

Visa, Immigration Status, and Entry Stamp



What is a Visa?



A visa is a physical sticker added to a page in your passport that is issued by a U.S. embassy or consulate outside of the U.S. It indicates that you are eligible to apply for entry to the U.S. in a specific immigration category such as F-1 or J-1 student. Please note that Canadian citizens [are not required to have a U.S. visa](#). [1] but are required to have all other documentation.

See the [U.S. Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#) [2] for more information about different U.S. visas.

What is Immigration Status?

The maintenance of immigration status refers to the responsibilities that an individual has while in the U.S. These will differ according to your visa type. For F-1 and J-1 students, maintaining legal status includes having:

- An unexpired passport
- A valid Form I-20 or DS-2019
- A full-time course load in each required term of study
- No more than 20 hours per week of on-campus work during an enrolled term
- F-1 OPT or CPT, or J-1 Academic Training authorization for any work off-campus
- Completing proper transfer, extension, or change of program

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It is your responsibility to understand how to maintain your immigration status. Your F-1 Form I-20 or J-2 Form DS-2019 should always be accurate and unexpired. There are further details about about [F-1 status](#) [3], or [J-1 status](#) [4] on the OISS web site.

What is an Entry Stamp?

Upon entering the U.S. a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) official will:



1. Review your immigration document, visa, and other documents
2. Authorize your status in the I-94 system
3. May put an ink entry stamp in the passport (this process is being phased out)

The I-94 record includes the length of time you may remain inside the U.S. Students should always [print their I-94 record](#) [5] so that they have evidence of their immigration status.

For more details on what happens upon arrival, see our [Arriving in the U.S.: Immigration Inspection](#) [6] page.

What Does 'D/S' Mean?

F-1 and J-1 visa holders will see the notation 'D/S' on their entry stamp and their I-94. D/S stands for 'duration of status' and refers back to the expiration date on the immigration document. When your status is D/S you can stay in the U.S. as long as your immigration document (Form I-20 or DS-2019) is accurate and unexpired.

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

A visa in your passport issued by from a U.S. consulate does not determine how long you can remain in the United States; it is only an entry document and must be valid on days that you enter the U.S. Therefore, **you may stay in the U. S. beyond the expiration date of a visa** as long as you are maintaining your [F-1](#) [3] or [J-1](#) [7] status and the immigration document (I-20 or DS-2019) remains valid.

For most [international travel](#) [8] the immigration document, passport and visa must be valid and unexpired. If the visa is expired it will be necessary to apply for a new visa, through the same process as your initial visa application, at a U.S. embassy or consulate outside the U.S. You can learn more about international travel using the [F-1 visa](#) [9], or the [J-1 visa](#) [10] on the OISS web site.

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Links

[1] <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/visa-and-immigration-status/for-canadian-citizens> [2] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/frequently-asked-questions/what-is-us-visa.html> [3] <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/f-1-students/maintaining-legal-status> [4] <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/j-1-students/understanding-j-1-status> [5] <http://oiss.yale.edu/travel/i-94-record> [6] <https://oiss.yale.edu/getting-started/new-students/travel-arrival/arriving-in-the-us-immigration-inspection> [7] <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/j-1-students/maintaining-legal-status> [8] <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/travel-guidance/traveling-outside-the-us> [9] <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/f-1-students/traveling-in-f-1-status> [10] <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/j-1-students/traveling>