1. Who is considered an F-1 student at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC)?

An F-1 student at TAMU-CC is defined as a student with non-immigrant F visa, who comes to TAMU-CC temporarily pursuing a "full course of study" to achieve a specific educational or professional objective, and has been enrolled in the DHS Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

2. What is considered a full course of study for an F-1 student at TAMU-CC?

F-1 students are required to enroll in a "full course of study" every academic semester except during official university breaks/vacation terms, or unless approved under a specific exception, in advance, by Office of International Education (OIE).

(A) 12 credit hours for undergraduate Students
(B) 9 credit hours for graduate students

3. Can an F-1 student ever register below full-time?

Yes, under certain circumstances OIE may allow an F-1 student to engage in less than a full course of study. A Reduced Course Load must consist of at least six semester or quarter hours, or half the clock hours required for a full course of study. A student who drops below a full course of study without the prior approval of the OIE will be considered out of status. An RCL can be granted to the following:

(A) Illness or Medical Condition
(B) Initial Difficulty with English Language
(C) Initial Difficulty with Reading Requirements
(D) Unfamiliarity with American Teaching Methods
(E) Improper Course Level Placement
4. Can an F-1 student take online courses?

Yes, an F-1 student may enroll in no more than the equivalent of one online/distance education class or 3 credits per semester that may count towards the "full course of study" requirement." If the student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be counted toward the full course of study requirement.

5. Can an F-1 student take on-line courses in her/his final semester?

It all depends. If a student is in their final term and only needs one course to finish his or her program of study, it cannot be taken through online/distance education. There must be a physical presence requirement for the course.

6. Can an F-1 student take a leave of absence for a semester?

An F-1 student may take a temporary leave of absence from studies and leave the U.S. due to unforeseen circumstances, but the student's F-1 status will be terminated due to an Authorized Early Withdrawal by OIE.

(A) Following an authorized early withdrawal, the student will be allowed a 15 day period to leave the U.S.

(B) If the student will be able to resume his or her studies in less than 5 months, the student's record can be reactivated, but no guarantee, so that the student can return to the United States.

7. When can Temporary Absence be requested from Office of International Education?
A student must request a temporary absence from OIE no later than the first day of classes, which is the next session start date in their SEVIS record. Otherwise, they are not eligible for a temporary absence, and must obtain a new Initial Form I-20 and pay a new I-901 SEVIS Fee if they wish to return to TAMU-CC.

8. What happens to an F-1 student if they are suspended or have an enforced withdrawal due to academic reasons?

The F-1 status for a student on academic suspension or enforced withdrawal will be terminated. If a student is eligible to return, the student must contact OIE prior to the semester he/she is eligible to return (at least 45 days in advance).

If an F-1 student will be able to resume his or her studies in less than 5 months, the student’s record could be reactivated so that the student can return to the TAMU-CC, but there is no guarantee.

9. Is an F-1 student allowed to participate in on campus employment?

Yes, an F-1 student is generally permitted to work part-time on the premises of TAMU-CC that issued the student’s currently valid I-20, with the TAMU-CC as an employer, while he/she is attending TAMU-CC and maintaining his/her F-1 status.

(A) limited to 20 hours per week while TAMU-CC is in session; can be full-time during official TAMU-CC breaks.
(B) Can be in any on-campus jobs that does not displace a U.S. worker; does not have to be related to course of study.
(C) On-campus also includes work at an off-campus location which is “educationally affiliated with the TAMU-CC’s established curriculum or related to contractually funded research projects at the post-graduate level.

10. When can an initial or transfer F-1 student begin to work on TAMU-CC campus?
An Initial entry or a transfer student can begin working on campus as early as the 30th day before classes start date.

11. Can an F-1 student work on campus during the 60-day grace period?

No, an F-1 student may not engage in on-campus employment during the 60-day grace period following the completion of a course of study (after receiving a degree) or OPT.

12. Is an F-1 student allowed to participate in off campus employment?

Under certain circumstances, an F-1 student may be eligible to participate in off campus employment.

(A) Curricular Practical Training (CPT): “An integral part of an established curriculum” and "directly related to the student's major area of study." It is defined to be "alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school.

   i. CPT must be required by the student’s curriculum, or
   ii. The student must receive credit for the training.

(B) Optional Practical Training (OPT): Temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student's major area of study.

   i. Pre-completion OPT, available before the student's program end date;
   ii. Post-completion OPT, available after the student's program end date:
       a. Standard post-completion OPT
       b. STEM extension OPT
       c. H-1B cap-gap extension OPT
(C) An F-1 student (other than a Mexican or Canadian border-commuter student) who experiences severe, unforeseen economic necessity may apply to USCIS for off-campus work authorization.

(D) To qualify for off-campus work authorization, the student must also demonstrate that:
   i. Employment on campus is unavailable.
   ii. Otherwise insufficient to meet the needs that have arisen as a result of the unforeseen circumstances.
   iii. Make normal progress towards completing the course of study, by completing studies before the expiration of the program completion date on Form I-20.

13. Can an F-1 student be Concurrent enrolled at more than one institutions?

An F-1 student may be enrolled in two different Service-approved schools at one time as long as the combined enrollment amounts to a full time course of study.