

# Welcome to Western Illinois University

## Immigration Information for International Students



**Western Illinois  
University**

**Western Illinois University**

**Dana Sistko**  
Immigration Specialist

Phone: (309) 298-1806  
DM-Sistko@wiu.edu

# Topics

- F-1 Immigration Status
- Driver's License and I.D. Cards
- Social Security Numbers
- Contact Information

# F-1 Immigration Status

## **1. Report to the PDSO (Dana Sistko)**

- It is REQUIRED that you check-in with me. I will need a copy of your passport, visa, I-20 and the completed check in form that I will email you.

# F-1 Immigration Status

## 2. Always Enroll Full Time

- Undergraduate: at least **12** credits /semester
- Graduate: at least **9** credits /semester – know the “2 C Rule”
- Talk to the PDSO **before** you drop below full time enrollment or take a leave of absence.
- Online/in-person classes – Normally, only **ONE** online course will count toward your full-time status. **This spring students are allowed to take more than one on-line course; however you must be enrolled in at least one in-person or hybrid course.**

# F-1 Immigration Status

## **3. Update your local address within 10 days of moving:**

- Update on your STARS account
- I will update it in SEVIS

# F-1 Immigration Status

## 4. Keep your Immigration Documents **VALID** and **CURRENT**

Make **photocopies** of your documents and keep the copies and originals in a safe place.

- Passport pages with your personal information and picture
- Passport page containing the U.S. visa stamp
- Print your I-94 number at [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94) (check to make sure it is correct)
- I-20, pages 1-3
- Your visa can expire while you are here, but you will need to reapply when you leave the U.S.

# F-1 Immigration Status

## **4. Keep your Immigration Documents VALID and CURRENT**

- a) Keep your passport valid (recommended at least 6 months in the future)
- b) I-20 can be extended (with permission from your advisor)
- c) Change of Degree Program or Level

# F-1 Immigration Status

## **5. Discuss Transfer Plans with the PDSO**

- If you plan to transfer to another school, the PDSO will need to complete the **immigration transfer procedure.**

Contact the PDSO for more information.



# F-1 Immigration Status

## **6. Notify the PDSO of a new degree program no later than 60 days after graduating**

- If you plan to go on to another program of study after graduating from WIU, either at WIU or at another school, you **MUST** contact the PDSO and complete the appropriate immigration procedures **no later than 60 days** after graduating from the first degree.

# F-1 Immigration Status

## **7. Never Work Off-campus Without Prior Authorization**

- On-campus Employment: You can work on campus up to 20 hours per week. (Up to 40 hours per week during summer and winter breaks)
- Off-campus Employment: If your program requires an internship, contact the PDSO to apply for CPT.

# F-1 Immigration Status

## **8. Notify the PDSO When You Leave the U.S. or Change Visa Status**

- When you **finish your program** and **leave the U.S. permanently** or you **change to another visa status**, email the PDSO.

# F-1 Immigration Status

## 9. Traveling outside of the United States

- Re-entering the U.S. after a Temporary Absence
  - Valid passport
  - Valid F-1 or F-2 visa stamp
  - Current I-20 with a valid travel signature (2<sup>nd</sup> page)
  - Proof of financial support
  - Proof of enrollment

# F-1 Immigration Status

## 9. Traveling outside of the United States

- Traveling to Canada
  - Check visa requirements and
  - Download a Canadian visitor visa application at <http://www.cic.gc.ca>.
- Renewing Your Visa Stamp
  - Apply in person to a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad
    - Valid passport and I-20
    - Passport-size photographs
    - Proof of financial support and enrollment

# F-1 Immigration Status

## Recap: Requirements to maintain your F-1 status

- Report to the PDSO upon arrival
- Always enroll FULL-TIME during the academic year
- Update your local address within 10 days of moving
- Keep your passport, I-20 and visa valid and current

# F-1 Immigration Status

- If you plan to transfer to another school, contact the PDSO.
- Notify the PDSO of a new degree program no later than 60 days after graduating
- NEVER work off-campus without PRIOR authorization
- Notify the PDSO when you leave the U.S. or change visa status
- If you travel outside the U.S., be sure to have the proper re-entry documents

# Driver's License and ID Card

- **Who is eligible for a driver's license or ID?**
  - Any nonimmigrant as long as he or she is in lawful status and presents the necessary supporting documents required to verify legal presence in the U.S.
  - Recommended to get an Illinois driver's license even if you have an international driver's license.



# Driver's License and ID Card

- **What should I do before applying for a state driver's license?**
  - Become aware of the appropriate state requirements ([www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com))
  - Wait a minimum of **10 calendar days** from the date of entry into the United States before applying for a driver's license (**tell me if planning on doing this so soon**).
  - State ID requires that you have a social security number.

# Driver's License and ID Card

- **What do I need to take to the DMV?**
  - Valid passport and current I-20
  - I-94 (print a copy from [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94))
  - 2 documents which prove your residency
    - Apartment lease, utility bill, official mail from the university, etc.

# Driver's License and ID Card

- **After you have the correct documents**
  - First call to confirm the facility is open
  - Go to the Macomb Secretary of State Facility (DMV) - 5 minutes by car
  - Take a written test and a driving test.
    - Review the Rules of the Road handbook in advance.
    - If you are taking a road test, you must provide your own vehicle and insurance card.

# Social Security Number

- The Social Security number is issued for **employment purposes only**.
- You must have a student employment or graduate assistantship job on campus **before** you can apply for a SSN.

# Social Security Number

- You must take the following documents to the Social Security interview:
  - **Passport**
  - **I-20** (F-1 visa) or **DS-2019** (J-1 visa)
  - **I-94** (print a copy from [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94))
  - **Employment verification letter** with your supervisor's signature and the signature of the Immigration Advisor
  - **J-1 only:** Employment authorization letter from your sponsor

# Contact Information

Dana Sistko, Immigration Specialist

Sherman Hall 116

Phone: 309-298-1806

Email: [DM-Sistko@wiu.edu](mailto:DM-Sistko@wiu.edu)

**Normal Office hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**