

International Student Services (ISS)

536 Mission Street (Room 3301), San Francisco, California, USA 95105-2968
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Now That You Are In SEVIS. . . (F-1 Students)

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) database that replaces the old paper-based records for F-1 students. In the past, F-1 student immigration records were only reflected on the paper documents you carried and when filing benefit applications with DHS. Now, with SEVIS, your I-20 Form demographic and travel information is kept electronically and the paper I-20 Form is used as documentation of the government's database information. SEVIS also imposes new regulations and reporting requirements for F-1 students.

Our mission at Golden Gate University School of Law is to help you and every international student and scholar to achieve your legal education goals. We will make every effort to assist you with your immigration needs, but it is important that you know the F-1 regulations and your responsibilities in order to avoid penalties and interruption of your education in the US. You should check the International Student Service (see GGU LAW ISS website) to receive information about regulation changes, travel alerts, and other immigration news.

Your SEVIS I-20 Form

Your I-20 information has been entered into SEVIS and a new SEVIS I-20 has been issued for you. Notice the following on the SEVIS I-20 Form: a bar code on the first page and a record of F-1 travel events and benefit applications on the third page.

- ❑ **Review your SEVIS I-20 Form** and make sure the information is accurate. If you find an error, immediately inform John Pluebell in the GGU Law International Student Services (Room 3303).
- ❑ **Sign your SEVIS I-20 Form.** Read and sign item #11 on page 1. Print your name, sign your name, and date. If you have F-2 dependents (spouse and/or children under age 21), then sign each F-2 dependent's document.
- ❑ **Make note of the SEVIS I-20 Form ID.** 11-digit number printed above the bar code on your I-20. This is your SEVIS ID number. It will be your unique ID number with the Department of Homeland Security.
- ❑ **You should always have** your most recent SEVIS I-20 Form and keep all past copies of your I-20. Over time you may accumulate multiple I-20 copies. We suggest you keep them in a safe place.
- ❑ **Make note of** your studies completion date on your I-20 (item #5). If you need an extension you must request a new updated SEVIS I-20 Form **at least thirty days (30) before** the program completion date.
- ❑ **You must have a current travel endorsement** (i.e., a signature from a School of Law immigration adviser) on page three whenever you are traveling overseas and reentering the U.S (together with a valid F-1 visa stamp in your passport). Each I-20 travel endorsement is valid for one year/twelve months under federal regulation. However the practice at US Port of Entry/Airports is to require **current** endorsement.
- ❑ **If you have F-2 dependents**, a SEVIS I-20 has been printed for each dependent. Each dependent must have his or her own SEVIS I-20 to apply for an F-2 visa and/or to enter the US. Each dependent should carry his or her own current SEVIS I-20 and keep all copies. Dependents also need current travel endorsements on their I-20s when traveling overseas and reentering the US Port.

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- **If information on your SEVIS I-20 changes**, you must request a new I-20 from GGU School of Law. This includes changes to any of the following data elements:
 - Change of completion date, either early or extension (see below)
 - Change of major
 - Change of degree level (e.g. LLM. to SJD) (JD to LLM) (LLM to Postgraduate LLM Certificate)
 - Change of financial sponsorship

New SEVIS F-1 Regulations

SEVIS imposes new regulations and reporting requirements for F-1 students. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is very strict about the rules and requirements. Because SEVIS is an electronic database, it instantly detects late dates and students who fail to register. Missing an application deadline or failure to follow the registration requirements can immediately result in losing your F-1 student visa status.

What you are required to do:

- **You are required to be a registered, full-time student every term** (not including summer session). Exceptions to this requirement are allowed if you receive prior approval from a GGU immigration advisor.

