



OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICES (OIS)

# Information Session for New and Continuing F-1 Students

Intended for students who have entered the United States as an F-1 student

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

# The following information is intended for:

- New Students
- New Transfer-In Students
- Continuing students returning to the U.S. from a Leave of Absence (LOA)
- Continuing students who traveled and re-entered the U.S.
- Students who have changed their status to F-1

**All students must have entered the United States as a USC F-1 student.**

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# Introduction to the Office of International Services (OIS)

# Office of International Services (OIS)

**OIS supports international students and scholars as they strive to achieve their educational, professional, and personal objectives.** Recognizing the many benefits of international educational exchange, OIS advocates for these benefits on campus, locally and nationally.

OIS is a resource center to help members of the USC international community make the most of their USC experience:

- Answer any questions F-1 students may have regarding their immigration status or benefits
- Provide one-on-one and group advising and support



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# Maintaining F-1 Status

MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS

# Full-Time Enrollment Requirements

To maintain F-1 immigration status, students must **enroll full-time in courses that apply to their degree requirements** during each fall and spring semester.

Students admitted to Summer Session are required to enroll full-time during their first summer at USC.



# Full-Time Enrollment Requirements

**Students are considered full-time when enrolled in a minimum number of units, based on their degree level:**

- Undergraduate students – **12 units**
- Master's students – **8 units**
- Graduate Certificate students – **8 units**
- Ph.D. students – **6 units**
- Master's/Ph.D. students with an assistantship – **6 units**



# Online Course Restrictions

- No more than one online course (up to 3 units) is applicable to the full-time enrollment requirement
- After meeting the full-time enrollment minimum for each level as described below, any additional units of coursework may be either in-person or online

Degree Level	Course Enrollment
Undergraduate <i>12 unit minimum</i>	9 units of in-person course(s) + 3 units of in-person or online course(s)
Master's or Graduate Certificate <i>8 unit minimum</i>	5 units of in-person course(s) + 3 units of in-person or online course(s)
Master's/Ph.D. with an assistantship or Ph.D. <i>6 unit minimum</i>	3 units of in-person course(s) + 3 units of in-person or online course(s)

# Reduced Course Load (RCL)

F-1 students may qualify for exception(s) to the full-time enrollment requirement for the fall and spring semester if they meet certain criteria for a Reduced Course Load (RCL) category:

1) **Academic Difficulty**



2) **Medical Reason**



# Reduced Course Load (RCL)

## RCL due to Academic Difficulty (first semester ONLY)

- A student may qualify for an academic difficulty RCL if they meet one of the below criteria:
  - initial difficulty with reading requirements;
  - initial difficulty with the English language;
  - unfamiliarity with U.S. teaching methods; or
  - improper course level placement
- Students who file an RCL must be enrolled at least part-time (6 units for undergraduate, 4 units for masters, and 3 units for doctorate)
- An academic difficulty RCL can be used only *once per degree level*



# Reduced Course Load (RCL)

## RCL due to Medical Reasons

- OIS may authorize a medical RCL due to a temporary health (physical or mental) condition(s) with an appropriate doctor's letter recommending the RCL for medical reasons
- To submit a medical RCL, F-1 students must provide a doctor's letter with their RCL submission to OIS
- No more than 12 months total of a medical RCL is permitted per degree level
- Must receive treatment from a US doctor while remaining in the U.S.
- Students who need to take a semester off to receive medical treatment from outside the US will need to apply for a Standard Leave of Absence (LOA) instead of a Medical RCL.



MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS

# Reduced Course Load (RCL)

Students who meet criteria for an RCL must submit their RCL request to OIS via Trojan International **by the end of the second week of the classes.**



**DEADLINE**

# SEVIS Final Semester Check

Students who are in their final semester of study and only have a few units remaining to meet academic program requirements are exempt from the full course load requirement.

For example, if you only have 4 units remaining in your degree program, you do not have to enroll in additional units to maintain your immigration status.

**If you only need to be registered in one course to complete your degree program during your final term, it must be in-person.**

Students who are in their final semester and are taking less than a full course load must submit a [SEVIS Final Semester Check eForm](#) through Trojan International.



MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS

# Program End Date – Program Extensions

Students who maintain status by enrolling full time every semester but are still unable to complete their program in time (i.e. change of major), must request a program extension **before** their program end date (i.e. at least one month before the I-20 expires). Please check your program end date on your I-20.

