

## Visa and Immigration Status



### What is an Immigration Status?

Immigration status is your legal permission to remain in the U.S. under specific conditions as defined by a visa document. For example, an F-1 student would have a Form I-20 as a visa document. A J-1 scholar would have a Form DS-2019. An H-1B professor would have an Approval Notice (Form I-797.) In most cases the visa document will be (or will be extended to be) for a longer period than the visa stamp discussed below. For most [international travel](#) [1] both the visa document and the visa stamp must be valid.

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### How is Your Immigration Status Different from Your Visa?

The visa issued by the U.S. embassy as a seal in your passport indicates that you are eligible to apply for entry to the U.S. in a specific immigration category such as F-1 Student or J-1 Research Scholar. This visa stamp must be accompanied by a visa document such as a Form I-20 (F-1 student) or Form DS-2019 (J-1 Research Scholar). Upon entering the U.S., a Customs and Border Protection official will review these documents and authorize your status in the I-94 system and finally put an ink entry stamp in the passport.



Students and scholars should always [print this I-94 record](#) [2] so that you have evidence of your immigration status, which includes the length of time you may remain inside the U.S.

F-1 and J-1 visa holders will see the notation "D/S" in their I-94 data. D/S stands for "duration of status" and refers back to the expiration date on your immigration document (Form I-20 or DS-2019). When your status is D/S you can stay in the U.S. as long as your visa document (Form I-20 or DS-2019) is accurate and unexpired. Scholars with other visa status (such as H-1B or TN) will have I-94 data with actual expiration dates by which time you are expected to leave the United States or apply for an extension of status.

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### What If My Visa Expires While I Am in the U.S.?

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A visa in your passport issued by from a U.S. consulate does not determine how long you can remain in the United States. Therefore, **you may stay in the U. S. beyond the expiration date of a visa** as long as the visa document (Form I-20, Form DS-2019, or Form I-797) remains valid. Once the visa expires it will be necessary to apply for a [new visa stamp](#) [3], through the same process as your initial visa application, at a U.S. embassy or consulate when traveling outside the United States.

**Source URL:** <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/visa-and-immigration-status>

### Links:

[1] <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/travel-guidance/traveling-outside-the-us>

[2] <http://oiss.yale.edu/travel/i-94-record>

[3] <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration>