Understanding Your Immigration Status

Christina Veloso Pope, International Student Advisor
Why It’s Important to Understand Your F-1 or J-1 Status

- Remain in the United States legally
- Make your life easier
- Access benefits
- You are responsible for knowing these rules – no excuses.
Understanding what? The basics.

- Your Documents
- Your Responsibilities
- What you can do at International Student Services
Your Documents: I-20

- lists details of your program
- must always be valid and updated
- reflects your F-1 status

Take out your I-20:
Did you sign it?
# Your Documents: Visa vs. Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISA</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry document</td>
<td>Condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like a movie ticket</td>
<td>Maintained by upholding rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only needed to come in to U.S.</td>
<td>Must be maintained in order to remain in the United States legally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can expire while you are here</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot be renewed in the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need valid VISA every time you enter the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Don’t let it expire while you are here.

It should always be valid for at least 6 months into the future – is yours?

If any of these documents are stolen, report the theft to the police.
I-94 Admission Number

- Need to print it?: [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94)

- This number tracks your entry and exit from the United States and proves you entered legally
Your Documents: SEVIS

SEVIS

Student & Exchange Visitor Information System

It’s how the US Department of Homeland Security tracks international students in the U.S.

UMSL records changes to your personal, academic, and financial information in SEVIS

You each have a SEVIS record that must be maintained (kept active)

How do you keep your SEVIS record active?
Follow the rules for your status

What are the rules, exactly?
Your Responsibilities: Enrollment

- Enroll full-time and complete a full-time course load each fall and spring semester.

- Enroll = Register for classes.
Your Responsibilities: Enrollment

- 12 credit hours for undergraduates
- 9 credit hours for graduate students
- Only 1 online class counts toward full-time
- A, B, C, D, F count toward full-time
- Maintain a minimum GPA
  - 2.0 for undergraduate students (C average)
  - 3.0 for graduate students (B average)
- Meet additional requirements of departments and scholarships
- Sometimes a class may be too difficult.
What should you do if a class is too difficult?

1. Attend class.
   Do NOT stop attending class = FN grade.

2. Talk to the professor
3. Talk to your advisor
4. If needed, drop the class EARLY so you can replace it with another class.
5. Talk to ISS before going below full-time. You need permission to go below full-time.
To enroll, you:

1. Take English placement test and receive results, if required
2. Take the math placement test, if needed
3. Meet with your advisor AFTER orientation.
# Undergraduate Advising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
<td>303 Lucas Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts &amp; Comm</td>
<td>303 Lucas Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>487 SSB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>116 SCCB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>228 Benton Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Floor NAB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>121 Bellerive Hall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See page 14 of Guide to Your First Week*
## Graduate Advising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
<td>Email program director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts &amp; Comm</td>
<td>Email program director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>350 JC Penney North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>116 SCCB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy</td>
<td>406 SSB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/future/index.html](http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/future/index.html)

*See page 14 of Guide to Your First Week*
Know your current admission status

- Provisional admission or missing documents
- Restricted admission (graduate students only)

Submit any missing items before March

Documents = inside sealed, official envelopes

*Cannot register for second semester until missing items are received by ISS*
May 2, 2012

Dear [X],

Your Student Number is: [X]

I am pleased to inform you that you have been admitted as a provisional graduate student in Fall 2012 for the Master of Public Policy Administration degree. **Your admission is considered provisional until you submit your official BS and LLB mark sheets and degree certificates, and an official IELTS score.** You must provide these before the start of classes. The Graduate School reserves the right to withdraw any offer of admission should it not be possible to determine the veracity of educational documents that have been submitted as evidence of academic preparation. All international students must take and successfully complete any required ESL courses as determined at orientation.

I encourage you to visit the Graduate School website under the Current Students menu and read the section “Once You Have Been Accepted”. That page provides links for obtaining your Gateway ID for e-mail, grade notification and interest areas. Please set up your e-mail account right away; you can route your UMSL mail to another.
Transfer Credit

Credit from a U.S. university
- Former registrar’s office sends transcripts to UMSL Registrar’s office

Credit from a foreign university
- Official transcripts
- Course descriptions
- Meet with the transfer advisor in ISS
- The review takes time (2 months)
Your Responsibilities

- Obey all state and federal laws
  - What is the legal drinking age in the U.S.?
  - Drug and alcohol related arrests can make you ineligible for future entries to the US and future US visas.
  - Camping?
Your Responsibilities

- Employment

  - You can work 20 hours or less per week while school is in session.
  