*Paid internships (i.e. CPT/Pre-completion OPT) will not be permitted in the extended semesters unless it's a degree requirement.*

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status  
OMB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID: **NO**

SURNAME/PRIMARY NAME	GIVEN NAME	<b>F-1</b> ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE
PREFERRED NAME	PASSPORT NAME	
COUNTRY OF BIRTH CHINA	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP CHINA	
CITY OF BIRTH Chi Feng	DATE OF BIRTH 06 DECEMBER 1997	
FORM ISSUE REASON INITIAL ATTENDANCE	ADMISSION NUMBER	

**SCHOOL INFORMATION**

SCHOOL NAME University of Southern California	SCHOOL ADDRESS Office of International Services, 649 West 34th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90089
SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL Sarah Butler Assistant Director	SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE LOS214F00291000 30 JANUARY 2023

**PROGRAM OF STUDY**

EDUCATION LEVEL DOCTORATE	MAJOR 1 Industrial Engineering 14.3501	MAJOR 2 None 99.0000
PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Not Required	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES English language fluency is vital to student success at USC. However, USC does not set minimum scores for admission. The university uses benchmark English test scores to determine whether an admitted student needs to take an internal English placement exam upon arrival. USC then uses this writing and oral skills assessment test to place students in specific required writing assignments while pursuing their	EARLIEST ADMISSION DATE 16 DECEMBER 2020

START OF CLASSES  
15 JANUARY 2021

PROGRAM START/END DATE  
15 JANUARY 2021 - 17 DECEMBER 2025

**FINANCIALS**

ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR: 9 MONTHS		STUDENT'S FUNDING FOR: 9 MONTHS	
Tuition and Fees	\$ 52,210	Personal Funds	\$ 0
Living Expenses	\$ 22,482	Scholarship	\$ 74,692
Expenses of Dependents (0)	\$ 0	None	\$ 0
None	\$ 0	On-Campus Employment	\$ 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 74,692</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 74,692</b>

**REMARKS**

**SCHOOL ATTESTATION**

I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by § CFR 214.2(f)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DATE ISSUED 06 November 2020	PLACE ISSUED Los Angeles, CA
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SIGNATURE OF: Sarah Butler, Assistant Director

**STUDENT ATTESTATION**

# Additional Requirements for Maintaining F-1 Status

## Address Updates

Immigration regulations require all international students to **report any change in their local address to OIS within 10 days of moving.**

Students must submit the [SEVIS U.S. Address and Contact Update](#) in Trojan International to ensure their U.S. address gets updated in SEVIS. The submission of this form only updates your U.S. address in SEVIS. It does not update any other university system.

Students must [enter their U.S. address in the correct format](#) for their information to be updated in SEVIS.



# Additional Requirements for Maintaining F-1 Status

## International Travel

- Students may travel internationally during scheduled [university breaks](#)
- Students returning to the U.S. from a temporary break should ensure they have the required documents to re-enter the country



# Additional Requirements for Maintaining F-1 Status

## Required Documents for Re-entry to the U.S.

- Valid Passport (valid for at least 6 months beyond the date of the re-entry to the U.S.)
- Valid F-1 visa in passport (except students from Canada)
- I-20 with a [valid travel signature from OIS](#)

## Recommended Supporting Documents

- Financial support documents (proof of funding)
- USC acceptance letter
- Paper receipt of [Form I-901: SEVIS fee payment](#)
- Copy of USC transcript and/or proof of course registration



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# Employment Options for F-1 Students

# F-1 Employment Options

## Types of Employment

1) **On-campus  
Employment**



2) **Curricular Practical  
Training (CPT)**



3) **Optional Practical  
Training (OPT)**



# F-1 Employment Options

## On-Campus Employment

- Does not require separate work authorization
- Limited to 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters
- May work up to 40 hours per week during summer and vacation breaks, if approved by the hiring USC department
- Review the [OIS website for additional information](#)



# F-1 Employment Options

## Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

- Authorization for paid off-campus internships
- Requires separate work authorization from the student's academic department and OIS
- Authorized during a student's degree program
- Review information on the [OIS website for eligibility requirements](#)



# F-1 Employment Options

## Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- Authorization for employment after the student graduates
- Requires OIS and USCIS authorization
- Employment can be paid or unpaid and needs to be related to the student's field of study
- Review information on the [OIS website for eligibility requirements](#)



# Social Security Number (SSN)

- If a student finds a paid job in one of the categories mentioned under F-1 employment options, they are eligible to apply for the SSN
- SSN is 9-digit number issued to citizens, permanent residents and temporary (working) non-residents by the Social Security Administration (SSA)
- Primary purpose on an SSN is to track individuals for taxation purposes; it is not intended to be used for identification purposes
- Students and scholars who are not eligible for an SSN may be eligible for a Tax Identification Number (ITIN) to use for filing taxes during tax season reporting



# Trojan International

The Office of International Services uses [Trojan International](#), an immigration compliance and case management tool, to streamline how students request documents and services from OIS. Trojan International is fully integrated into the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) SEVIS system and USC's Student Information System (SIS).

