



## January 2025 NEWS

Welcome to Spring Semester at USF! The Office of International Services (OIS) at USF handles immigration matters for students, scholars, and employees. OIS sends this newsletter monthly to keep students informed of important immigration updates and to ensure students understand how their status interacts with academic matters. Students can meet with immigration advisors via Virtual Drop-Ins and Walk-in on weekdays. For days and times see our [Contact US page](#).

For events for international students or help with living in the US, follow the USF International Student Support Team on social media - <https://linktr.ee/usfintlstudentsuccess>

### Immigration Updates

#### What is SEVIS?

The Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a web-based system used by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to maintain information about certificated schools and F-1 and J-1 visa holders.

#### What is a DSO?

All staff in OIS are designated school officials (DSOs) in SEVIS and serve students at all three USF campuses. There are 13 staff members who are DSOs. They are available during virtual drop-in and walk in hours to answer questions about immigration status or work authorization. Students can [meet the staff](#) and view ways to [contact us](#) on our website.

DSOs help students to navigate their status while studying. They are required by law to update and maintain SEVIS records. OIS does this by pulling academic, enrollment, and biographical data into iStart and reviewing for compliance with federal regulations. If students appear to have violated an immigration regulation, an alert shows in iStart and OIS reaches out to the student via their USF email to assist them in making appropriate changes to stay in status.

#### What is proof of my status in the US?

Proof of status varies by visa type. Most non-immigrants have an I-94 that lists the visa type and end date for their status in the US. Non-immigrants who change status in the US, will have another document showing approval of that status. F-1 students and J-1 students will have D/S as the end date for their status. D/S stands for duration of status or time it takes to complete their academic program. F-1's end of program is the end date of the I-20 or the end of OPT whichever comes later. J-1 students end of program is the end date of the DS-2019.

If you have questions about your visa status, please contact one of our advisors during virtual drop-in or walk-in hours.

## Get Ready for Tax Season

All F and J visa holders who were physically present in the U.S., in 2024, are required to file a tax form in 2025. This is regardless of whether you worked or received income or not in 2024. Relax! Tax forms are filed between February 15 and April 15. There is time to review the resources in the [tax section](#) of our website. We will send you an email with instructions to use, *Sprintax Forms*, in mid-February. This year we will provide you with a special code that applies the USF discount and covers the cost of the basic 1040-NR and 8843 forms.

## Spring Semester Reminders for F-1 and J-1 Students

- **Spring Semester Enrollment**
  - F-1 and J-1 students should select mostly in-person courses at their home campus.
  - Undergraduate students should enroll in 12 credits hours and graduate students should enroll in 9 credit hours.
  - F-1 and J-1 students are restricted to counting one 3 credit hour online course (out of the 12 or 9) towards their full-time enrollment.
  - Students who are completing their academic program and graduating in Spring 2025 can complete the Reduced Course Load eform in iStart if they need less than full-time courses to complete the program.
  - *F-1 and J-1 students who do not follow enrollment rules for their visa status will be contacted by OIS via email. The email will include recommended action. Do not ignore the email.*
- **Other academic matters**
  - **USF Home Campus** -F-1 students are required to take 50% or more of their courses at their USF Home Campus. We recommend that students check carefully to determine the campus connected to online courses. Taking courses at multiple campuses does not allow a student to take additional online courses.
  - **Excess Credit Hours** -Students should not postpone graduation or add additional excess credit hours for the purposes of engaging in internships or post-graduation work.
- **Payment of fees**
  - Full fees are due on Friday, January 17 unless there is a tuition deferment. Failure to pay results in course cancellation.
  - Check out the official [USF tuition payment deadline](#) website for a full list of payment deadlines.
  - Failure to pay tuition in full by the deadline can result in cancellation of registration. If you are an F-1 or J-1 student, you must remain enrolled for full-time courses as part of your immigration status. OIS will reach out to you if your registration is cancelled.
- **Address Reporting**
  - F-1 and J-1 students are required to report their physical US address and valid US phone number to OIS within 10 days of any changes. Report this by updating your address in Student Self Service.
  - F-1 and J-1 students are also required to maintain a foreign address while they are in the US studying. This address must remain a foreign address. If you change it to a US address, you will be asked to provide an updated foreign address.
  - For instructions, go to <https://www.usf.edu/world/international-services/immigration/maintaining-your-status/address-updates.aspx>
- **Work Permission**
  - F-1 students may work up to 20 hours per week at their HOME campus. If students are offered a job and need an SSN, they should go to iStart and complete the SSN Letter Request eform.
  - J-1 students must request special permission from OIS to work on-campus via the Request J-1 On-Campus Employment eform in iStart.
  - Any off-campus position requires work permission. Please review our [off-campus employment website](#) for more information. Beginning in February, our Practical Training Team will host workshops on OPT (used for work permission after graduation) and CPT (used for internships connected to academic majors).

# Workshops and Presentations

## F1/J1 Status Maintenance Q&A – January 28 at 2pm

Join our Current Student Team for an informative session via Microsoft Teams about the standard requirements for Program Extension, Reduce Course Load, Transferring Out, and Authorized Early Withdrawal. This session welcomes all currently enrolled students holding F-1 or J-1 visas. Go our Bullsconnect page for the session link.

## Spring 2025 Semester Important Dates

- January 17 – End of drop/add week; last day to add a major for Spring; and tuition payment deadline (GAs and financial aid deferments pay tuition by February 28)
- January 20 – USF Closed
- March 17-23 – Spring Break
- March 31 – Registration begins for summer and fall
- May 2 – last day of classes
- May 3- 8 – exam week
- May 10 – official end of the semester for immigration purposes

Join our BullsConnect Group - [https://bullsconnect.usf.edu/INTLSVCS/club\\_signup](https://bullsconnect.usf.edu/INTLSVCS/club_signup)



**Office of International Services**  
**4202 E Fowler Ave BEH 255 - Tampa, FL 33620**  
<https://www.usf.edu/world/international-services/>

Virtual Drop-In via Teams ([E-Form](#) in [iStart](#)) - Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 11am-1pm & Thurs 1pm-2pm  
Walk-in Hours Tampa Campus ([BEH Map](#)) - Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 1pm-2pm & Thurs 2pm-4pm  
Visit Schedule to USF St Pete & Sarasota - <https://www.usf.edu/world/international-services/about-us/contact-us.aspx>