

Maintaining your F-1 Status

As an F-1 student, it is your responsibility to maintain your F-1 status while studying in the US, and it is important that you understand F-1 rules and regulations. *The list below is not an exhaustive list, but contains the primary requirements of maintaining F-1 status.*

Please reach out to the International Student Advisor with any questions regarding maintaining your F-1 status at international@saintpaul.edu or 651-403-4470. You can also schedule an appointment through [Navigate](#).

For more information on maintaining your F-1 status, please visit the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Study in the States page: studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/maintaining-status.

To Maintain your F-1 status:

1. Register for a “full course of study” each Fall and Spring semester

- You must be enrolled in at least **12 credit hours*** every Fall and Spring semester (there is no requirement for Summer enrollment, *unless you are completing your program in a Summer term*) to maintain your F-1 status.
- Of the 12 credits required, at least 9 credits must be either on-campus or blended/hybrid credits.
- **You may not withdraw** below 12 credit hours during Fall and Spring semesters without prior reduced course load authorization as documented on Form I-20. **Your F-1 status may be impacted if you receive a W, FN, or FW grade that places you below 12 credit hours*.**
 - Withdrawing from (W grade), or receiving FN (failure due to non-attendance) or FW (failure due to unofficial withdraw) grades are considered withdrawing in regard to your status. **FN and FW grades** can be given by instructors when a student fails to attend the first week of classes, misses too many classes during the semester, or fails to submit required assignments by the instructors posted deadlines.

**Students in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Program at the high intermediate or advanced level must enroll in at least 18 credit hours every Fall and Spring semester while completing EAP courses.*

2. Pay tuition

- You must pay your tuition every semester in order to register for the next semester. If you do not pay your tuition bill, you will not be able to register for classes to maintain your F-1 status.
- If you pay your tuition using a payment plan, you must stay current with the payment plan schedule.

3. Purchase the mandatory Minnesota State health insurance every semester

- Minnesota State policy requires all F-1 international students to purchase the system-approved health insurance plan each semester to enroll in courses: [Undergraduate Admissions Policy Part 11, Subpart B](#)
- Visit the Health Insurance section of the International Student Services webpage for more information.

4. Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

- To maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), you must:
 - Earn a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher
 - Complete 67% or more of registered credits with earned grades of A, B, C, D, P or AU
- More information can be found here: <https://www.saintpaul.edu/student-services/appealing-academic-suspension/>

5. Have a valid passport always

- You must have a valid passport at all times while in the US.
- If you need to renew your passport while in the US, you will need to search online for your country's nearest embassy location in the US.
- If you receive a new passport, please submit a copy of this to International Student Services at international@saintpaul.edu.

6. Update and report address changes

- You must notify International Student Services of any change of address within **10 days** of your move so this can be updated in SEVIS.
- To update your address, login to [eServices](#), click "Account Management", then "Name and Address Info". Click "Edit" to change your address.
- You will also need to email the International Student Advisor or international@saintpaul.edu immediately after making this update so that your address can be updated in SEVIS.

7. Adhere to F-1 employment regulations

- **You cannot work off-campus** without prior approval from Saint Paul College or USCIS. Self-employment, working online/remotely for a company outside of the US, and most unpaid internships (and some volunteer work) are also considered work that requires authorization in federal F-1 regulations.
- **Ensure that you have valid authorization for employment in your hands before engaging in ANY work off-campus.** This includes:
 - An I-20 with CPT authorization on page 2 for the correct employer and with the correct dates
 - A valid EAD card for OPT, Economic Hardship, or Special Student Relief

8. Complete your program by the program end date on your I-20, or request an extension

- There is a program end date on your Form I-20. If you are unable to complete your academic program (Associate degree) before this end date, it is your responsibility to request a program extension. Extensions may only be granted due to compelling academic reasons such as change of major, having taken pre-requisite courses, or documented illness.
- Meet with your Pathway Advisor regularly to ensure you're on track to complete your program.

9. Follow all US Federal Laws and Minnesota State Laws

This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Filing your taxes every year.** Every international student must file some kind of tax form each year, even if you have not worked or earned any income. More information can be found on the [International Student Services](#) website under "Taxes" and resources will be communicated from International Student Services via email each tax season.
- **Do not engage in illegal activities, such as (but not limited to):**
 - Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - Possessing or consuming cannabis/marijuana/THC or other federally illegal substances
 - Shoplifting

Updated: March 2025