Students will need their USC NetIDs to gain full access to Trojan International.



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# Immigration Status Verification (ISV)

# F-1 Immigration Status Verification (ISV)





Failure to complete ISV in a timely manner will affect your eligibility to legally remain in the U.S.

## F-1 Immigration Status Verification (ISV)

This form can only be completed *after* you have arrived in the U.S.  
You must complete steps 1-5 of this eform for OIS to review.

If you are an International Academy student, do not complete this form. Please email International Academy ([iaom@usc.edu](mailto:iaom@usc.edu)).  
If you are participating in a Summer Non-Degree Program, please reach out to your Department for ISV instructions.

Please complete ALL steps for request to be submitted to OIS

- REQUIRED  
**Step 1: Confirm Current Physical Location**
-  NOT YET AVAILABLE  
**Step 2: Review Information Session for New and Continuing F-1 Students**
-  NOT YET AVAILABLE  
**Step 3: Assessment**
-  NOT YET AVAILABLE  
**Step 4: Upload ISV Documents**
-  NOT YET AVAILABLE  
**Step 5: Confirm Acknowledgement of Enrollment Requirements**

# Immigration Documents

## Passport

- F-1 students are required to always maintain a valid passport
- Should be valid for at least 6 months into the future, especially for re-entry into the U.S. and when applying for a visa
- Students must contact their local embassy or consulate for instructions on renewing their passport
- Students may continue to use the expired passport with the valid visa, along with the new passport, when traveling



# Immigration Documents

## F-1 Visa

Students may stay in the U.S on an expired F-1 visa if they maintain their immigration status by being in possession of a valid I-20 and an [I-94 Arrival/Departure record](#)

- **Visas cannot be renewed inside the U.S.;** they must be renewed at a U.S. embassy/consulate abroad
- Review the [U.S. embassy/consulate](#) website for details on the visa renewal process including required documents
- Check [visa wait times](#) prior to renewing to ensure you have enough time to renew and re-enter the U.S.
- Due to security checks, it is not recommended students use the period of winter or spring breaks to renew since they may be unable to return by the first day of classes



# Immigration Documents

## SEVIS and the Form I-20

- The Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a web-based system of the federal government that maintains information on international F-1 students while in the U.S.
- USC creates and issues the Form I-20 for F-1 students via SEVIS

Department of Homeland Security U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement		I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status OMB NO. 1653-0038	
<b>SEVIS ID: NO</b>			
SURNAME/PRIMARY NAME		GIVEN NAME	<b>Class of Admission</b> <b>F-1</b> <b>ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE</b>
PREFERRED NAME		PASSPORT NAME	
COUNTRY OF BIRTH CHINA		COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP CHINA	
CITY OF BIRTH Chi Feng		DATE OF BIRTH 06 DECEMBER 1997	
FORM ISSUE REASON INITIAL ATTENDANCE		ADMISSION NUMBER	
<b>SCHOOL INFORMATION</b>			
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SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL Sarah Butler Assistant Director		SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE LOS214F00291000 30 JANUARY 2023	
<b>PROGRAM OF STUDY</b>			
EDUCATION LEVEL DOCTORATE	MAJOR 1 Industrial Engineering 14.3501	MAJOR 2 None 99.0000	
PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Not Required	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES English language fluency is vital to student success at USC. However, USC does not set minimum scores for admission. The university uses benchmark English test scores to determine whether an admitted student needs to take an internal English placement exam upon arrival. USC then uses this writing and oral skills assessment test to place students in specific required on/off campus while pursuing their	EARLIEST ADMISSION DATE 16 DECEMBER 2020	
START OF CLASSES 15 JANUARY 2021	PROGRAM START/END DATE 15 JANUARY 2021 - 17 DECEMBER 2025		
<b>FINANCIALS</b>			
<b>ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR: 9 MONTHS</b>		<b>STUDENT'S FUNDING FOR: 9 MONTHS</b>	
Tuition and Fees	\$ 52,210	Personal Funds	\$ 0
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None	\$ 0	On-Campus Employment	\$ 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 74,692</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 74,692</b>
<b>REMARKS</b>			
<b>SCHOOL ATTESTATION</b>			
I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by § CFR 214.2(h)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.			
X	DATE ISSUED	PLACE ISSUED	
SIGNATURE OF: Sarah Butler, Assistant Director	06 November 2020	Los Angeles, CA	
<b>STUDENT ATTESTATION</b>			

# Immigration Documents

## I-94 Arrival Record

Individuals must carry a printed copy of their most recent Form I-94 at all times.

