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## Immigration Benefits and Responsibilities Of Students in F-1 and J-1 Status

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1. **Purpose.** This document summarizes some of the more important responsibilities and benefits you have as an F-1 student in relation to the immigration regulations of the United States government. It also identifies some of the situations for which you should seek assistance from the office of Admission, Registration, & Records (ARR) in relation to your status. The staff in the office of Admission, Registration, & Records will be pleased to offer you additional information, as well as advice and assistance, on all federal regulations and procedures related to your Immigration Status.
2. **Required Immigration Documents.**
  - a. **General.** The documents listed in this section must be valid at all times while you are in the U.S. Expiration or lapses of these documents can lead to serious immigration sanctions. You should keep these documents in a safe place. You should also make photocopies of all these documents and keep the photocopies with you at all times. If any of these documents are damaged, lost, or stolen, it is your responsibility to have them replaced as quickly as possible; visit the office of Admission, Registration, & Records if you have any questions about your papers or how to replace them.
  - b. **Passport.** This document must be valid for at least an additional six months at the time when you apply for any of the benefits of the F-1 or J-1 status.
  - c. **Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student (F-1) Status (INS Form I-20).** All information on this document must be true and correct at all times. If any information changes, such as major or program, it is your responsibility to request a new document.
  - d. **Arrival/Departure Record (INS Form I-94).** Without your I-94 document, you are ineligible to apply for any of the benefits of the F-1 or J-1 status.

**You must submit any and all changes to your immigration documents to the office of Admission, Registration, & Records so that we can update your file. For example, if you have a new passport or your new I-20 is stamped for the first time by the INS, you must submit these changes to the Office of Admission, Registration, & Records.**

3. **Visa as different from Immigration Status.** A visa is an adhesive stamp or sticker inside of your passport or travel documents. Your immigration Status is a complex set of rules that govern the rights and responsibilities of an individual who has been admitted into the United States under a particular category. For example, *an F-1 student visa will usually allow an individual to be admitted into the U.S. in F-1 Student Status.*

Once you have been admitted into the U.S., the visa is of no real value until you leave and then reenter the United States, but your immigration status remains critically important. For this reason, while your visa – the stamp or sticker in your passport – can expire or lapse, your immigration status must never lapse.

4. **Length of Time You May Remain in the United States.** You may study in your present program until you complete all requirements for it, terminate your program, or until the expiration of your Form I-20, whichever occurs first. If you need more time to complete your studies than that which is indicated on your Form I-20, it is your responsibility to contact the office of Admission, Registration, & Records at least thirty days before the expiration date and request an extension.
5. **Registration, Attendance, Course Load Requirements**

- a. **Registration and Attendance.** You must register for classes and attend school until the end of each fall and spring semester. You do not have to enroll for interim terms or during the summer unless you have been admitted to begin attendance during one of these terms.
- b. **Course Load.** You must register for a “full course load,” as defined by INS, unless one of the following situations applies to you. If none of the following applies you must carry a “full course load.”
  - i *Academic difficulties:* If you are having (a) initial difficulties with the English language, reading requirements or American teaching methods, or (b) difficulties due to unfamiliarity with American teaching methods or (c) were improperly placed in a course level placement you can be approved for a reduced course level by OIE.
  - ii *Medical Difficulties:* If a medical practitioner recommends that you reduce your class schedule due to compelling illness or other medical condition you can be approved for a reduced course level by ARR.
  - iii *Final Semester:* If you will have completed all degree requirements by the end of that semester and is confirmed in writing by your academic advisor or department chair, you can be approved for a reduced course level by ARR.
- c. **Undergraduate Students.** While you may register for as many classes as university policy allows, you must register for at least 12 credit hours each fall and spring semester.
- d. **Online or Distance Courses.** Students are only allowed to count a maximum of one electronic or online course towards the calculation or full-time enrollment per semester.

