IMMIGRATION ESSENTIALS
For incoming students in F-1 and J-1 status
Summer and Fall 2013

TOPICS
- Immigration Terms & Documents
- Maintaining F-1/J-1 Status
- Travel rules
- ISSO Recommendations

IMMIGRATION TERMS & DOCUMENTS
- SEVIS
- Entry Visa
- Admission Stamp in Passport
- Certificate of Eligibility: I-20 for F-1 status
  DS-2019 for J-1 status

SEVIS
- SEVIS = Student & Exchange Visitor Information System
  Information system which contains data on:
  - F-1 students
  - J-1 exchange visitors
  - F-2 and J-2 dependents

SEVIS
- government database since 2004 accessible by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Consulates
- collects, maintains and tracks information on international students and exchange visitors
- F-1 and J-1 documents are processed through SEVIS

STUDENT INFORMATION STORED in SEVIS
- Information on your Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019)
- Your U.S. and Permanent Address
- Your Entry Visa Information
- Your Arrivals & Departures
- Your Enrollment and Employment
ENTRY VISA

Issued by the U.S. State Department at U.S. Embassy/Consulate abroad

Determines how many entries you can make into the U.S. during a specific period of time

**NOTE:** Does not determine how long you may stay in the U.S. in the status with which you entered

Validity period of the entry visa depends on reciprocity agreement between the U.S. and your country.

http://travel.state.gov/visa/fees/fees_3272.html

5-year entry F-1 visa DOES NOT mean that you may stay in the U.S. for 5 years if your program is shorter.

6-month entry visa DOES NOT mean you must leave and get a new one when it expires.

It is **not** a problem to have an expired entry visa in your passport while in U.S. maintaining your status

**Electronic I-94 Arrival Record and Admission stamp in passport**

- Date and place of entry
- Status (F-1, J-1)
- How long you can stay

**Electronic I-94 Arrival Record and admission stamp in passport**

- Electronic record if arriving by air or sea
- Paper I-94 card if arriving by land border
**Admission stamp in passport**

Should be marked “F-1 D/S” or “J-1 D/S”

**Electronic I-94 Arrival Record and admission stamp in passport**

- Check that passport stamp is correct
- After arrival, go to [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94) to access and print out your admission record after each arrival. Need to keep paper copy.

**CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY (COE): I-20 (F-1) or DS-2019 (J-1)**

- Must be presented every time you enter the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 status
- Columbia University students in F-1 status must use an I-20 issued by Columbia University.

**DS-2019**

Columbia University students in J-1 status must use a DS-2019 issued by Columbia University or sponsoring agency such as IIE, OAS or LASPAU.

If you have a DS-2019 issued by another school contact the ISSO IMMEDIATELY.
MAINTAINING STATUS

- Maintain a valid and unexpired passport at least 6 months into the future.
- Enroll full-time and make normal academic progress toward degree.
- NEVER drop below full-time registration without speaking with an ISSO officer (NOTE: Academic advisers may not be aware of immigration regulations).

NEVER work without proper work authorization.

Update your change of address with the ISSO within ten days of your move.

https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/isson/address_change.html

TRAVEL REGULATIONS

To return from a trip abroad during your program, carry the following documents with you:

- Unexpired Passport, valid 6 months into the future (some countries are exempt from the 6-month rule. See http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/faq_f2.htm#_Toc81222003)
- Unexpired F-1 or J-1 entry visa, valid for further entries
- I-20 or DS-2019, with travel signature less than 12 months old on date of return

I-20 TRAVEL SIGNATURE

valid for 12 months

AUTOMATIC REVALIDATION

**Special considerations apply for travel to Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. May be possible to return to the U.S. with an expired visa. Please check with the ISSO for details.**
CANADIANS & TRAVEL

No entry visa requirement, but you MUST present your I-20 or DS-2019—with an unexpired travel signature—each time you re-enter the U.S. in F-1 or J-1 status.

ADVICE TO YOU..

- Maintaining your immigration status is YOUR responsibility. Keep informed!
  - Read ISSOnews, which is sent to your CU email address
  - Attend ISSO workshops
  - Contact the ISSO with ANY questions about your immigration status
- Always bring your passport and your certificate of eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019) when visiting the ISSO

ISSO CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Office Hours**
  Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
  10:30 – 4:00 pm.
  Closed on Wednesday

- **Address**
  504 Riverside Drive in International House North, between 122nd Street and Tiemann Place
  (212) 854-3587

- **Website**

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  isso@columbia.edu