

# Goldey-Beacom College

## F-1 International Student Handbook

International students in the United States are required by immigration law to follow certain regulations in order to maintain legal status in the United States. The Financial Aid/ Advisement Office is responsible for advising international students on the immigration regulations as they pertain to F-1 status and for the processing of various immigration documents. When coming to your advisor for immigration matters, always bring your passport and I-20. You should always allow at least 10 business days for the processing of documents.

You are responsible for knowing, understanding, and complying with these regulations. If there is something you do not understand, please schedule an appointment with your advisor. Failure to comply with all rules and regulations could result in severe consequences, including deportation.

### **Regulations for International Students with F-1 Status**

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) have established certain rules and regulations which you are expected to understand and follow. Explained is a list of regulations, procedures, and forms that are frequently used in negotiation with the USCIS. *Please note that this is a summary and does not constitute legal advice.* Most of the forms referred to may be obtained from the Financial Aid/ Advisement Office or from any Immigration Office. They may also be found on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website: <http://www.uscis.gov>.

### **VISA**

Your visa is a stamp in your passport, either a multi-colored stamp or an orange label affixed to the visa page. The visa, which you obtained from the American Embassy, allowed you to ask for permission to enter the United States. A non-immigrant visa (such as the F-1) is valid only for the sole purpose for which it was issued. It is not a guarantee of entry. Your visa is numbered, and shows your name, the visa category (for example F-1), the date and place of issue, the expiration date, the sponsoring university, and the name of the consular official who signed it.

For initial admission, you are required to attend the school written below the visa for at least one academic semester. Once you have been granted entry, your visa does **NOT** determine how long you stay in the United States. (See I-20 and I-94) The visa governs only your entry into the United States, and not your stay.

You are required to obtain a new visa only when you leave the U.S. and wish to return and if your visa has expired, or if your visa was designated as a single entry only. A request to obtain a new visa must be made at an American Embassy or Consulate outside of the United States.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If your visa has expired, you are permitted to stay in the United States if you are in legal F-1 status (enrolled full-time on the degree indicated on your I-20). However, you must renew your visa if you go outside of the United States or in order to re-enter. *Please note that your I-20 and passport must be valid and unexpired at all times.*

### **Passport**

This is your most important piece of identification, and you need to keep it valid, renewing it at least 6 months before it expires. You cannot renew your visa unless your passport is current; neither can you leave the U.S. without a valid passport. To renew your passport, **you must contact your country's embassy or consulate.**

It is recommended that you photocopy important pages of your passport: the identification page, the expiration date, and the visa page. Should you lose your passport, having copies of important documents may reduce the time needed to replace the document.

### **I-94**

This is the entry permit issued to you by the immigration inspector at the port of entry into the U.S. It is the little white card which was stapled to your passport. **DO NOT REMOVE IT. IT IS YOUR PERMIT TO REMAIN IN THE U.S.** The D/S (Duration of Status) status marked on the I-94 means that you are permitted to remain in the U.S. for as long as you are pursuing your intended program of study provided you remain in-status, your I-20 has not expired, and you are making satisfactory progress toward completion of your degree.

### **I-20- Certificate of Eligibility for Non-Immigrant F-1 Status**

This form was initially issued to you to attend Goldey-Beacom College. Having accepted the I-20, you are required by Immigration to attend Goldey-Beacom College for at least one semester before transferring. Whenever you travel outside of the U.S. you must carry an up-to-date I-20 endorsed by a Designated School Official in the Financial Aid/Advisement Office. You must also check the visa requirements of those countries through which you will travel.

The I-20 (student copy) certifies that you are eligible to study at the designated school and that you have verified your financial ability to pay tuition, fees, and basic living costs while pursuing your education.

Page 3 of the I-20 is used to note transfers, travel authorization signatures, and other records (i.e., employment, reinstatement of status). It is also used to document your date of re-admission to the U.S. after a temporary absence.

In conjunction with your I-94, your I-20 indicates the length of time you have permission to remain in the U.S. (by the completion of studies date) as long as you are still maintaining your status and working toward the degree indicated on the I-20.

All F-1 students are issued an I-20 to enter the United States. Most immigration transactions will be noted on the student's I-20. If you should receive a new I-20 for any reason (program extension, school transfer, change of major), you should keep your previous I-20s as a record of your legal stay in the United States. In most cases, you will need to provide new financial support documents in order to obtain a new I-20.

Immigration regulations state that you should keep your I-20 with you at all times.

If you lose your I-20s, please report it to the Financial Aid/ Advisement Office immediately.

