

**Questions Frequently Asked of the
International Programs Office
Since September 11, 2001**

What does a prospective foreign student need to do in order to obtain a student visa to attend the University of Arkansas?

- Submit a written application to the University of Arkansas
- Show proof of English language ability as required by the University (or be admitted conditionally, with the provision that satisfactory completion of intensive English study will precede full program admission)
- Meet the academic requirements for admission to the University
- Show proof of ability to meet all expenses during the course of study
- Receive a Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status, from the University of Arkansas' designated official
- Possess a valid passport
- Submit an application for the appropriate visa at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate nearest his/her place of residence
- Satisfy the consular officer of his/her intention to stay in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full course of study
- Provide photographs as required
- Pay any applicable visa fees

When a student enters the United States, what happens in the process?

- When F-1 students arrive in the United States, they must present
 - a valid passport,
 - a valid F-1 visa stamp,
 - evidence of financial support, and
 - an I-20 signed by a designated University of Arkansas official
- The Immigration officer at the port of entry determines that the applicant intends to attend the school specified on the student visa, inspects the documents presented to ensure their authenticity, and verifies that the person requesting inspection is in fact the same person who qualified for and received the visa.
- The Immigration officer processes the student's arrival/departure form (I-94) and the student's I-20 by taking pages 1 and 2 and giving the student back pages 3 and 4. Information from pages 1 and 2 of the I-20 is entered into a national database, then the form is sent to the University of Arkansas. Currently, it may take up to six months or more for the form to arrive at the school, notifying the institution of the individual's use of their documents to enter the United States.

What happens if a student has been admitted to the University of Arkansas and does not enroll?

- Foreign students normally apply to several universities. Therefore, simply having been admitted to the University of Arkansas (including the issuance of a Form I-20 by the institution's designated official) does not mean that the student will enroll at the University of Arkansas. If a student receives admission to more than one institution, the student must decide which school he or she wishes to attend, then use that school's I-20 to obtain a visa and enter the United States. The student should return any I-20s issued by other schools to the issuing institution(s). If a foreign student were to use an I-20 issued by the University of Arkansas to enter the United States (thus indicating intent to pursue a full course of study here), but fail to enroll at the University of Arkansas, that student would be considered out of status.

If someone did use University of Arkansas documents to enter the country and then did not enroll here, shouldn't someone notify the INS?

- The International Programs Office checks each Form I-20 AB (the page sent to us by the INS processing center) to verify that the student named on the document did in fact report to the University of Arkansas and enroll for a full course of study. If the individual did not report here, we notify INS of that fact, as has been our longstanding practice.

Don't foreign students have to leave the U.S. once their visas expire?

- The visa is the stamp in students' passports that allows them to request entry into the United States. It does NOT indicate the length of time students are permitted to remain in the United States. Therefore, the visa may expire without causing any violation of lawful nonimmigrant standing or impediment to benefits granted to students in lawful status. The student does not need to leave the United States as long as he or she is maintaining full-time student status.

How long can a student stay in the United States?

- An F-1 student at the post-secondary level is admitted for the time spent pursuing a full course of study, plus time spent in authorized employment in his or her major after completion of studies (if applicable), plus 60 days. An F-1 student must apply for an extension of stay only if the estimated date of completion listed on the I-20 is going to pass

What kind of work is legal for a foreign student in the United States?

- F-1 students may work on-campus for a MAXIMUM of 20 hours per week during the semester and full-time during official school breaks. The work may be hourly or appointed as long as the time is limited to 20 hours per week or 50% appointment.
- F-1 students may work off-campus under specific conditions and *only* after obtaining written authorization from the International Programs Office and/or the Immigration and Naturalization Service, as required.

What happens when a foreign student drops a class?

- If by dropping the class, the student is enrolled less than full-time, then the student is out of status and cannot apply for benefits afforded through the F-1 status. During the fall and spring semesters full-time is normally:
 - 12 hours for undergraduate students
 - 9 hours for graduate students
 - 6 hours for graduate students with 50% appointed graduate assistantship.
- There are some exceptions to this rule, such as medical conditions, completion of all formal coursework with only research remaining, initial difficulties with English language/reading requirements/American teaching methods/improper course level placement, and last semester in the program. Verification from the academic adviser or medical care provider is required in these cases and then students will be considered full-time for immigration status purposes.
- <http://www.uark.edu/depts/inprinfo/IPO/enrform.pdf> provides a link to the form needed to verify full-time status,

I have a student that has a foreign sounding name in my class that has been absent for the past few weeks. To whom do I report this information?

- At this time, you are not required to report class attendance. However, if you are concerned about the student's well-being or have concerns about the public safety, please feel free to contact the International Programs Office and we will follow up on your concerns.

What information does the University of Arkansas report to the Immigration and Naturalization Service?

- The University of Arkansas is required to maintain the following information on all F-1 students:
 - Name
 - Date and place of birth
 - Country of Citizenship
 - Address
 - Status (full-time or part-time)
 - Date of commencement of studies
 - Degree program and field of study
 - Practical Training information
 - Termination date and reason (if reason known)
 - Number of credits completed each semester
- The University of Arkansas is required by law to report this information when the Immigration Service requests such a report (not to exceed more than once a semester). The Service also can ask for information on particular F-1 students as need arises.

I have heard about a new electronic reporting procedure for students and scholars. What is this about?

- The Immigration Service is required by Congress to have a national electronic reporting system on-line beginning January 2003. This system will allow the Service to track the status of F, M and J students and scholars across the United States. The University of Arkansas will be required to comply with the regulations regarding implementation of the new system in order to continue to enroll foreign students and scholars.
- For current information about this program, visit the following sites:
<http://www.nafsa.org/content/ProfessionalandEducationalResources/ImmigrationAdvisingResources/sevpindex.htm> and
<http://www.ins.gov/graphics/services/tempbenefits/sevp.htm> .

Graduate students in my lab have access to controlled substances. I am concerned about some of my foreign students having access to this material. What can I do?

- Access to controlled substances is a security issue that must be addressed by the University community. However, singling out a class of students because of their immigration status or national origin fails to fully address the problem. Any measures you take should be equally applied to all who have access to the lab.
- <http://www.aau.edu/resources/resources.html> provides a link to resources on the web for security concerns at universities.

A foreign student in my class is having difficulty understanding my lectures. What resources are available to him?

- The International Programs Office offers conversation groups to assist with conversational English. Native English speakers are grouped with 3 to 4 non-native speakers for conversations about current or cultural topics.
- The University of Arkansas offers listening/speaking classes through EASL 0053
- The Ozark Literacy Council offers tutoring (call 521-8250 for information)

I want to take this opportunity to help my American students understand the larger world in which we live. What resources are available to me at the University of Arkansas?

- The International Programs Office provides educational resources for the campus to infuse an international perspective within the curriculum:
 - International Culture Team is a group of students trained to speak in the classroom on a variety of topics
 - Cross-cultural simulations facilitated by IPO staff actively engage students in the process of communicating in a multicultural context
 - Resource kits and videos are available to check out for use in a classroom setting

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