The Office of International Students

The Evett L. Simmons ’79 Center for Multicultural Appreciation
The Office of International Students is available to assist you during your transition to Florida Southern College and the United States.

The office provides a variety of services for international students enrolled at Florida Southern.

Brenda Lewis, the International Student Advisor seeks to have an on-going relationship with each international student. She strives to assist students with immigration and employment regulations, legal rights and responsibilities, adjustment to Lakeland and the United States and other various personal concerns.
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Responsibilities for International Students

In addition to meeting the responsibilities shared by all FSC students, it is essential that you follow the regulations below. International students should be familiar with the information on this webpage: www.flsouthern.edu/student_life/Crosscultural/isa.htm.

1. Students with F-1 Visa status must take a full course load at all times during their academic stay. For undergraduates, this means a minimum of 12 course hour credits each; for graduate students, this means a minimum of 9 credits per semester. If not you will fall “out of status.”

2. International students must keep passports and immigration documents valid at all times.

3. International students are responsible for observing the regulations of the U.S. Department of State, and Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

4. Any international student attending FSC for the first time (or any continuing student who has been absent from the college for a semester or more and is returning to the U.S.) must check-in at the Office of International Students. Students must bring their passport with Visa stamp and Visa document (I-20) for check-in.

5. A new immigration document (I-20) must be issued for the new school year/program within the first two weeks of the semester in which the new program begins. For an extension, the new I-20 must be issued prior to the expiration date on the current immigration document.
Responsibilities for International Students

6. Students with F-1 Visa status are permitted to work on campus up to 20 hours per week while school is in session and full-time during summer and vacation breaks.

7. International students in any non-immigrant Visa status who are enrolled full-time at Florida Southern College must participate in the health insurance program offered by the college, unless a waiver request is approved (visit the Office of International Students).

8. Changes of address must be reported to the Office of International Students and the Office of the Registrar within ten days of the change.

9. All financial obligations are payable before the beginning of the semester or term, and must be satisfactorily handled before students are allowed to attend classes. If there is any balance on your account, it must be paid prior to preregistration for the following semester. Please be advised that once a student is no longer enrolled with Florida Southern College, any unpaid balance left on the student’s account is subject to assignment to a collection agency. All costs and expenses, including collection fees up to 33% of the debt and any attorney’s fees will become the student’s responsibility and will be added to the balance due.
You must bring all of the documents listed below to the Office of International Students immediately upon arrival so that copies can be made for your file.

**PASSPORT**: Your passport should be updated before you travel to the U.S and must be kept valid at least six months into the future at all times.

**I-20 FORM**: This is the Certificate of Eligibility for the regular F-1 Visa and F-1 student status.

The I-20 is used to obtain the F-1 Student Visa from the U.S. Consulate or Embassy in your country. It is also required for entry into the U.S.

After your initial entry into the U.S., your I-20 must be properly endorsed by a Designated School Official in the Office of International Students before leaving the U.S for temporary travel during your studies.

Please note that the date of completion of study in Section 5 on the I-20 is an estimated date. It may take you more or less time to complete your program of study.

If you will not finish your studies by the completion date on your I-20, you need to contact the Office of International Students.

The Visa gives you permission to apply for entry into the U.S. It indicates the type of Visa you have been given for your stay in the U.S., when it will expire, and how many times you can enter the U.S. using that Visa. (e.g. single/two/multiple).

Please note that a Visa does not determine the length of time you may stay in the U.S. It is an entry permit and only needs to be valid at the time of entry or reentry into the U.S.

The length of time you are authorized to stay in the United States is determined only by your approved program of study, as indicated on your I-20 Form or DS-2019 Form, and your I-94 Form.
Immigration Documents (continued)

I-94 FORM: In order to streamline passenger processing, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is automating its arrival and departure process and eliminating the paper Form I-94 for air and sea travelers. Although air and sea travelers will no longer receive a paper Form I-94, except in limited circumstances, CBP will create an electronic record. Travelers will be able to obtain their admission number and electronic I-94 record through the website www.cbp.gov/i94

Get I-94 Number  I-94 FAQ

Admission (I-94) Number Retrieval

Admission (I-94) Record Number: 6900088062
Admit Until Date (MM/DD/YYYY): 10/10/2012
Details provided on Admission(I-94) form:

Family Name: LI
First (Given) Name: LYDIA
Birth Date (MM/DD/YYYY): 01/01/1990
Passport Number: P123456789
Passport Country of Issuance: Mexico
Date of Entry (MM/DD/YYYY): 04/11/2012
Class of Admission: B1
1. This is the time during which you are pursuing a full course of study (as shown on your I-20) and making normal progress toward completion of your degree.

2. During this time you are engaged in authorized optional practice training (OPT) for F-1 students after you complete your studies (if you qualify and are authorized by USCIS, this will be no more than one year).

3. A grace period of 60 days (F-1) to transfer schools or depart from the U.S.

The Immigration Service grants “duration of status” to F-1 students by entering the non-immigration “D/S” in the upper right corner of the I-20 Form and on the I-94 Form. The completion of studies date in item 5 of your most recent I-20 is the date by which the Immigration Service expects you to complete the requirements for your current program. If you are unable to complete your program by this date, contact the Office of International Students at least 30 days in advance to discuss applying for a program extension.
On-Campus Employment
For F-1 Students

As an F-1 student you may apply for on-campus employment, provided that you are authorized by the USCIS to attend FSC, and that you are maintaining full-time studies. You will need a Social Security Number (SSN) in order to get paid. If you do not already have a SSN, be sure to start that process as soon as you are offered a job on campus!

