Welcome to Texas A&M University Corpus Christi. This document has been prepared in order to review important information about your Status as an International Student. Your student Visa, I-20, and all requirements to maintain your legal status in the U.S.

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### 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.

### Immigration Basics

**What’s the difference between a Visa and the I-20?**

| 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. as long as your I-20 is valid. |
| 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. |
Important Immigration Documents

Passport:

- 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.

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!

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.

Form I-94:

- The I-94 is a legal document to provide passenger identification and to record a person’s entry to and departure from a country.
- Each time you enter the U.S you must log into: www.cbp.gov/I94
- Print 2 copies of your I-94 keep one and give the other to Ms. Karin Griffith.
- 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.
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 acceptable.

To update DHS of your change of address, please e-mail Ms. Karin Griffith. You must keep Ms. Karin Griffith informed of any change of physical address, e-mail address, and phone number. Be sure to contact Ms. Karin 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. Karin 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 Ms. Karin Griffith. 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 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 date indicated. 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 Ms. Karin Griffith 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.

**Some reasons why F-1 students lose legal status:**

- Allowing the Form I-20 to expire.  
- Working without work authorization.  
- Enrolling in less than full-time without permission from Ms. Karin Griffith.  
- Dropping below full time enrollment without permission from Ms. Karin Griffith.

There are other actions that may impact your legal nonimmigrant status. If you are unsure, speak with Ms. Karin Griffith before taking action.

**Consequences:**

Ms. Karin Griffith 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 out of status as well.

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 (karin.griffith@tamucc.edu), 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 F1 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.
- Students can work full-time (40 hours a week) during summer, spring break and winter break.

### Social Security Number

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:

- Letter of employment on Department letterhead, Letter of Ms. Karin Griffith verifying your F-1 Status, Passport, I-20, I-94

Social Security Application:

Social Security Office: 3801 S Port Ave, Corpus Christi, TX 78415. 361/806-5560

### How to obtain a Drivers License

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

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.), a $25 fee.

Your driver license must be renewed EVERY year.

For more information, visit:

Texas Department of Public Safety.