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) have established certain rules and regulations which you are expected to understand and follow. The following list of regulations can be obtained from the Financial Aid/ Advisement Office or from any Immigration Office and are known worldwide:

### **Your Legal Responsibilities**

- Undergraduate students must enroll in a full course of study (minimum of 12 credit hours per semester) through out the academic year. Fall and Spring semesters are required. In addition, Summer semester may be required to complete your degree program or under certain circumstances. The student must also maintain satisfactory academic progress (both GPA and earned credits). Always consult your advisor before you drop your course load to part-time or withdraw from all of your courses- otherwise you may jeopardize your legal status. Also, remember, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will not accept insufficient funding as an excuse for dropping below full-time hours.
- Graduate students must enroll in a minimum of 6 credit hours per semester. College policy states that an F-1 graduate student must enroll in at least one session I course and one session II course. Consecutive attendance in Fall, Spring, and Summer Semesters is required. Always consult your advisor before you drop your course load to part-time or withdraw from all of your courses- otherwise you may jeopardize your legal status. Also, remember, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will not accept insufficient funding as an excuse for dropping below the required credits.
- Keep your passport valid. Renew it *at least six months* prior to its expiration date.
- DO NOT accept employment off-campus without written permission from a Designated School Official of the College and USCIS. (see CPT/OPT)
- Report any change of address to the Financial Aid/ Advisement Office within 10 days of moving while enrolled at Goldey-Beacom College or while on OPT. This is a USCIS REQUIREMENT that, if not complied with, will make you subject to DEPORTATION. The new USCIS regulations, effective January 1, 2003, state that your address changes must be submitted to the school. Since Goldey-Beacom College is a SEVIS approved school, you do not need to submit your

address change on the Form AR-11 at this time. Addresses must be a physical location, not a P.O. Box.

- Report any change of major to your advisor, so a new SEVIS I-20 can be generated.
- Request an extension of stay (program extension) before the expiration date on your I-20 if your studies will not be completed within the allotted period. Be aware of your completion of studies date on your I-20.
- Provide your advisor with any update information regarding you passport, visa, or status.

#### Duration of Status:

The meaning of D/S (Duration of Status) allows an F-1 student who is pursuing a full course-of-study to complete any education level, series of educational programs and any practical training, and then 60 days later ( after completion of studies) either to depart from the U.S. or apply for a change of visa status. A student who has not applied for practical training or change of status after completion of studies may not remain in the U.S. beyond the 60-day grace period even if the expiration date on the I-20 has not yet been reached.

The 60-day grace period is no longer in the legal definition of “duration of status.” The new rule creates 2 grace periods:

1. 60 days for those who have completed their course-of-study and any authorized practical training.
2. 15 days for those who terminate their course-of-study before it is complete (if student obtains authorization of DSO prior to terminating their course of study.)

**NOTE: Students who terminate their course of study without prior DSO approval or otherwise fail to maintain status are not eligible for any additional period and should leave immediately the United States.**

Students who find that they are unable to complete their studies in the time noted on the I-20 are required to obtain a new I-20 ID with the new date of completion noted. To do this, you must report to your advisor PRIOR to the date of completion of your I-20 ID; you will be required to submit documentation of financial support. To gain a program extension, students must also show satisfactory progress towards the degree. Unacceptable reasons for extending one’s program include probation, suspension, or not maintaining full-time status.

#### **School Transfers**

F-1 students who are eligible to transfer must bring his/her advisor an F-1 transfer form from their perspective college in order to begin the transfer process. Any questions regarding your eligibility to transfer should be directed to your advisor.

## **SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System)**

SEVIS facilitates timely reporting and monitoring of international students and exchange visitors in the United States. It is an Internet-based application for electronically tracking and reporting on foreign students and exchange visitors in the U.S. SEVIS allows schools to transmit electronic information to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and Department of State, which is now the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Schools are able to submit school certification applications (like CPT and OPT) update certification information (edit or renew a CPT), submit updates to INS and create an update in F-1 student records (i.e., change of address, major, graduation date).

## **Other Non-Immigrant Changes Affecting Change of Status from B-2 to F-1 and F-2 to F-1**

Students entering the U.S. on a B-1 or B-2 visa (visitor) cannot be admitted and start studying in an academic program while still in B status. Also, students entering the U.S. on an F-2 visa (spouse or child of an F-1) cannot be admitted and start studying in an academic program while still in F-2 status. For further information, currently enrolled students should speak with an advisor in the Financial Aid/ Advisement Office. Students on a B-1, B-2, or F-2 visa and seeking admission to the College should speak with the International Admissions Representative.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

### **On-Campus Employment**

Any full-time student with good academic and financial standings is eligible to work on campus. You do not need permission to work on-campus from USCIS. Students can not work more than 20 hours per week during mandatory semesters, which are Fall and Spring.

Please note that on-campus jobs are limited and are offered on a first come, first serve basis. For more information regarding on-campus employment please see your advisor.

