Immigration Essentials
International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)

Today We Will Cover
- Terms and Definitions
- Maintaining Your Status
- Travel
- Employment
- Tax Filing Obligations
- Staying Informed
Terms and Definitions

SEVIS

- Student & Exchange Visitor Information System
- Federal database since 2003
SEVIS

What does SEVIS do?

- Collects, maintains, and tracks your information
- Accessible to Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Consulates, and Universities
- Processes your F-1 and J-1 forms
What is stored in SEVIS?

- I-20 or DS-2019
- Information on your I-20 or DS-2019
- Your Entry Visa Information
- Your U.S. and Permanent Address
- Your Arrivals & Departures
- Your Enrollment Status each term, and employment

Certificate Of Eligibility (COE):

- I-20 (F-1)  or  DS-2019 (J-1)
I-20

- Issued by Columbia
- Needed to Apply for F-1 Visa
- Present every time you enter U.S. in F-1 status
- From another university
- F-2 dependents have their own

New Version As of June 26

DS-2019

- Issued by Columbia
- Issued by J-1 sponsor
- Needed to Apply for J-1 Visa
- From another university
- J-2 dependents have their own
Entry Visa

- Applied for at U.S. consulate or embassy
- Put in passport
- Eligibility to enter the U.S. with valid I-20/DS-2019

Canadian citizens exempt from requirement.

Cannot obtain Visa in the U.S.

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

Determines how many entries you can make into the U.S. during a specific period of time with a valid I-20 or DS-2019.

Multiple unlimited entries.
What do these mean?

**5 Year**
DOES NOT mean that you may stay in the U.S. for 5 years if your program is shorter.

**6 Month**
DOES NOT mean you must leave U.S. and obtain a new one when it expires.

**Expired**
Relevant ONLY for entering the U.S.
Not a problem if it expires while in the U.S. maintaining status.

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**Arrival Record (I-94 and Passport Stamp)**

- Processed by a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officer when entering the United States.
- Evidence of your admission and used to document legal status in the United States.
Arrival Record

Admission Stamp in your Passport

Electronic I-94 Record or Paper I-94 card

Admission Stamp in Passport

- Check that admission stamp in passport is correct
- Should be marked “F-1 D/S” or “J-1 D/S” for students
- Should be marked “F-2 D/S” or “J-2 D/S” for dependents
- F-2 dependents have their own
Electronic I-94 Arrival Record

- Arrive in the U.S.
- Go to [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94) to check for accuracy.
- Need to print it for SSN application, employment verification, etc.

D/S

- Duration of Status.

- The duration of your authorized period of stay in the United States as indicated on your COE (I-20 or DS-2019) unless you finish earlier.
Duration of Status

The length of your fulltime program as indicated on your COE (unless you finish earlier)

Any period of authorized F-1 Post Completion Optional Practical Training/ J-1 Post Academic Training following completion of studies

Grace Period

• The time designated for you to prepare for your departure.
Grace Period Usage

A) Used directly after the completion of program

or

B) After practical training/academic training time

Grace Period Timeframe

- **60 Days**: F-1
- **30 Days**: J-1
Grace Period Restrictions

- No international travel
- No work during this time

Duration of Status

- I-20/DS-2019
- Employment Authorization
- Grace Period
Duration of Status

NOT defined by the expiration date of your visa!

Maintaining Your Status
Maintaining Status

- Submit online SEVIS report form within 7 days of arrival: [http://tinyurl.com/issocheckin](http://tinyurl.com/issocheckin)
  - Dependents do not need to check-in
- Enroll full-time and make normal academic progress toward degree.
- Maintain a valid and unexpired passport at least 6 months into the future.
- Update your change of address with us within 10 days of moving:
  - Student Services Online (SSOL): [https://ssol.columbia.edu/](https://ssol.columbia.edu/)

Must Speak with ISSO:

- Never drop below full-time registration without first receiving ISSO approval.
- Inform us if you are completing your program earlier than the date on your I-20/DS-2019.
- Do NOT work without proper work authorization.
- Do NOT let your I-20/DS-2019 expire! If you qualify for more time, apply for an extension BEFORE the expiration date.

