Important Terms

**USCIS** – United States Citizenship and Immigration Service

**I-20** – Certificate of Eligibility to study at an institution in the U.S.

**F-1 Visa** – For entry to the U.S.

**SEVIS** – Student & Exchange Visitor Information System

**I-94** – Arrival/Departure Record

**Visa Status** – You must follow certain rules to maintain your F-1 status while you are in the U.S.
Passport

- A passport is a document which certifies, for the purpose of international travel, the identity and nationality of its holder.

- Issued by the national government of your home country.

- If you obtain a new passport and your F-1 visa is in your old passport, you need to keep both passports and travel with both of them.
Important Immigration Documents

Form I-20

- Form I-20 is a United States Department of Homeland Security document that provides supporting information for the issuance of a student visa or change of status.
- This is your Certificate of Eligibility.
- Issued by colleges, universities, and vocational schools which you attend
- Upon receiving your I-20, review it to make sure the information is correct.
- Check item #5 carefully. You are not allowed to enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the “report to school” date.
- Keep all your I-20’s ever received by all schools FOREVER!
Important Immigration Documents

Visa

- A citizen of a foreign country who seeks to enter the U.S., generally must first obtain a U.S. visa from a U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad. The Visa is placed or stamped in the traveler’s passport. All students coming to TAMUCC will receive an “F-1” visa.

- Issued by the U.S. Department of State.

- Must say F-1.
Important Immigration Documents

**VISA**
- Your visa allows you to gain entrance to the U.S.
- You must have your visa to enter the U.S.
- It is legally acceptable to have an expired visa once you have entered the U.S.

**I-20**
- Your I-20 shows that you have a purpose and are allowed to stay in the U.S.
- You must have your I-20 to enter the U.S.
- It is NOT legally acceptable to remain in the U.S. with an expired I-20. Your I-20 must be valid for the duration of your stay.

You **CAN** stay in the U.S. with VALID I-20 and an expired visa.
Important Immigration Documents

Form I-94

An I-94 card is a legal document to provide passenger identification and to record a person’s entry to and departure from a country.

- Must be stamped “F-1 D/S” at port of entry.
- This is evidence of your legal entry into the U.S. through Immigration.
- You will surrender your I-94 when you leave the U.S. and will obtain a new one when you re-enter.
Nonimmigrant Status

• Non-immigrants are admitted to the U.S. for a limited time, with a specific purpose and plan to depart the U.S. after completing that purpose.

• F-1 students and their F-2 dependents are non-immigrants.

• When you sign your I-20, you certify that you “seek to enter or remain in the U.S. temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full course of study at the school name on page 1” of the I-20. In your case, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.
Maintaining Your F-1 Status

As an F-1 student, you were admitted to the U.S. for "duration of status" (D/S is found on the I-94 card). This means you are permitted to stay in the U.S. as long as you maintain your status by fulfilling the requirements of being an F-1 student. Following these regulations is extremely important. Penalties for violating these student regulations may result in termination of your I-20, and/or deportation:

• Maintain a valid passport at all times.
• Keep your I-20, your passport, and your I-94 with you when traveling outside Corpus Christi.
• Maintain a full course of study per semester (9 hours for graduate students/ 12 for undergraduate students). Remember that only 3 hours of distance or online credits count toward full-time enrollment each semester.
• Working off campus is NOT permitted.
• Keep your address up-to-date. Please e-mail Karin Griffith and enter the change of address in S.A.I.L.
• Maintain adequate health insurance.
Maintaining Your F-1 Status
Keeping your address Up-to-Date

• F-1 non-immigrants are required to keep the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) informed about their place of residence at all times while living in the U.S. Your local address must be updated within 10 days after any change of residence. P.O. boxes are not accepted.
  – To update DHS of your change of address, please e-mail Ms. Karin Griffith. You must keep Ms. Griffith informed of any change of physical address, e-mail address, and phone number. Be sure to contact Ms. Griffith within 10 days of the changes.

• Students must also inform the University of any change of address.
  – To update your address in the University records, you must log on to S.A.I.L. and make the necessary changes. All University correspondence will be sent to the address you have registered in S.A.I.L.