### **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**

#### **Definition:**

The Immigration Service defines curricular practical training (CPT) as employment, which is an integral part of an established curriculum, including alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum, which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school. According to INS the word, "required" does not always limit this type of practical training to work experience, which are required parts of the curriculum. This clarification is discussed below.

## **Job Requirements**

To be considered curricular practical training, the work must not only be directly related to your major field of study, but must also be an integral or important part of your studies. A work or training experience, which is required by your degree program, meets the requirements for practical training, regardless of whether or not you receive academic credit for your work. Training which is not required by your degree program may meet the requirements for curricular practical training if you receive academic credit for the employment experience and if it is an important part of your studies. Consult with your advisor about your particular academic program before accepting any offer of employment. F-1 students can apply for CPT by completing and submitting all federally required paperwork and registering for CPT with their advisor. In addition, interested students must officially register for the internship(s) and be charged at the current tuition rate.

## **Student Eligibility Requirements**

Undergraduate F-1 students must be full-time for one academic year before they can engage in curricular practical training. Undergraduate students must have at least a 2.75 GPA to apply for CPT. If you are a graduate student maintaining lawful F-1 student status, and if the proposed employment is a required part of your studies, you may apply for permission to engage in curricular practical training at any time. Graduate students must have at least a 3.0 GPA to qualify for CPT. Students enrolled in English language training programs are not eligible for curricular practical training. A student who has an outstanding obligation to the College is not eligible to apply for CPT.

## **Terms**

Employment for 20 hours or less per week while you are enrolled for classes is considered part-time curricular practical training. The employment authorization written on the back of your I-20 ID copy will specify permission to engage in part-time training and you must limit your work to no more than 20 hours per week. There is a one year limitation upon length of time you may participate in part-time curricular practical training; you must simultaneously be enrolled in order to maintain lawful F-1 status. You must re-new your CPT application every year.

## **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

Under Optional Practical Training regulations an F-1 student is subject to be approved for up to 12 months of optional practical training after each level in F-1 status.

You may obtain authorization for optional practical training after completion of a course of study. You must apply before graduation.

To be eligible for Optional Practical Training you must:

1. Have held student status for at least one academic year
2. Currently be maintaining valid F-1 visa
3. Have completed a course of study

4. Intend to work after completion of studies in a job directly related to your course of study
5. Have no outstanding obligations to the College (coursework, financial obligations, or required paperwork)

Please note that you do not have to have a job offer before applying for Optional Practical Training and that you must in any case apply before completion of your studies. Optional Practical Training must end no later than 14 months from your completion of studies date.

Students are only permitted to apply for a period of 12 months of OPT following each degree received as long as the degrees are a higher level, (i.e. associates to bachelors or bachelors to masters). Obtaining two degrees of the same level, such as MBA concentration Finance and Master of Management entitles applicant to only one 12 month period of OPT.

### **Application and Authorization Procedures**

To apply for OPT you must come to the Financial Aid/ Advisement office no more than 90 days before your anticipated completion of a course of study to pick up the OPT application packet. You must apply to the Financial Aid/ Advisement Office and USCIS for an Employment Authorization Document within this application period. Financial Aid/ Advisement nor USCIS will process your application after completion of your course of study.

**PLEASE NOTE: NO APPLICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER COMPLETION OF YOUR STUDY.**

Please note again that your practical training application is not approved until you have your official photo Employment Authorization Document card. The processing time may take as long as 90 days after the application has been received. Once you have received your official photo EAD card, you will need to provide a copy of it to the Financial Aid/ Advisement Office.

Please note that the application period for OPT, which begins 90 days before you complete your program of study is very important. You must apply both to the Financial Aid/ Advisement Office and USCIS for an Employment Authorization Document within this application period. Financial Aid/ Advisement nor USCIS will process your application after completion of your course of study.

### **Request for departure**

A request for departure form must be completed two weeks prior to the date requesting to depart. Please bring the completed request form along with all of your original I-20s, passport, visa, I-94, and any supporting documentation to your advisor for the request to be processed.

Upon re-entry to the U.S. you are required to provide your advisor with your new I-94 departure card.

### **Where do I inquire about immigration matters?**

Direct all inquires to the Financial Aid/ Advisement Office at 302-225-6265. Do not rely on information from a friend or hearsay. Your friend may have good intentions but may be unaware of changes in regulations; especially the new regulations embodied in newly implemented SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System).

The Financial Aid/ Advisement Office wants to assist you in reaching your educational goals and give you opportunities for training in your major field of study. You must do your part by keeping informed of changes in regulations pertaining to your status by coming to our office when you have questions or concerns.

Helpful Websites:

[www.immigration.gov](http://www.immigration.gov) (Immigration and Naturalization Service)

[www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org) (Association of International Educators)

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