### [I-94 Arrival Record](#)

### Get Most Recent I-94/I-95

*Get your most recent I-94/I-95 form to prove your legal visitor status in the United States (I-94 available going back to 1983 for most classes of admission, (or parole), and indefinitely for certain classes, such as diplomats and those admitted under the Compacts of Free Association. I-95 response is restricted to only return an I-95 that is not expired.*

### Enter Your Traveler Info

*Note: The info returned may not reflect applications submitted to or benefits received by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services or Immigration and Customs Enforcement.*

Required fields are indicated by an asterisk \*

First (Given) Name* <span>?</span>	Last (Family) Name/Surname* <span>?</span>
Date of Birth* <span>?</span> <i>MM/DD/YYYY</i>	Country of Citizenship* <span>?</span>
Document Number* <span>?</span>	

Continue

# Immigration Documents

## I-94 Travel History


[I-94 Travel History](#)

### View Travel History

*View your United States arrival and departure history*

### Enter Traveler Information

Required fields are indicated by an asterisk \*

First (Given) Name*	?	Last (Family) Name/Surname*	?
Date of Birth*	 ?	Document Country of Issuance*	?
<i>MM/DD/YYYY</i>			
Document Number*	?		

Continue

# Registration Holds

## **STU50 Hold – *Removed by OIS***

- Placed on graduate student records
- Restricts course registration

## **STU60 Hold – *Removed by OIS***

- Placed on undergraduate student records
- Does not restrict course registration

## **ALI01 Hold – *Removed by USC American Language Institute (ALI)***

- Placed on all students who have not met the USC English proficiency requirement
- Restricts course registration
- Questions? Email [askali@usc.edu](mailto:askali@usc.edu)

# Registration Holds

## **ADM40 Hold – Removed by USC Registrar**

- Placed on students who are required to submit their previous degree documents to IERF
- Does not restrict course registration
- Deadline to submit is by end of student's first semester
- Contact: <https://ierf.org/uni-evaluation/usc/>, [usc@ierf.org](mailto:usc@ierf.org)

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# Life in the U.S.

# California Driver's License

- Students are encouraged to obtain a California driver's license from the [Department of Motor Vehicles](#) (DMV) if they plan to drive a car in the US
- California **does not** recognize an International Driving Permit (IDP), International Driver's License or an International License as a valid form of driver's license
- A California driver's license is required to purchase a car and obtain auto insurance
- Apply for the driver's license after the add/drop deadline of 1st semester at USC
- Social Security Number (SSN) is not required to apply for a driver's license
- Must pass written and driving exams



# Beware of Scams

Watch the [OIS video](#) for information on how to protect yourself from scams

A graphic on a dark red background. It features a white smartphone icon with a yellow speech bubble coming from the top. Inside the speech bubble, the text 'Beware of scammers!' is written in large, bold, black letters. Below the smartphone, there is a white warning sign icon (a triangle with an exclamation mark).

**Beware of scammers!**

**Scammers have stolen \$70,877 since Move-In Day!**

**Know the facts. Follow safety tips.**

**If you've been the victim of a scam or suspect you've been scammed, contact:**  
USC Department of Public Safety (DPS) (213) 740-6000  
Los Angeles Police Department (877) 275-5273

## Know the Facts

### IRS or other government agencies will never:

- Ask for money over the phone or online
- Request or accept payments in the form of gift cards or Bitcoin

### Law enforcement agencies will never:

- Request payment of citations, warrants, etc., via the phone

## Safety Tips

- Never provide your credit card information or your Social Security number over the phone or online to someone you don't know
- If you visit a website that asks for your Social Security number, don't provide it
- If you receive an email from a stranger or company asking you to click on a hyperlink and/or open an attachment and enter your financial information, delete the email
- Do not respond to friend requests from strangers
- Hang up on telemarketers

L I F E I N T H E U . S .

# Resources for International Students

## International Update (IU)

- Stay up-to-date with the OIS e-newsletter
- [Subscribe today](#)

**INTERNATIONAL(Update)**

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# OIS Contact Information

# Contact OIS

The Office of International Services provides assistance to our international community via email, one-on-one advising via Zoom, or through online group advising/webinar sessions.



## **OIS Live (Virtual Front Desk/Drop-in Advising via Zoom)**

OIS Advisors are available for one-on-one consultation Monday through Friday via Zoom. Advising hours and Zoom meeting link are posted on the [OIS website](#). Appointment not required.

## **Zoom Group Advising**

OIS will offer group advising sessions via Zoom. Refer to the [OIS eCalendar](#) to view upcoming session topics.

## **Email**

For all F-1 student related inquiries: [ois@usc.edu](mailto:ois@usc.edu)



Thank you for your attention during this important training. The next step is to take the short assessment to show your understanding of the material we have shared.