

Immigration Documents

All International students and scholars should be aware of the immigration regulations applicable to their stay in the U.S and must keep all documents appropriately updated and valid. The ultimate responsibility for maintaining your immigration status is YOU. Therefore, you should be familiar with the following documents:

PASSPORT

The passport is the legal document issued by your country that indicates your identity and country of citizenship. Your passport must be valid at all times while in the U.S. The passport can usually be renewed through your nearest Embassy or Consulate in the U.S. If you need assistance in locating the nearest Embassy or Consulate, you may contact the ISS.

VISA

The U.S. visa is the stamp or computer label in passport obtained from United States Embassy or Consulate giving you permission to enter the United States. The U.S. visa may expire while you are in the U.S.; you cannot and need not renew it while you are here. A new visa will be required if the original visa expires and you travel outside the U.S. and seek re-entry. The visa does not need to be valid while you are in the U.S.; however, your immigration documents (I-20, DS-2019) must be kept valid at all times in order to maintain your legal immigration status.

A summary of visa types can be downloaded [here](#).

I-20

It is a Certificate of Eligibility is used to present to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad to obtain an F-1 visa and show to the port of entry each time you travel abroad and return. When you are traveling outside the U.S., you must have this document signed before your travel. (See travel section for additional information) This document is important for your stay in the U.S. Do not lose your I-20 nor throw it away even if it has expired.

DS-2019

It is a Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor status used to obtain a J-1 visa and show to the port of entry each time you travel abroad and return to the U.S. When you travel outside the U.S., you must have this document signed by before your travel. This document is important for your stay in the U.S. Do not lose your DS-2019 nor throw it away even if it has expired.

I-94 DEPARTURE RECORD

An arrival/departure form is issued to all non-immigrants upon arrival in the United States. The form is surrendered upon departure. This document authorizes you to be in the U.S. as a student or scholar for a specified time. Two dates appear on the I-94, the date of entrance into the U.S. and date of expiration of your stay. For students with an F or J immigration status the expiration date is D/S (Duration of Status), which implies the date of program completion.

I-539

It is an immigration form used by a non-immigrant to apply for a change to another non-immigrant status and for an F-1 student to apply for reinstatement.

I-515

It is an immigration form used to notify of a student or exchange visitor admitted to the U.S. without an I-20 or a DS-2019. The student must submit an I-20 or DS-2019 to CIS within 30 days after entry into the U.S. See an ISS staff member if you have been issued an I-515.

I-765

It is an immigration form used when applying for off-campus employment such as Optional Practical Training and Severe Economic Hardship.

EAD

Employment Authorization Document is a card issued by CIS containing your photograph and dates of allowable employment

SEVIS

Student Exchange Visitor Information System is the CIS tracking system for all students with F, M and J status.

Note: CIS forms usually have identification numbers (i.e. I-765) in the lower left corner of the page.

Do not destroy or discard any immigration forms that have been issued to you.