What is considered on-campus employment?

On-campus employment means that you will be working on FSC’s premises. Additionally, work that is performed at an off-campus location, but that is educationally affiliated with FSC can be considered as on-campus employment.

How many hours can I work?

You can work up to 20 hours per week while school is in session. You may be eligible for full-time employment during vacation periods and holidays.
The Social Security Number (SSN) is a 9-digit number issued by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to those individuals who are eligible to work in the U.S. The SSN is required in order to be paid for any work you do in the U.S. You are under no obligation to obtain a SSN; however, if you plan to work in the United States, you will need to obtain one.

Effective October 13, 2004, the SSA now requires that a student secure a job offer in order to qualify to apply for a SSN. With this new regulation, you will need to obtain a letter offering you a position before you will be able to apply for the SSN. This may take some negotiating on your part with a prospective employer.
You will fill out and present an application and the following original documents for review & copy:

- Valid Passport
- F-1 Visa
- Form I-20
- Form I-94
- Letter from prospective employer or FSC Human Resources

If you have been issued CPT authorization for an internship, you may present the I-20 in lieu of a letter from the employer.

If you have been approved for OPT, you may present the EAD card in lieu of a letter from an employer.

It takes approximately **2-3 weeks** for the Social Security Administration to issue your SSN and Card. Once you have an SSN, you will use the same number throughout your stay in the U.S. The nearest Social Security Office is located at:

**SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**  
550 COMMERCE DR  
LAKELAND, FL 33813
To fall “out of status” means that you have violated an immigration regulation pertaining to your particular immigration status. If this occurs, you may lose the benefits of your status in the U.S., including your eligibility to work. You are at risk of violating your status for any of the following reasons:

- You allow your passport to expire.
- You are not attending the school that you are authorized to attend, that is, the one that issued the I-20 Form you used to enter the U.S. most recently.
- You do not follow the correct procedures for transferring from one school to another, or for continuing from one educational level to another.
- You drop below full-time in any semester without first obtaining permission.
- You do not attend school during the Fall or Spring semester.
- You work off-campus without proper authorization.
- You work on or off-campus for more than 20 hours per week while school is in session.
- Your program completion date on your I-20 has passed and you have not filed for a program extension.
The best place to find detailed information on where and how to get a driver’s license is directly from the Florida Department of Motor Vehicle’s (DMV) web page at http://www.flhsmv.gov/. The procedures are as follows:

- Florida will accept your out-of-country license as proof you have been licensed before.
- Please bring:
  1. Your valid Department of Homeland Security documents
  2. Proof of Social Security Number, if you have one
  3. Documentation showing your residential address
- While appointments are not mandatory they are recommended to reduce your waiting time and inconvenience.
- Study books are available at the DMV and their website. www.flhsmv.gov.

If you don't need a driver's license, you also have the option of getting a Florida I.D. Card for identification purposes.
If you are an F-1 student, you have the option of working in the United States by engaging in practical training during your program or after it ends. Practical training can provide valuable work experience by sharpening and adding to the skills you are learning in school. There are two types of practical training available for F-1 students: curricular practical training (CPT) and optional practical training (OPT).

**Curricular Practical Training**

- CPT must relate to your major and the experience must be part of your program of study.
- When you enroll at the graduate level, your designated school official (DSO) may authorize CPT during your first semester if your program requires this type of experience. Ask your DSO for details.
- Your DSO will provide you a new Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," that shows that the DSO has approved you for this employment.
- You can work on CPT either full-time or part-time.
- CPT requires a signed cooperative agreement or a letter from your employer.
- If you have 12 months or more of full-time CPT, you are ineligible for OPT, but part-time CPT is fine and will not stop you from doing OPT.
Optional Practical Training

- OPT must relate to your major or course of study.

- You can apply for 12 months of OPT at each education level, (i.e., you may have 12 months of OPT at the bachelor’s level and another 12 months of OPT at the master’s level).

- Your DSO will provide you with a new Form I-20 that shows the DSO recommendation for this employment.


- Wait to start work until after you receive your EAD. While school is in session, you may only work 20 hours per week.
Buying a Cell Phone

AT&T
1384 Town Center Dr. Lakeland
1-863-682-0684

Sprint
3615 S. Florida Ave. Lakeland
1-863-647-9380

T-Mobile
4120 S. Florida Ave. Lakeland
1-863-647-9933

Verizon Wireless
3406 S. Florida Ave. Lakeland
1-863-644-8800
Because Florida Southern believes a better learning environment exists without alcohol, alcohol use is prohibited on campus.

All students are expected to abide by local, state, and federal laws along with the policies of the College.

All international students are encouraged to join the International Students Association. It is a diverse organization and everyone is welcome to join.

The bookstore on campus is not your only place to buy textbooks. Check the Internet and shop around for the best prices.

There are many resources available on campus. If you need extra help with your studies ask your instructor or advisor for assistance.

Have a great time at FSC. Take the time to meet great friends!

The International Students Association is an organization open for all students at FSC. Its goal is to gather people from all over the world, to know each other, and to build “global-friends” for life. The second goal is to enlighten the community on and off campus in a professional and social setting, by establishing an understanding of differences in cultures.

Come and be part of a great organization!
International Student Advisor
Brenda S. Lewis
Evett Simmons Multicultural Center
925 Johnson Avenue
Lakeland, FL
863-680-6285

Office Hours:
M-F 8am–5pm