**Any deviation from minimum registration requirements must be approved in advance by the office of Admission, Registration, & Records (ARR). Only ARR can authorize under-enrollment and withdrawals from a course that place a student below full-time immigration status. Failure to receive prior approval for under-enrollment is a violation of immigration rules and can result in serious consequences.**

6. **Course Work at or Transfer to a Different School.** If you wish to take one or more courses at a different school temporarily, you must receive written authorization from the office of Admission, Registration, & Records in advance. If you wish to cease your studies at the Community College of Denver and transfer to another institution please consult with your advisor at ARR and follow INS transfer procedures before you attend a different school.
7. **Completion of Program.** Upon completion of your studies, you may be eligible to (1) transfer to a new school, (2) apply for one year of “practical training” employment, (3) leave the country within sixty (60) days, or (4) change your visa status. **You should consult with your advisor at ARR regarding your plans at least one term before you complete your studies.**

## 8. Employment

- a. **On-Campus Employment.** As long as you are in lawful F-1 status, you may be employed in most on-campus jobs. However, you must limit all on-campus employment to a combined total of 20 hours per week during academic terms. Full-time on-campus employment is allowed only during official college holidays, spring break, and summer term. On-campus employment at CCD is defined to include the entire Auraria Higher Education Center and its constituent campuses. Employment may be performed at an off-campus location if the location is educationally affiliated with the college.
- b. **Off-Campus Employment.** You may not accept off-campus employment without first obtaining written authorization from the Department of Homeland Security. After your first year of study, you may be eligible to apply for off-campus employment permission if (a) the employment may be considered an integral part of your study program (practical/academic training) or (b) you have experienced an unforeseen change in your financial circumstances that results in “severe economic hardship.”

**Working without prior written authorization from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or the office of Admission, Registration, & Records is a very serious violation of your immigration status.**

9. **Holidays and Vacation.** You may remain in the U.S. and will be considered to be maintaining status during holidays and vacation periods observed by the college, including the summer term, provided (a) you are eligible

and intend to register and attend the next school term and (b) the expiration date of your lawful F-1 status will not be reached before you resume studies.

## 10. Travel

- a. **Travel within the U.S.** You may freely travel within the U.S. provided you maintain lawful F-1 status and possess a valid ID. Students are strongly encouraged to carry their immigration documents with them if they will be traveling outside of the Denver area.
- b. **Travel outside the U.S.** You may leave the U.S. at any time. You may be allowed to return provided you have the proper documents. You should consult with ARR at least two weeks before making any trips outside the U.S. to obtain needed permissions. If you intend to return to the U.S. for the purpose of attending a different school, you should (1) notify your advisor at ARR of your intention and (2) obtain an I-20 from your new school before you reenter the U.S.

11. **Dependents and Other Family Members.** If you are married, or plan to marry during a trip away from the U.S., you may be eligible to have your spouse (husband or wife) and/or any children temporarily visit you, or join you for the duration of your studies. Each dependent (F-2/J-2) needs to have his or her own form I-20/DS-2019.

Dependents of F-1 student (F-2 status holders) may not work or pursue full-time studies at the collegiate level while in F-2 status. Dependents (F-2) under the age of 19 are allowed to be full-time primary/secondary school students without restriction.

Other members of your family (parents, sibling, etc.) may be able to visit you during your studies too. The office of Admission, Registration, & Records will be pleased to write letters to support visa issuance for your family.

12. **Maintaining a Current Address.** Under the immigration regulations, students are required to maintain a current information file with the college at all times. If students move or change their contacts, they are required to notify their advisor at ARR within 10 days of the change. Failing to update the University with current information is a violation of immigration status.
13. **Further Information.** . Staff members at the Admissions, Registration & Records office are always pleased to provide you with information, advice, and assistance so that you may achieve your educational goals while at Community College of Denver
14. **Conclusions.** The immigration regulations that govern a student's stay in the United States are complex, and there are significant penalties for non-compliance. However, most problems can be avoided by remembering three simple rules, which we call the "**Three Golden Rules.**"
- a. **Be a Full-Time Student:** Register for a full-course load each term; Do not under-enroll or withdraw from courses without first receiving ARR permission!
  - b. **Keep your documents valid:** Make certain that your passport, I-20, visa and I-94 are valid and that the information on the documents is correct. If changes are needed or you need to extend documents, consult with an international student advisor before the papers expire!
  - c. **Do Not Work Without Authorization:** Working without written authorization from either the DHS or ARR, for even one day, is a very serious violation of status and can jeopardize your program and your stay in the United States!

### **FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH RESPONSIBILITIES**

**The immigration laws of the U.S. provide for severe penalties if you fail to comply with your immigration responsibilities. You should work closely with the staff in the office of Admission, Registration, & Records to make certain that you comply with all F-1 regulations.**