



**Office of International Education  
Immigration Services  
1324 S. Lumpkin Street, Athens, GA 30602-5407  
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(706) 542-2900 fax: (706) 583-0123**

### **Visa vs. Status:**

As an international student in the United States you may be asked from time to time about your “visa” or your “status.” While in most situations in the U.S. the two are interchangeable, it is a good idea for you to know the difference.

**Visa:** A visa stamp in your passport issued by a U.S. Embassy or Consulate and cannot be obtained in the U.S. The purpose of the visa is to allow you to be taken to a U.S. Port of Entry to determine whether you are eligible for admission to the U.S. After you have been admitted to the U.S., the visa in your passport does not need to remain valid for you to be in the country legally. Should you travel outside the U.S., a valid F-1/J-1 student visa may be required for your re-entry.

**Status:** As an international student, you are granted status upon clearing inspection at a U.S. Port of Entry. Your status can be found on your I-94 record (which you can access at [cbp.gov/i94](http://cbp.gov/i94)). Your I-94 grants you permission to remain in the U.S. while pursuing your degree as long as you maintain your immigration status. Your I-94 will show the date of entry into the U.S. and while your status (F-1 or J-1). You will also notice the abbreviation “D/S” on your I-94. “D/S” stands for “Duration of Status.” This means that your immigration status will remain valid while you pursue your degree as long as you maintain your status.

### **Requirements of Maintaining Your Immigration Status:**

Information regarding the maintenance of your immigration status may be found on the third page of the F-1 Form I-20 or the second page of the J-1 DS-2019. By signing the I-20 or DS-2019, you are stating that you have read the information and you plan to abide by the requirements during your stay in the U.S. on your non-immigrant status (F-1 or J-1). Please make sure to read this page before entering the U.S. Upon arrival at the University of Georgia, you will verify that you understand the requirements of maintaining your immigration status. These are listed below:

1. All international students must be enrolled in a full course of study each academic semester at UGA. (Graduate students = 9 hours per semester, Undergraduate students = 12 hours per semester). Dropping below a full course of study without prior authorization will violate your immigration status.
2. International students are not permitted to work outside the UGA campus without prior approval. Working outside of the UGA campus without approval will be a violation of your immigration status.
3. International students must limit employment while enrolled. Students may engage in up to 20 hours per week while school is in session unless otherwise authorized.
4. International students must report any change in address or name within 10 days of the change. This can be done by updating your UGA Athena record.

5. International students must have a valid passport at all times. It is suggested that individuals with passports that will expire in six months contact your nearest consulate or embassy to inquire about renewal procedures.
6. Violations of status will negatively impact your immigration status and SEVIS record. Proper steps must be taken by international students to legally regain status. Failure to do so may result in arrest or deportation.

**Contact Information for Questions about Maintaining Your Status:**

Immigration advisors are available for questions in several different ways. Feel free to use the contact information to ask any questions you may have. It is much better to ask a question before you make any action on your record: both immigration matters and academic.

Visit OIE for walk-in advising or an appointment:  
OIE, 1324 S. Lumpkin Street, Athens, GA 30622

Call with Questions:  
(706) 542-2900

Email our office:  
[immigration@uga.edu](mailto:immigration@uga.edu)