- Full-time is:**
- * **JD Law Students = enrolled in at least 12 units per semester (Fall and Spring)**
 - * **LLM Law Students = enrolled in at least 8 units per semester (Fall and Spring)**
 - * **SJD Law Students = enrolled as advised during each semester (Fall and Spring)**

BEFORE you do any of the following, you must contact a GGU immigration advisor--John Pluebell:

- Withdraw from the University (for any reason)
- Are not registered full-time (for any reason)
- Drop class(es) below full-time (for any reason)
- Are not registered for a semester because of the following:
 - Final semester at GGU
 - Using Filing Fee status (graduate students)
 - Any other reason for not being registered

If you are not registered or are not full-time each and every semester, do not assume your immigration status is OK unless you have confirmed your status with a GGU immigration advisor--John Pluebell!!! Failure to contact the School of Law before doing any of the above can result in losing your F-1 status and having to leave the US, being subject to deportation, or possibly barred from the US for a period of three years or longer.

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- **Report any change of address or residence within 10 days of the change.**
Report your local residential address in GGU4YOU or at the Law Registrar's Office. Address must be your physical residence – P.O. boxes and campus office addresses are not acceptable.
- **Report a legal name change (i.e. a name change in your passport) within 10 days of the change.**
Report a passport name change directly to GGU immigration advisor--John Pluebell. This is not a change in the name the University uses, but rather an official change in the name on your passport.
- **Abide by employment regulations.** F-1 students are limited to **no more than 20 hours per week** (50% graduate student positions i.e. research assistants) of on-campus employment while school is in session. More hours are permitted during summer or winter breaks. You are **NOT permitted to work off-campus without receiving prior authorization** from GGU immigration advisor--John Pluebell.
- **Report early departure date and reason.** Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, students leave the University early or unexpectedly. These reasons may include early graduation, a leave of absence for personal reasons, or academic probation. You are required to inform John Pluebell if you plan to leave the University before the completion date on your I-20 Form, and the reason for doing so.
- **Apply for extension of program before the completion date on your current I-20 Form.** If you need more time to complete your degree beyond the completion date on your current I-20, you must request an extension of program thirty days (30) before the completion date on your I-20. Extension is not possible after this date.
- **Request an I-20 “release” to transfer to another school.** If you are planning to transfer to another School of Law or academic program in the US, you should meet with GGU immigration advisor--John Pluebell well in advance to plan your immigration transfer. John Pluebell must initiate at transfer “release” of your SEVIS record before the completion date on your current SEVIS I-20 Form.

What Golden Gate University School of Law must do:

GGU is required to enter and regularly update certain information into SEVIS. Some information will be reported once a semester and other information will be reported as soon as a change happens. Golden Gate University must report:

- The information on your I-20 Form (Demographic, Travel, Employment)
- Your residential address (Local US mailing address)
- Registration for each semester (Fall and Spring)
- Full-time or part-time enrollment
- Withdrawal from the GGU School of Law or failure to register

GGU **DOES NOT** report any other information to SEVIS. GGU will only report what is required by law and federal regulation and will take all steps necessary to keep your information secure and confidential. Reporting “registration” only means confirmation that you are registered each semester and that you are full-time. The University does not report courses enrolled or other information about your studies or activities at the University.

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Impact of SEVIS

For the most part, SEVIS will have little impact on your day-to-day life as a student in the US. However, failure to comply with the above SEVIS regulations and requirements can result in severe consequences even if the mistake was unintentional. Failure to get GGU School of Law clearance on registration matters or missing a deadline can result in an interruption in your legal studies, F-1 visa stamp voidance, removal/deportation, or being barred from reentering to the US. Thus it is very important for you to know and understand the requirements for maintaining your F-1 immigration status. GGU School of Law will do everything we can to inform and help you with your F-1 immigration status, but it is ultimately your responsibility to maintain your legal status.

GGU School of Law will do everything it can to make the impact of SEVIS as seamless as possible, but there will be some processes and problems that are simply beyond our control. Over time, as Department of Homeland Security (DHS) further develops and improves the SEVIS system, some processes such as work permit applications and travel should continue to become easier and quicker than they were in the past.

If you have any questions or concerns about SEVIS, your F-1 immigration status, or your responsibilities to maintain your F-1 status, please feel free to contact your GGU immigration advisor--John Pluebell. I am happy to help in any way possible!