

Global Education Office (GEO)
2120 Mesa Vista Hall
MSC06 3850 1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001
Phone (505) 277-4032 ♦ Fax (505) 277-1867
Email iadvisor@unm.edu
Web: <https://iss.unm.edu/>

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES CONTRACT FOR F1 AND J1 STUDENTS

I. EXPLANATION

International students are required by United States law to follow immigration regulations while in the US including pursuing full-time study. Participation by students in any other activity in the US, from employment to vacation travel, is considered to be a privilege and is only allowable in accordance with strict Department of Homeland Security (DHS) rules. Penalties for violations of immigration law can be severe and can include deportation and 10-year bars from reentry to the US, so it is essential for students to understand their responsibilities. **It is the STUDENT and not the university who is responsible for knowing and abiding by all immigration rules and for maintaining legal student status. The university must report updated information and violations of student status to the government via an electronic tracking system (SEVIS) within 21 days of the update/violation, SO KNOWING THESE RULES IS ABSOLUTELY VITAL TO YOUR ABILITY TO REMAIN IN THE US AND TO COMPLETE YOUR ACADEMIC PROGRAM!** Changes or updates in these rules will be sent to your student email account from iadvisor@unm.edu every semester, so please read these email notifications!

II. DOCUMENTATION OF LEGAL STUDENT STATUS IN THE US

International students are normally admitted to the US for "Duration of Status" (D/S). This means that they are allowed to remain in the US for as long as they "maintain legal student status", and NOT for the length of time listed on their visa or I-20/DS-2019 document. **If you fail to follow all the rules of legal student status, your stay expires on the day the violation occurs.** Students MUST have the following documents while they are residing in the US to remain legally present. *You should make copies of each of these documents and keep them in a safe place separate from the originals in case they are lost or stolen.*

1. Passport

The passport is the legal document issued by your country of citizenship. It must be valid for 6 months into the future upon your entry into the US, and it should remain valid at all times during your stay. Your passport MUST be valid to work in the US. The passport can usually be renewed through your embassy or one of your consulates in the U.S. If you have been issued a *Travel Document in Lieu of a Passport* by your government, the information above regarding passports applies to *Travel Documents*.

2. I-20 or DS-2019 - "Certificate of Eligibility"

The I-20 (for F-1 status) or DS-2019 (for J-1 status) is the document that you show at the US Embassy or Consulate abroad to obtain a visa and that you present to immigration officials to enter the US each time you travel abroad and return. For most UNM students, the I-20 or DS-2019 is issued by the university through the Global Education Office (GEO). Some J-1 students have documents issued by the US government or another organization. You should keep all of these and any other immigration documents for your records, even if you get new ones in the future. The I-20 and DS-2019 forms are issued via the SEVIS government tracking system. ***If any of the information on these documents changes, you MUST come to GEO immediately to apply for a new document.*** Remember, the expiration date on the I-20 or DS-2019 is just an estimate. For F-1 students, your permission to stay in the US ends 60 days after the date you complete the last requirement for your degree. For J-1 students, your permission to stay ends 30 days after completion of the last requirement. If you fail to follow all the rules of legal student status, your stay expires on the day the violation of status occurs.

3. I-94

The I-94 is the official record of legal entry into the US. If admitted in student immigration status, this document authorizes you to be in the US as a student (F-1 or J-1) for a specified period of time, for the specified program of study, and at the institution on the I-20/DS-2019. **You must print your own paper I-94 each time you enter the US at: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/request.html>.** If you cannot find your record after entry or your personal information is incorrect on it, you must go to a CBP office at an airport or other port of entry to have it corrected. The I-94 contains your immigration status (e.g., F-1 or J-1), the date of entry into the US and the date of expiration of your permission to stay. For F-1 and J-1 visa holders, the expiration date should be written as "D/S" (duration of status), which implies the date of program completion (not always the same date as graduation). The I-94, like the passport, must be valid at all times. The I-94 should be kept for your records and should be carried while traveling in the US. It must be presented when applying for a Social Security number or a driver's license or state ID. Each time you re-enter the US, you should print a new I-94. The number at the top, called your "Admission Number" or "I-94 Number", may be requested on immigration applications. ***Once again, if you fail to follow all the rules of legal student status, your stay expires on the day the violation occurs, even if your I-94 and I-20 or DS-2019 are still valid.***

