

Definition of Important Documents for F-1 Students

- **Passport** - Your passport is permission from your home country to travel abroad. To enter the U.S., your passport must be valid at least six months into the future. If your passport is set to expire within six months, you will not be permitted to enter until you renew your passport.
- **Visa** - The visa grants you the ability to apply at a port of entry for permission to enter the U.S. It does not give you permission to enter (only the I-94 will) and must be valid only the day you enter the U.S. There is no effect on your legal status if your visa expires while you are in the U.S., and F-1 visas are neither issued nor extended in the U.S. Do not worry if your visa expires. A valid visa is very important if you wish to leave the U.S. and re-enter, however. You should always meet with the International Student Advisor before engaging in such travel.
- **I-94** – Arrival/Departure record – If it is not stapled right on to your passport then you must download it from here after entry into the US.
<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html> It is one of your most important documents. It is your permission to enter and remain in the U.S., and it is issued at the port of entry or border crossing. Do not lose it. You will note that it gives F-1 students permission to remain in the U.S. for "D/S." This means that you may remain for Duration of Status or as long as you continue to engage in full-time study or in authorized practical training or as long as you continue to obey the basic rules. Please see your advisor if you do not have this.
- **I-20** - Your I-20 is necessary to obtain an F-1 visa or to enter or re-enter the U.S. in F-1 status. It is also used as proof of continuing studies during brief travel periods. To travel you must have page three signed by the International Student Advisor in order to re-enter the U.S. This signature is good for one year from issue date, so be sure and check BEFORE leaving the U.S. to make sure it is valid.