UCLA Dashew Center
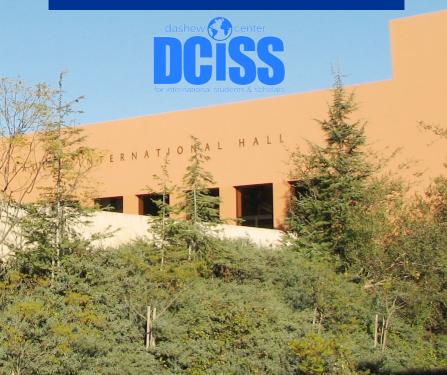## for International Students & Scholars

F-1 Student Visa

Regulation Guidelines

INTERNATIONAL HALL

F-1 VISA RELATED DOCUMENTS

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

The Department of Homeland Security oversees three agencies relevant to your visa status in the U.S.:

- **Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** is responsible for immigration and customs inspections at U.S. ports of entry.

- **United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)** is responsible for granting immigration and citizenship benefits, such as employment authorization, permanent residency petitions, and processing requests such as the replacement of immigration documents.

- **Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)** is responsible for maintaining the Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), conducting immigration investigations, detentions and removals (deportation).

F-1 Visa

An entry permit issued by a U.S. Embassy or Consulate for international students (Canadian citizens exempt) to enter the U.S. in F-1 status to engage in full-time studies at a U.S. institution. You are only required to have a valid F-1 Visa when entering the U.S. from abroad. For more information about the F-1 Visa, please visit travel.state.gov. You may remain in the U.S. beyond your F-1 Visa expiration date as long as you maintain valid F-1 status and continuous full-time enrollment.

SEVIS I-20

A Certificate of Eligibility issued by a U.S. institution allowing international, admitted students to request an F-1 Visa from a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Your SEVIS I-20 contains information such as your major, degree objective, program start and end dates and other personal information relevant to your F-1 status, which must be kept up-to-date at all times. Your SEVIS I-20 must be valid at all times during your studies at UCLA.

I-94 Admission Record

The I-94 Admission Record, issued by CBP, documents your arrival and lawful entry to the U.S. The I-94 Admission Record could be issued either electronically or as a paper card.

Electronic I-94: Retrieve and print online from CBP at www.cbp.gov/i94

Your I-94 should indicate your admission to the U.S. for the duration of status, abbreviated as "D/S," which stands for the period that an F-1 student will be pursuing a full course of study or engaging in authorized Practical Training. The I-94 is required to request for state and federal benefits, such as a Social Security Number (SSN) or Driver License.

F-1 STATUS REQUIREMENTS

Mandatory Visa Check-In

Newly-admitted UCLA F-1 students are required to check-in with DCISS upon arrival to UCLA. Failure to check-in will result in the termination of your F-1 status. You are required to submit the following documents to DCISS during a designated check-in session:

- Copy of UCLA I-20
- Copy of I-94 Admission Record
- Copy of F-1 Visa *(Canadian citizens exempt)*
- Copy of Most Recent U.S. Entry Stamp Inside Passport
- Copy of Passport Photopage

Mandatory F-1 Visa Workshop

All newly-admitted UCLA F-1 students must also complete an F-1 visa workshop. This online workshop will cover important information on F-1 status requirements, responsibilities and eligibility for F-1 benefits.

Address, Phone Number, and E-mail Reporting

F-1 students are required to have a valid local address, overseas address, U.S. phone number, and e-mail recorded in *MyUCLA* at all times during their studies at UCLA. Failure to maintain valid contact information may result in the termination of F-1 status by DHS.

Log on to **www.my.ucla.edu** and click on 'Settings', then click on 'Official Email/Address/Phone' to update your contact information as follows:

- ■ *E-mail Address*: an e-mail address that you check regularly. E-mail is the primary method of communication DCISS will use to contact you.
- ■ *Mailing Address*: your local, residential address within the Los Angeles area. This address cannot be an address outside the U.S. or California, an academic department or office address, or a post office box address.
- ■ *Permanent Address*: your residential address in your home country. This address cannot be a U.S. address or an academic department address.
- ■ *Primary Phone Number*: your valid U.S. telephone number. Input a 10-digit phone number only. No special characters or parentheses.

Enrollment

To maintain F-1 status, you are required to pursue a full course of study and make normal academic progress towards completion of your degree program. Summer enrollment is optional for continuing students.

- ■ **Undergraduate Students:** minimum of **12 units** each quarter
- ■ **Graduate Students:** minimum of **8 units** each quarter
  (*some degree programs may require more units for academic purposes, please check with your academic department for further information*)

Reduced Course Load (RCL)

F-1 students may only drop below full-time enrollment if they meet one of the criteria below. You must receive approval from DCISS before dropping below full-time enrollment. Please visit the DCISS website for more details.