4. Entry visa

The entry visa is a sticker with a photograph on a page of your passport that permits you to enter the US. Only Canadian citizens do not need a visa to enter the US. Individuals entering as students will have either an F-1 or J-1 entry visa. The visa may expire while you are in the US. It is not necessary to have a valid entry visa while you are inside the US, but a new entry visa will be required if the original expires and you travel out of the US and then wish to re-enter. You must present a valid SEVIS form I-20 or DS-2019 from the school you will attend to a US Consular officer to obtain a new entry visa. You may be able to travel to and return from Canada, Mexico, and adjacent

islands (except Cuba) without a valid visa if you will be staying less than 30 days (check with an advisor for current regulations). Remember, *the visa does not indicate how long you are permitted to stay in the US. Your permission to stay ends once you complete your program of study (plus grace period) or when you fail to “maintain legal student status”.*

III. REQUIREMENTS FOR “MAINTAINING LEGAL STUDENT STATUS”

YOU MUST ALWAYS:

1. Attend the school whose name appears on your I-20 or DS-2019. For J-1 students, the DS-2019 may be from a different organization than UNM but the agency that issues the DS-2019 has given you permission to attend UNM.
2. Provide an updated local address within 10 days of any change (notify GEO in person or via email and in turn, we notify DHS).
3. Maintain registration as a full-time student throughout every Fall and Spring semester. Summer is considered your annual vacation unless you enter the US to begin your program in summer. You must COMPLETE each semester with a full-time course load.

Full-time means:

- Undergraduate students = 12 credit hours minimum to keep legal student status (15 credit hours to keep an Amigo scholarship).
 - Graduate students = 9 credit hours minimum (or 6 credit hours if you have an assistantship).
 - ***NO STUDENT may drop below their minimum number of credits except under extremely limited circumstances that must be authorized in advance by an international student advisor!!!***
 - **Grades that do NOT count toward your full-time minimum include:**
 - “W”: This grade means “withdrawal” and will be assigned by professors if you do not attend class.
 - Grade option of “Audit”: This is a non-graded course which allows you to sit in on the class without doing the work.
 - More than 3 credit hours of online courses: While students are permitted to take more online courses, only 3 credits from online courses can be counted toward your full-time minimum.
4. Keep your "certificate of eligibility" (I-20 or DS-2019 form) correct and valid at all times and apply for extensions of stay at least one month before the document expires; ALSO, see an advisor for a new I-20/DS-2019 if any information changes.
 5. Maintain a valid passport throughout your stay in the US. Your passport must be valid for six months into the future to enter the US, and you must submit updated passports to GEO immediately so that we can report the new information when required.
 6. Complete necessary "immigration transfer procedures" if changing from one school to another in the US (even if you completed the program at the prior school); contact an international advisor for details.
 7. Observe the “grace period” upon completion of studies. ***This means that if you are F-1 you have 60 days and if you are J-1 you have 30 days from the end of your program to do one of the following things:***
 - Leave the US.
 - Get a new I-20 or DS-2019 for a new program or school and enroll in the next available semester (in less than 5 months)
 - Apply for off-campus work authorization (OPT for F-1, Academic Training for J-1). Because of application timelines, you must speak with an advisor 3 months **before** completing your program requirements in order to get this benefit.
 - Apply for a change to another immigration status.

If you leave before completing your program, you do NOT have this “grace period” – please speak with an advisor for details.

YOU MUST NEVER:

1. WORK OFF CAMPUS unless you have written authorization from the international advisor in advance on your I-20 or DS-2019 form.
2. WORK ON CAMPUS more than 20 hours per week while school is in session (unless you have been authorized for another type of work permission).
3. Take a leave of absence, withdraw from classes, or drop below the required number of credits without FIRST checking with an international advisor at GEO.

IV. OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS:

- Once you have completed or terminated your program, or have failed to “maintain legal student status,” you can no longer legally enter the US with your I-20 or DS-2019 form and the staff of GEO can no longer sign those forms (this means that you should NOT plan to travel out of and return to the US with your current I-20/DS-2019 after you have finished your program).
- All international students are required to complete and submit US tax forms to the federal government every year regardless of whether or not they earned any money in the US.
- All students are required by UNM policy to have health insurance that covers them throughout their studies. J1 visa holders are also required by US government regulations to have health insurance. The minimum coverage that all students must have is: \$100,000 per accident/illness, \$25,000 for repatriation of remains and \$50,000 for medical evacuation. Students who become residents for tax purposes (usually those in the US for more than 5 calendar years) must have health insurance that meets the requirements of the U.S. Affordable Care Act (ACA), which requires more insurance coverage than is listed here. Students who fail to maintain health insurance are in violation of UNM and U.S. policy, could be subject to tax penalties, and are financially responsible for all medical charges incurred in the U.S.

***Students agree to understanding all of the rules and regulations above when they
Sign-in to the MyGEO portal.***