  - During the breaks (fall break, winter break, spring break, summer semester) you can work up to 40 hours per week. (Average across year: 28)
  
  - You cannot work off-campus without permission.
More on employment

- Employment
  - What is work?
    - Anything where you go to a job site or complete job tasks in your field, paid or unpaid
  - Be careful with “volunteer” situations
More on employment

- OPT
- CPT
- Academic Training

- Any internship or volunteer position related to your major could be considered work – talk to our office and get authorization!!
Campus Resources: Career Services—278 MSC

- Offer many services to help you get a job on campus or off campus.
  - Resume workshops
  - Practice interviewing skills
  - Major field exploration and career counseling
  - Job search assistance
  - Going Global
You do not NEED a Social Security Number (SSN) to live in the U.S.

You can get a SSN if you have a job offer.

Bring the job offer letter to ISS office to learn how to obtain a SSN.

File a tax return every year that you work. Check MyGateway in January or February for announcements about tax workshops at UMSL

All non-residents are required to file a nonresident tax form.

Tax specialist Jim Webb provides more information about filing tax forms every spring.
Government Imposter Scams

- You receive a phone call from someone who says that s/he is with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and that they have discovered that you owe back taxes. The caller then claims that if you don’t send money immediately by wire transfer, pre-paid debit card or by providing your credit card information, federal agents will come to arrest you. **For more information:** [http://www.irs.gov/uac/Tax-Scams-Consumer-Alerts](http://www.irs.gov/uac/Tax-Scams-Consumer-Alerts)

- Similarly, if your family name sounds like it’s from another country, you may get a call from someone claiming to be from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. Again, the caller will claim that you owe money and that if you don’t pay, you and your family will be deported, your assets frozen or you’ll go to jail. **For more Information:** [http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/dialing-dollars](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/dialing-dollars)

- **New!** In another version, you may get an email from a government agency stating you owe a fee or fine. For instance it may look like you are getting an email from EZ Pass with a bill stating that you owe for driving on a toll road. As with the other scams, no government agency will send you a bill by email. If you owe a fee for driving on a toll road, you will get a proper bill in the mail, generally including a picture showing your car driving on the road.
Travel Outside of the U.S.

- Need a travel signature on I-20 if you will leave the U.S. for a break and return.
- You cannot get a travel signature if you have a hold that prevents registration, e.g. financial.
- Request travel signature 2 weeks before trip.
  - Need a new signature every six months.
- Cannot leave and re-enter U.S. after I-20 end date or close to end.
Review

- Full time!
- Obey U.S. laws
- Working on campus: no more than 20 hours per week
- Working off campus: only with prior approval first
- Travel signature two weeks before you leave the US
- Address Changes: report within 10 days
- Report any other changes right away: name, degree level, funding, etc.
Our Role

- Help you understand the immigration rules that apply to you
- Apply the federal regulations to student situations
- Help you access any benefits attached to your status
- Report information in SEVIS to keep your record active
How Our Office Works

- The front desk is open 8am-5pm Monday-Friday
- We do not check email or phones outside those hours
- Appointments available 9am-5pm
- Always better to make an appointment – why?
- Call or email for appointment
- Sometimes you do not need to see an advisor:
  1. Front desk
  2. Website
- We email you VERY important information to your UMSL email account. Look for emails from us and from “MyGateway.”
Advisors in ISS—ask us if you have questions. We’re here to help!

- www.umsl.edu/international [Click]
- www.ice.gov/sevis/students/
- www.uscis.gov
Questions

Jennifer Amatya
314-516-4834
amatyaj@umsl.edu

Christina Pope
314-516-6780
popec@umsl.edu

International Student Services
MSC 261
314-516-5229
iss@umsl.edu
J-1 Students

- Room 314
- Maria Cservak
- Sabine Hobi
- Aleksander Kicior
- Huan-Ann Shen
1. Complete New Student Check-in Form
   - US emergency contact is optional; US phone number if you have it

2. Put 1 Student Statement of Responsibility in the envelope and keep 1 for you

3. Put form, passport, and signed I-20 or DS-2019 in envelope
   - If you don’t have something, bring it to ISS tomorrow

4. When finished, go into the hallway to get checked & receive lunch ticket. After lunch, leaders take you to English test.

5. Pick up documents between 5pm-5:30pm today in MSC, 2nd floor