



For F-1 and J-1 Students
Keeping Your Stay Legal While in the U.S.

United States immigration law places **responsibility upon the individual student** to know and follow all relevant immigration regulations. Failure to comply with these regulations may have very severe consequences for your ability to study, seek employment, or even remain in the United States. Please read the list below carefully, and contact The Office of International Education (OIE) with any questions you may have.

1. **Report to the International Student Advisor (ASB 123H)** within 15 days of the start date on the I-20 (for F-1 students) or DS-2019 (for J-1 students) for *initial registration*.
2. **Verify that immigration documents are valid or unexpired at all times.**
 - **Passport**- valid for at least six months into the future.
 - **I-94 card**- (white card stapled in passport) marked "F-1 D/S" or "J-1 D/S"
 - **I-20** (for F-1 students) **or DS-2019** (for J-1 students)- stamped by an immigration inspector or activated by the International Student Advisor.
3. **Register for a complete full course load every semester.**
 - **Undergraduate** (BA/BS) students must always complete at least 12 credits every semester
 - **Graduate** students are ordinarily required to complete 9 credits in order to be considered full-time.
4. **Make normal, full-time progress toward program completion and complete within specified time periods (start and end date on I-20 or DS-2019).** Extensions other than for medical or other unavoidable academic reasons are not permitted.
5. **Obtain OIE approval BEFORE a reduced course load registration is finalized.** Retroactive approval of part-time enrollment once registration has ended is NOT possible.

- 6. Do not accept off-campus employment without written authorization from the OIE or USCIS (Immigration authorities).** Full-time students in F-1 or J-1 status work no more than 20 hours per week during the academic year and 40 hours during vacation periods and school breaks.
- 7. Report any change of address to the Ramapo College Registrar's Office and OIE within 10 days of your move.**
- 8. Apply for an extension** of your I-20 or DS-2019 before your documents expire if you need more time to complete your program. An extension request submitted after your I-20 or DS-2019 has expired cannot be processed. Failure to complete your program of study on time or to obtain a timely program extension may constitute a violation of immigration status.
- 9. Contact the OIE immediately if there are any changes to your I-20 or DS-2019, or to your personal or academic situation. Examples of such changes include but are not limited to the following:**
 - change of name or citizenship
 - change of school, major, or degree level
 - withdrawal or termination from program due to academic or medical reasons
 - departure from the U.S. for research, study, or a leave of absence
 - transfer to another institution in the U.S.
- 10. Obtain a travel signature** when traveling internationally. Students appearing at a port of entry without a properly signed I-20 or DS-2019 can be denied admission to the United States. Students who are planning to travel outside the United States and whose visa is expired should make an appointment to see the International Student Advisor to obtain guidance in seeking a new visa.
- 11. Maintain valid health insurance while in the United States.**

Remember, maintaining legal status in the United States is your individual responsibility!

Keep updated about the latest changes in immigration regulations by subscribing to the OIE listserv, ISSNET. If you are not receiving ISSNET, send an e-mail with your name and email address to mangevin@ramapo.edu.