

## LIVING AND STUDYING IN THE UNITED STATES *ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS*

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**Passport:** Your passport must be valid at all times during your stay in the U.S. For passport renewal, your consulate may require that you present a certificate of your student status. Please see the Coordinator of International Student Support (CISS) for more information.

**U.S. Entry Visa:** Your visa is the multi-colored or blue stamp entered on a page of your passport at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad. (Canadians do not need visas.) It is used to allow you to enter the U.S. for a certain number of times (ranging from one to multiple “M”) until a particular date. This visa needs to be valid only on the day you enter or re-enter the U.S.; it does not need to remain valid while you are in the U.S. However, if you leave the U.S. and the visa stamp has expired, you must get another one at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad before you can return; new visa stamps **cannot** be obtained in the U.S.

**I-94 Arrival/Departure Record:** The I-94 card, also called the Arrival/Departure Record, is the white card stapled into your passport. **This card is an important document that states your official immigration status and how long you may stay in the U.S. It is your proof that you have legal status in the U.S.** All F-1 students should have the notation, “F-1, D/S” on the I-94 card. D/S means “duration of status” and allows you to stay in this country until completion of your study program plus a 60-day grace period, as indicated on your I-20. Your admission number is printed on the I-94 card the first time you enter the U.S.; if you enter a second time, this number is replaced with a written admission number in the spaces provided.

**I-20 Certificate of Eligibility:** U.S. schools issue the I-20 to international students who have been admitted to their academic program and who have presented evidence to the school of sufficient financial support to study in the U.S. The I-20 is used to obtain the F-1 visa stamp at a U.S. Consulate or Embassy. The completion date noted is an estimate of the normal length of time it takes to complete a specific degree. Students must finish on or before that date or must request an extension from the school before that date has passed. However, regardless of the I-20 completion date, once you have completed your degree, you have 60 days to leave the U.S., apply for another visa or Optional Practical Training or gain admission at another school authorized to issue I-20s.

**It is your responsibility to adhere to the completion date on your I-20 and request extensions in a timely manner well in advance of your program end date.**

