

Important Immigration Terms for International Students

Passport

A **passport** is travel document issued by your country showing your origin, identity, and nationality or citizenship. This document is necessary for entry into a foreign country. ***Your passport should be valid 6 months into the future at all times.***

Visa



A **visa** is a stamp or sticker in your passport that allows you to apply for entrance to another country. In the United States, the F-1 visa is considered an entry document that is separate from your immigration status once you arrive.

Currently, F-1 students may remain in the US past the expiration date on their *visa stamp*, as long as your I-20 remains valid. However, if the date on your visa stamp expires and you leave the US, you will need to renew your visa in order to return.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

The F-1 **visa stamp** enables you to *enter* the United States.

The **I-20** confirms your F-1 **status**, which allows you to *remain* in the United States during your course of study.

I-20



The **I-20** is a document that certifies your eligibility to be an international student in the United States. It contains important information regarding your status as an F-1 student such as your name, major, and program end date.

Never throw away an old I-20! These are an official record of your time in the US pursuing a degree.

A **travel endorsement** is a DSO or PDSO signature on Page 2 of the I-20 that certifies you are eligible to return to the US for study after exiting the US to travel or visit home. Travel endorsements are valid for one year after the date it was signed.

I-94

The **I-94** is a record of all your US arrivals and departures. It shows every date you entered and exited the United States. This document is often requested when applying for things like a Social Security number or driver's license. Non-Canadians can print a copy of their I-94 at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>. Canadian citizens receive a paper I-94 card stapled in their passport.

DSO / PDSO

Designated School Official / Principal Designated School Official. These individuals are authorized to sign immigration documents and advise international students. Active DSOs and PDSOs have access to SEVIS to report and update records on international students attending their school.

SEVIS

SEVIS is the **S**tudent and **E**xchange **V**isitor **I**nformation **S**ystem. This is the electronic system used by schools and the US government to maintain records of international students who are studying in the United States.

Questions? Contact the Office of International Engagement at immigration@roberts.edu.