. You must receive prior authorization before engaging in any off-campus training or work experience (paid or unpaid).
5. F-1 students are eligible to work **on-campus** 20 hours or less per week (full-time on-campus employment is permitted during the winter, spring and summer vacations if the student was enrolled the previous semester and will be enrolled full time the upcoming semester). Please note: Chatham restricts all students to 19 hours per week. Please report employment to OIA within 2 weeks of job offer.
6. Maintain good academic standing for the duration of your enrollment. If you begin to experience problems with your course work, talk with your academic advisor and International Student Services Coordinator.
7. Abide by all campus, local, state, and federal rules and regulations. Students are required to disclose fully and truthfully all information requested by the Department of Homeland Security’s immigration bureaus. If the school takes disciplinary action against a student as a result of the conviction of a crime, the school is required to report this information in SEVIS.
8. Remain in the U.S. no longer than the **60-day** grace period after completing a full course of study, unless you are on Optional Practical Training or have been admitted into another academic program.
9. Keep your passport valid at all times. If your passport expires, you may experience difficulties and delays in immigration benefits or the ability to travel.
10. Attend only the school noted on your I-20.



OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. Remember to obtain proper signatures and documents from the Office of International Affairs before you travel abroad.
2. Do not depend solely on the opinion and advice of your friends or family when it comes to immigration matters. Always consult the Office of International Affairs on campus before making decisions that will affect your immigration status. More immigration information is available at <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/> **Immigration requirements are always changing.**
3. Health insurance is required of all international students at Chatham.
4. Check all e-mail that is sent to your **campus e-mail** address by the staff of International Affairs and other departments. Important, time-sensitive information will be distributed to you in this manner.
5. Make sure that you keep ALL previous immigration documents. Keep all current immigration documents in a safe location. These documents include your passport, I-20, and I-94 form.
6. If you work and earn income, you are required to file taxes at the end of the year. Check with the Office of International Affairs for particulars starting in late January. The deadline for filing taxes is April 15 each year. There is a heavy penalty for failing to file taxes, even if you have not earned enough income. All students whether they work or not are required to file the 8843 form.
7. WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK; WHEN IN DOUBT, DO NOT ASSUME.

For more information, please contact:
Office of International Affairs
Falk Building
412-365-1388

