

## Your Responsibilities as an F-1 Student

Our mission at the Center for International Education (CIE) is to help you and every international student and scholar at CSUEB to achieve your educational goals. We will make every effort to assist you with your immigration needs, but it is important that you know the F-1 regulations and your responsibilities in order to avoid penalties and interruption of your education in the U.S.

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) system that maintains records of your studies while you are in the U.S. as an F-1 student. The paper I-20 is used as documentation of the database information.

SEVIS imposes regulations and reporting requirements for F-1 students. USCIS is very strict about the rules and requirements. Because SEVIS is an electronic database, it instantly detects missed deadlines and students who fail to register. Missing an application deadline or failure to follow the registration requirements can immediately result in the loss of your F-1 status. Furthermore, Department of Homeland Security officials in Immigration Customs & Enforcement *can and do* follow up on information recorded in the SEVIS system as they see fit.

**You must check your Horizon email (<https://horizon.csueastbay.edu>) regularly to receive information about regulation changes, travel alerts, and other immigration news from CIE.** It is your responsibility to keep your contact information in MyCSUEB current, and to review University email messages sent to your Horizon account. Also, please only use your Horizon account when sending emails to CSUEB offices.

**You are required to be a registered, full-time student every semester.** Exceptions to this requirement are allowed if you receive prior approval from CIE.

**Full-time is:** Undergraduates and 2<sup>nd</sup> Baccalaureates = enrolled in **12 units** or more  
Graduate Students = enrolled in **8 units** or more

**Note:** Only **1 online course per term** can count towards your full-time status (for both undergraduate and graduate students).

**BEFORE you do any of the following, you must contact the CIE office and see an advisor:**

- Withdraw from the University (*for any reason*)
- Fail to register full-time (*for any reason*)
- Drop class(es) below full-time (*for any reason*)
- Fail to register full time for a semester because of –
  - Final semester at CSUEB
  - Completing thesis, project or comprehensive exams
  - Any other reason for not being registered

**If you are not registered full-time each and every semester, do NOT assume your immigration status is OK unless you have been authorized in advance by CIE.** Please complete a Request for Reduced Course Load form with necessary documentation for review and approval. A decision from CIE will be sent to your Horizon account within five business days. Failure to contact CIE before doing any of the above can result in your losing F-1 status and having to leave the U.S., being subject to deportation, or possibly being barred from the U.S. for three years or longer.

**You are responsible to be aware of the following:**

- **You are required to be a registered, full-time student every Fall and Spring semester.** Exceptions to this requirement are allowed if you receive prior approval from CIE.
- **Report any change of address or residence within 10 days of the change.** Update your local residential address on MyCSUEB. The mailing address must be your physical residence – P.O. boxes and campus office addresses are not acceptable. The home address must be your address in your home country.
- **Report a legal name change (i.e. a name change in your passport) within 10 days of the change.** Report a passport name change directly to the CIE office by submitting a copy of your new passport bio page. This is not a change in the name the University uses, but rather a change in the name on your passport.
- **Abide by employment regulations.** F-1 students are limited to **no more than 20 hours per week** of on-campus employment while school is in session. This includes graduate students and other positions. More hours are permitted during summer term and semester breaks. You are **NOT permitted to work off-campus without receiving prior authorization** from the USCIS and/or CIE.
- **Report early departure date and reason.** Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, students leave the University early or unexpectedly. These reasons may include early completion of degree program or a leave of absence for personal reasons. You are required to inform CIE if you plan to leave the University before the completion date on your I-20 and the reason for doing so.
- **Apply for a program extension before the completion date on your current I-20.** If you need more time to complete your degree beyond the completion of studies date on your current I-20, you must request an extension of program before the I-20 completion date arrives. Extension is not possible past the expiration date.
- **Request an I-20 “release” to transfer to another school.** If you are planning to transfer to another school, you should meet with an adviser at CIE well in advance to plan your immigration transfer. If we don’t know of your plans to transfer, we will be required to notify DHS of your failure to enroll at CSUEB.
- **Review your I-20** and make sure the information is accurate. If you find an error, inform CIE immediately.
  - ❑ **Sign your I-20.** Review the I-20 then your name and date on page one. If you have F-2 dependents, you (the student) must also sign each dependent’s document.
  - ❑ **Make note of** the number printed on the upper left corner on your I-20. This is your SEVIS ID number. It will be your unique ID number with the Department of Homeland Security.
  - ❑ **You should always have** your most recent I-20 and keep all previously issued I-20s. Over time you may accumulate multiple original I-20s. We suggest you keep them in a folder and in a safe place.
  - ❑ **You must have a current travel endorsement** (i.e., a signature from a CIE adviser) on page two whenever you are traveling back into the U.S (together with a valid F-1 visa). We strongly recommend that you get a new signature before each trip.
  - ❑ **If you have F-2 dependents**, a SEVIS I-20 has been printed for each dependent. Each dependent must have his or her own I-20 to apply for an F-2 visa and/or to enter the U.S. Each dependent should carry his or her own current I-20 and keep all copies. Dependents also need current travel endorsements on their I-20s when traveling.
  - ❑ **If information on your I-20 changes**, you must request a new I-20 from CIE. This includes:
    - Change of completion date, either early or extension
    - Change of major
    - Change of degree level (e.g. Bachelor’s to Master’s)
    - Change of financial sponsorship

## **What CSUEB must do:**

CSUEB is required to enter and regularly update certain information into SEVIS. Some information will be reported once a semester and other information will be reported as soon as a change happens. CSUEB must report:

- The information listed on your I-20
- Your US residential address
- Registration for each semester
- Full-time or part-time enrollment
- Withdrawal from the University or failure to enroll
- Reason for Authorized Reduced Course Load

CSUEB DOES NOT report any other information to SEVIS. CSUEB will only report what is required by law and federal regulation and will take all steps necessary to keep your information secure and confidential. Reporting “registration” only means confirmation that you are registered full-time each semester. The University does not report specific course enrollment or other information about your studies or activities at the University.

### **Reminders**

- **Optional Practical Training (OPT)** – If you are planning to apply for Optional Practical Training, we recommend that you apply before your completion of studies, usually about midway through your last semester (regardless of when you file for graduation).
- **The University Writing Skills Requirement (UWSR)** – The UWSR is a university graduation requirement. Failure to satisfy the requirement or postponement could lead to your inability to enroll full-time or complete your academic program as scheduled, which could then lead to immigration complications or prevent you from being eligible for OPT. It is in your best interest (both academically and for immigration purposes) to satisfy the UWSR early in your academic career.

### **Impact of SEVIS**

For the most part, if you uphold your responsibilities as an F-1 student, SEVIS will have little impact on your day-to-day life as a student in the U.S. However, failure to comply with the above SEVIS regulations and requirements can result in severe consequences even if the mistake was unintentional. Failure to get CIE clearance on registration matters or missing a deadline can result in an interruption in your studies, visa voidance, deportation, or being barred from re-entry to the U.S. Thus it is very important for you to know and understand the requirements for maintaining F-1 status. The CIE office will do everything we can to inform and help you with your immigration status, but it is ultimately your responsibility to maintain legal status.

**Check your Horizon email regularly to receive information about regulation changes, travel alerts, and other immigration news from CIE.**

If you have any questions or concerns about SEVIS, your immigration status, or your responsibilities to maintain F-1 status, please feel free to contact the CIE office. We are here to help you.