Travel

- Must speak with ISSO:
Bring when you travel

Unexpired Passport, valid 6 months into the future (some countries are exempt from the 6-month rule. See www.ice.gov/sevis/travel)
Unexpired F-1 or J-1 entry visa, valid for further entries (except Canadians)
Unexpired I-20/DS-2019 with a valid travel signature

- F-2 and J-2 dependents must carry their own documents

Travel Signature (I-20 pre June 26)

Get a travel signature from us.
It’s valid for one year (12 months) from the day you receive it or until your program end date, whichever is earlier.
Travel Signature (I-20 post June 26)

Get a travel signature from us.

It’s valid for one year (12 months) from the day you receive it or until your program end date, whichever is earlier.

Travel Signature (J-1)

Get a travel signature from us.

It’s valid for one year (12 months) from the day you receive it or until your program end date, whichever is earlier.
Upon Returning

- Go to [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94) to print out your arrival record each time you travel. Keep paper copies.
- Be mindful that your passport is stamped correctly when you return: "F-1 D/S" or "J-1 D/S"

Travel Exceptions

For Canadians:
- No Visa Requirement
- MUST present your I-20 each time you re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status and have your passport

If travelling to Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean:
- May be possible to return to the U.S. with an expired visa. [http://tinyurl.com/autoreval](http://tinyurl.com/autoreval)
Employment

Employment in Student Status

On-Campus

Off-Campus

J-1
Academic
Training

F-1
Practical
Training

CPT

OPT
On-Campus Employment

Work done for and paid by a Columbia office or department
- You are immediately eligible once in F-1/J-1 Status

- Teaching or Research Assistants (TA, RA)
- Paid by the hour jobs: Libraries, Computer Labs
- Part-time (up to 20 hours per week) during school year
- Full-time allowed during recess periods during the program of study
- No Work Study

Social Security Number (SSN)

Must have one to be paid

- Issued by Social Security Administration (SSA)
- Only for authorized employment
- Not 9-digit Columbia University ID numbers!
How to obtain a SSN for an On-Campus Job

1. Obtain an SSN verification form:
   - printed on their letterhead with original signature.

2. Bring us the form with your documents:
   - Passport
   - I-20/DS-2019
   - print-out of I-94 arrival: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94
   - Employment Letter

I-9 - Employment Eligibility Verification

- Kent Hall
- Studebaker Hall
- CUMC

Required of everyone who is employed in the U.S.

Multiple locations

Do within 3 days of starting employment
Off-Campus Employment

F-1
- Eligible after 1 academic year (2 full-time semesters)

J-1
- Eligible after 1 full-time semester
- Must be authorized

Types of Off-Campus Employment

F-1
- CPT - Curricular Practical Training
  - Fulfills a requirement or elective towards your degree completion

J-1
- AT – Academic Training
  - Employment in your field of study
  - Limited to time spent in J status

OPT - Optional Practical Training
  - Employment in your field of study during or after your program
  - Up to 12 months per degree level
Every F-1 and J-1 student has to complete one federal form, the 8843, even if they had no income.
Tax Return

2015

Required of all individuals employed or receiving U.S.-based income in the U.S. during 2015. Tax Return will include Form 8843.

How We Can Help You

Glacier Tax Prep

NY State Workshops
Stay Informed

- Read issonews, sent to your CU email address
- Attend our workshops
- Contact Us
- Always bring your passport, I-94 record and your I-20 or DS-2019
Thank You!

Contact Information
International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)
524 Riverside Drive in International House North
(between 122nd Street and Tiemann Place)
(212) 854-3587
isso@columbia.edu
http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/

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

Fall Phones:
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
1 – 4 p.m.

Check-In link:
http://tinyurl.com/issocheckin