- ■ Academic Difficulty *(can only be used once)*
- ■ Illness or Medical Condition
- ■ Final Quarter at UCLA

Leave of Absence (LOA)

If you would like to take time off to return to your home country during the academic quarters for personal reasons, you must contact DCISS to request for a personal leave of absence approval prior to your planned departure from UCLA. A leave of absence from UCLA will have an impact on your visa status, please schedule an appointment with DCISS in advance to review and understand leave of absence eligibility, timelines, restrictions, exit and re-entry requirements, and complete details on visa status implications.

Travel Abroad

To re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status after a short trip abroad, you must present the following original documents at the port of entry:

- Valid Passport *(for at least 6 months into the future)*
- Valid F-1 Visa *(Canadian citizens exempt)*
- Valid UCLA I-20 endorsed for travel by DCISS
  *(each signature is valid for only **6 months** even though the I-20 indicates one year, and must be valid at the time of re-entry to the U.S.)*

Automatic Visa Revalidation for F-1 Students

Automatic visa revalidation allows F-1 students to enter the U.S from Canada, Mexico, or one of the adjacent islands to the U.S. (other than Cuba) on an expired F-1 visa if the trip does not exceed **30 days**. You must have a valid UCLA I-20 endorsed for travel by DCISS, a valid passport, and an expired F-1 Visa to be eligible. (Students with a Paper I-94 Card must retain their original I-94 Card when departing the U.S. to be eligible for re-entry with automatic visa revalidation.)

Please Note: Automatic visa revalidation is not available to all F-1 students.

I-20 Extension

If you are unable to complete your degree program by the end date on your UCLA I-20, you must request for an extension of your I-20 from DCISS at least one month before it expires. Failure to request for an I-20 Extension in a timely manner will result in the termination of your F-1 status.

EMPLOYMENT ON F-1 STATUS

F-1 students are allowed to work in the U.S. with proper authorization from DCISS or the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). There are two types of employment available to F-1 students:

- **On-Campus Employment**
- **Practical Training**

On-Campus Employment

F-1 students are permitted to work on-campus using a valid UCLA I-20 and I-94 Admission Record. F-1 students may work on-campus part-time (up to 20 hours per week) during the academic year and full-time (more than 20 hours per week) during summer and winter vacations. On-campus employment may include teaching or research assistantships, reader positions, office assistant positions, campus library positions, or campus food/dining services. F-1 students are not eligible for federal work-study positions, unless they have been awarded a work-study grant.

Practical Training

F-1 students may engage in off-campus employment with prior authorization from DCISS or USCIS to gain practical experience in their field of study. There are two types of off-campus work authorization available to F-1 students: Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT).

- ■ *Curricular Practical Training (CPT):*

Work authorization approved by DCISS that allows you to engage in an off-campus internship that is a required or integral part of your academic program. Please visit the DCISS website for more details.

- ■ *Optional Practical Training (OPT):*

Full-time work authorization for up to 12 months approved by USCIS that allows you to work in your field of study upon completion of your degree program. Authorization from USCIS can take up to 4 months to obtain. Please visit the DCISS website for more details.

COMPLETION OF STUDY

Grace Period

Upon completion of your degree program or OPT, you are allowed a **60-day** grace period to prepare for your departure from the U.S., transfer to another academic program, or change to another immigration status.

UCLA CAMPUS RESOURCES

Ashe Student Health Center | 310-825-4073 | www.studenthealth.ucla.edu
Bruin Resource Center (BRC) | 310-825-3945 | www.brc.ucla.edu
Counseling & Psychological Services | 310-825-0768 | www.counseling.ucla.edu
Graduate Student Resource Center | 310-267-4805 | www.gsrc.ucla.edu
Office of the Deans of Students | 310-825-3871 | www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu
Office of Residential Life (ORL) | 310-825-3401 | www.orl.ucla.edu
Office for Students With Disabilities (OSD) | 310-825-1501 | www.osd.ucla.edu
Student Legal Services | 310-825-9894 | www.studentlegal.ucla.edu
UC Police Department (UCPD) | 310-825-1491 | www.ucpd.ucla.edu
UCLA Career Center | 310-206-1915 | www.career.ucla.edu
UCLA Undergraduate Writing Center | 310-206-1145 | www.wp.ucla.edu

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DCISSF1Unit@saonet.ucla.edu
310-825-1681 | M-F 8:30AM-5PM PST

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