

Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) requirements for F-1 student visa holders and their dependents are explained below. Please note: this information is required by USCIS of all students at all schools. However, this handout is written specifically for and about Claremont School of Theology (CST).

Designated School Officials (DSOs) are required to maintain the following data in the **SEVIS database**:

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Country of Birth
- Country of Citizenship
- Address in Home Country
- Address in the US (must be a physical address, not a Post Office box)
- Criminal Convictions (if they affect enrollment)
- Program Degree and Major
- Length of Study
- Program Start Date
- Program End Date
- English Proficiency
- Financial Support Information

Any changes to your personal information must be reported to the Designated School Official immediately, as reporting requirements sometimes mandate an update in as little as 24 hours.

Registration

Full-Time Enrollment. Your SEVIS record must be updated every semester to verify that you are enrolled full-time. Full-time enrollment for international students at Claremont School of Theology is defined as 8 units per semester for Doctoral students and 9 units for Masters students. Doctoral students enrolled in Dissertation Research or Doctoral Continuous Registration (after all coursework is completed) are considered to be enrolled full-time for 3 years. Audit units do not count towards meeting the unit requirement. Failure to maintain the minimum number of units will result in loss of F-1 status.

Exceptions

- You do not need to be registered during the summer.
- If you are in your final semester of coursework, you can register for the number of units necessary to complete your degree requirements.
- If you meet one of the requirements listed on the Reduced Course Load form.

Change of Degree/Major. Any request for a change in your degree program or major must go through the Admissions Office. If the request is approved, contact the Designated School Official to see whether you will need a new I-20. Depending on the circumstances, you may be required to submit a new International Student Statement of Financial Resources (ISSFR) and supporting documents.

Program Extensions (Specifically for immigration purposes; this is not the same process as filing for an extension through the Registrar's Office). Request an Extension packet from the Designated School Official. Complete and return the forms and supporting financial documents to the Designated School Official at least 30 days prior to the

expiration date on your I-20. If your extension request is approved, you will be issued a new I-20. Extensions can be granted for only one year at a time.

Leave of Absence. F-1 students may only be granted a leave of absence for medical reasons. A medical leave can only be granted one semester at a time, for up to one year. To be authorized, you must first obtain approval from the Academic Dean, then contact the Designated School Official for final authorization. If the Dean approves a leave of absence for any reason other than medical, you will need to leave the U.S. for the duration of the leave. Note: If you are out of the U.S. for more than 5 months, you will need to request a new I-20 in order to reenter the country.

Transfer to another School. First, obtain a Withdrawal form from the Registrar's Office and follow the procedure for withdrawing from CST. Next, you will need to obtain a transfer form from your intended school and submit this form to the Designated School Official. The Designated School Official will fill out and return this form to your school and release your record in SEVIS. This will give your new school access to your record and allow them to complete the transfer process.

Graduation. After completing your degree requirements (the last day of classes or the day you complete your project/dissertation) you will have no more than 60 days ("grace period") to remain in the US. During this grace period you may:

- Leave the country
- Transfer to another school
- Begin Optional Practical Training
- Begin a new program (must be completed before the start date of the new program and cannot start more than 60 days from the end of the previous program)
- Apply for a Change of Status

Students completing their program in the fall semester who leave the country (i.e. do not transfer, change to another program or begin OPT) may return to the US for the spring commencement ceremonies only if granted a tourist (B-1/B-2) visa.

Employment Reporting

Employment is any type of work performed for services provided in exchange for money, tuition scholarships, fees, books, supplies, room, food or any other benefit.

Optional Practical Training. You may be authorized for up to one year of post-graduation off-campus employment. You may obtain application materials from the Designated School Official. For the duration of the OPT, you are required to report within 10 days any changes in your address or employment to the Designated School Official. Failure to report changes in a timely manner may result in the loss of your OPT authorization.

Curricular Practical Training. You may be authorized for off-campus paid employment prior to graduation. You may obtain application materials from the Designated School Official. This training must be approved by both your academic advisor and the Designated School Official.

Economic Hardship. You may be authorized for off-campus paid employment prior to graduation for up to one year at a time for reason of economic hardship. The application for this type of employment is submitted to USCIS and approval is rarely granted. Contact the Designated School Official for more information on the application process.

Past Due Balances

All past due balances must be cleared through the Business Office by the end of the semester. You will not be able to register for the next semester if you have a balance from a previous semester. If you are having financial difficulties, make an appointment to speak with the Business Office staff about your payment options.

Dependent Information

Dependents are defined as the spouse or child (under 21 years old) of an F-1 student. Any changes to the dependent information listed below must be reported to the Designated School Official immediately.

- Marriage (at this time, the USCIS does not recognize same-sex marriage)
- Divorce
- Birth of a child
- Child turning 21 years old

Communications Policy

The Claremont School of Theology will assign you an email address. This address will be used for official communications from the Designated School Official and the US Citizenship and Immigration Services. Students are expected to regularly check, read, and respond to their email.

Failure to Maintain F-1 Status

Students who fail to maintain their status lose their F-1 student privileges and become subject to deportation. Specific consequences may include denial of re-entry to the U.S., denial of request for Practical Training, denial of requests to change visa status and possible denial of all future visa applications.

Regaining Legal Status

If a student fails to maintain their legal status then the international student will have to apply for reinstatement. Reinstatement approval is a rare benefit for exceptional cases. Students should talk with the Designated School Official about his or her specific case as soon as possible. Students who have been “out of status” (failed to maintain their status) longer than five months may not apply for reinstatement. If the USCIS does not reinstate the student, the student cannot appeal the decision and must leave the country.

Depending on your circumstances and the length of time you have been out of status, you may be barred from entering the US for up to 10 years.

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT COMPLIANCE WITH THESE REGULATIONS IS REQUIRED BY USCIS
AND THAT NO EXCEPTIONS TO IMMIGRATION RULES/REGULATIONS CAN BE GRANTED
BY CLAREMONT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY.**

I have read and understand my responsibilities as outlined in the International Student Requirements for SEVIS document.

Student Name

Student Signature

Date