• Remember: you must report the change of address to Ms. Griffith AND you must make these changes in S.A.I.L.
Keep your I-20 Up-To-Date

• **Change of Major**
  Report your change of major to [Karin Griffith](mailto:Karin.Griffith@tamu.edu). She will issue a new I-20 as necessary.

• **Change of Degree Level**
  Submit your application and provide documents as needed, including a new affidavit of support (visit [Graduate Studies](http://graduatestudies.tamu.edu) for more information).

• **Extension of Stay**
  Submit a request to extend the program end date on the I-20 if you are unable to complete your program by the original date. This extension must be completed BEFORE the I-20 expires.

  You must provide a signed letter/memo on letterhead or an e-mail sent to [Karin Griffith](mailto:Karin.Griffith@tamu.edu) from your Academic Advisor stating the reason(s) for extension of the program.
F-2 Dependents

- F-2 dependents are the spouse and unmarried children (under age 21) of F-1 students.

- **Individuals holding an F-2 visa cannot:**
  - Work
  - Enroll in a degree program
  - Attend school full time

- **Individuals holding an F-2 visa can take occasional, recreational courses.**

- **F-2 children under the age of 18 MUST attend elementary or secondary school.**

- **Individuals holding an F-2 visa are strongly encouraged to have health insurance.**
If I maintain Status, I qualify for:

Travel signature: F-1 students need a signature on page 3 of their I-20 from Ms. Griffith to reenter the U.S. Request this signature at least one week before you travel. Signature is valid for ONE year.

Practical Training: Ms. Karin Griffith will have workshops about practical training during the semester. You will learn all the steps you need to take to apply for this benefit.

On-Campus Employment: You may be eligible to work on campus. Ms. Karin Griffith will clear you prior to accepting on-campus employment.

Other benefits include:
- Program extension
- Transfer eligibility
Failure to Maintain Status

• Some reasons why F-1 students fall out of legal status include:
  – Letting the Form I-20 expire.
  – Working without work authorization.
  – Enrolling in less than full-time without permission from the International Student Services Coordinator.
  – Dropping below full time enrollment without permission from the International Student Services Coordinator.

• There are other actions that may impact your legal nonimmigrant status. If you are unsure, speak with the International Student Services Coordinator before taking action.
Consequences of Failure to Maintain Status

• The International Student Services Coordinator must report failure to maintain status to DHS by terminating the student’s SEVIS record.

• Once a student has fallen out of legal status, he/she cannot receive any F-1 benefits, such as employment authorization.

• If F-1 students fall out of status, their F-2 dependents are also out of status.

• Be sure to maintain your legal status. Contact Ms. Karin Griffith if you have any questions or concerns. You can reach her via e-mail, phone (361/825-2258), or come by her office in Classroom East (CE) 213B.
On-Campus Employment

According to federal regulations, on-campus employment for F 1 students is work that takes place either at your school or at an off-campus location that is educationally affiliated with your school. This work could be for an on-campus commercial business, like a bookstore or cafeteria, as long as the work directly provides services for students. For more information concerning on-campus employment, visit Career Services UC 304.

F-1 students can work part time (no more than 20 hours per week) during fall and spring semesters.

F-1 students can work full-time (40 hours a week) during summer, spring break and winter break.
Social Security Numbers (SSN)

• F-1 students must have a job in order to apply for a Social Security Number (SSN). A Social Security card IS NOT required to maintain legal status. A Social Security card is required to work on campus.

• To obtain a Social Security Number you will need the following documents:
  1. Letter of employment on Department letterhead
  2. Letter from Ms. Karin Griffith verifying your F-1 status
  3. Passport
  4. I-20
  5. I-94
  6. Social Security Application

  Social Security Office
  3801 S Port Ave
  Corpus Christi, TX 78415
  361/806-5560
How do I Obtain a Driver License

1. You must go to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in person. The DMV office is located at:
   
   1922 South Padre Island
   Drive Corpus Christi, TX
   78416-1399 (361)698-5625

2. You must present the following documents
   
   Valid Passport
   Visa (current or expired)
   Valid I-20
   I-94
   2 documents that verify your current physical address (lease agreement, utility or phone bill, etc.)

3. You must pay a $25 fee.

4. Your driver license must be renewed EVERY year.

5. For more information, visit Texas Department of Public Safety.

6. IMPORTANT: If you drive, the law requires that you carry insurance. It is against the law to drive without car insurance.