



The New America School

International Student

Guide Book

2009-2010

## Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Introduction.....	1
Important Notice to International Students.....	1
Purpose of SEVP and SEVIS.....	1
Arriving at the U. S. Port of Entry.....	1
Maintaining Your Student Status.....	3
Change of Address.....	5
Duration of Status.....	5
Program Extension.....	5
Transfer-In Students.....	5
Transfer-Out Students.....	6
Immigration Documents.....	6
Travel Outside the USA.....	7
Employment.....	7
Social Security Number.....	8
Income Tax.....	8
Spouse/Dependent Status.....	9
International Student Affairs Office.....	9
References.....	10

## **Introduction**

This handbook was written as a resource for international students who were accepted to The New America School (NAS) and granted approval to hold a Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) I-20.

## **Important Notice to International Students**

Please contact the International Student Affairs Office at NAS (see page 9) if you have any questions about immigration laws for international students. Please keep in mind that the immigration laws are constantly being updated and changed. It is your responsibility to stay abreast of these changes. The International Student Affairs Office can assist you in understanding and fulfilling your legal obligations.

As a student in F-1 status, you are responsible for abiding by immigration regulations concerning study, travel, and work while studying in the United States of America (U.S.A.) and for maintaining your student status. You were issued a SEVIS I-20 form because you demonstrated that you were planning solely to study while in the U.S.A. and intend to return home immediately following the completion of your studies.

Please read your paperwork carefully so that you know what your new responsibilities are due to the new laws and implementation of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

## **Purpose of SEVP and SEVIS**

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) acts as the bridge for varied government organizations which have an interest in information on foreign students. SEVP uses web-based technology, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to track and monitor schools and programs, students, exchange visitors and their dependents throughout the duration of approved participation within the U.S. education system.

SEVP collects, maintains and provides the information so that only legitimate foreign students or exchange visitors gain entry to the United States. The result is an easily accessible information system that provides timely information to the Department of State, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

## **Arriving at the U.S. Port of Entry**

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is committed to facilitating your stay in the United States while you take advantage of our nation's academic, educational, and cultural offerings. To enhance security without slowing legitimate travel, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has instituted some changes in U.S. entry and exit procedures. Careful planning and preparation by international students can ensure that any delay based on these procedures is minimal.

## **Plan Your Stay**

You may be refused entry into the United States if you attempt to arrive more than 30 days before the program start date listed on your SEVIS I-20 form.

## **Always Hand-Carry Your Documents**

**Do not check the following documents in your baggage.** If your baggage is lost or delayed, you will be unable to present the documents at your port of entry. As a result, you may not be able to enter the United States

1. **Your passport, valid for at least six months beyond the date of your expected stay.**
2. **SEVIS Form I-20.**

*In addition, it is strongly recommended that you also hand carry the following documentation:*

1. Evidence of financial resources.
2. Evidence of student status, such as recent tuition receipts and transcripts.
3. Paper receipt for the SEVIS fee (Form I-797C).
4. Name and contact information of the college's Designated School Official (DSO).

For comprehensive information on procedures for traveling and arriving in the United States, visit: <http://educationusa.state.gov/predeparture/travel/customs.htm>

## **Complete Your Entry Paperwork**

**If Arriving By Air:** Flight attendants will distribute Customs Declaration Forms (CF-6059) and Arrival-Departure Record Forms (I-94). These must be completed prior to landing.

**If Arriving By Land or Sea:** The Customs and Border Protection Officer (CBPO) at the port of entry will provide the necessary Customs Declaration Forms (CF-6059) and Arrival-Departure Record Forms (I-94) to be filled out upon your arrival.

## **As You Arrive At The Port Of Entry**

Proceed to the terminal area for arriving passengers. Have the following documents available for presentation: your passport, SEVIS Form (I-20), Arrival-Departure Record Form (I-94), and Customs Declaration Form (CF-6059). The Form I-94 should reflect the address where you will reside, not the address of the school or program.

All visitors entering the United States must state their reason for wishing to enter the country. You will also be asked to provide information about your final destination. **It is important that you tell the CBP Officer that you will be a student at NAS.** Be prepared to include the name and address of The New America School where you will enroll/participate.

Once your inspection is successfully completed, the inspecting officer will:

- **Stamp your SEVIS Form for duration of status (“D/S”) for F visa holders.**
- **Stamp your SEVIS Form for 30 days beyond program end date for M visa holders.**
- **Stamp the Arrival-Departure Record Form (I-94) and staple it in the passport.**

### **Following Admission into the United States**

Students should report to NAS within 30 days of the date that appears on the SEVIS I-20 form to register for courses or to validate their intended participation. Failure to do so may result in serious consequences.

### **Additional Information**

#### **SECONDARY INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS**

If the CBP officer at the port of entry cannot initially verify your information or you do not have all of the required documentation, you may be directed to an interview area known as “secondary inspection.” Secondary inspection allows inspectors to conduct additional research in order to verify information without causing delays for other arriving passengers.

The inspector will first attempt to verify your status by using the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). In the event that the CBP Officer needs to verify information with NAS, **we strongly recommend** that you have the **name and telephone number of the foreign student advisor at NAS**. In the event you arrive during non-business hours (evening, weekends, holidays), you should also have an emergency or non-business hour phone number available for this official.

Failure to comply with U.S. government entry-exit procedures may result in your being denied entry to the United States. Under certain circumstances, the CBP officer may issue a “Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor” Form (I-515A), which authorizes temporary admission into the United States. Work with your school to submit the proper documentation without delay.

### **Maintaining Your Student Status**

Once you enter the U.S.A. in student status, you must meet certain obligations in order to maintain that status. School officials are required to report violations of status to SEVIS within 30 days when any student is out of status. But school officials must first make students aware of the following status requirements.

A full course load at NAS is:

Intensive English Program: Day or evening classes with a minimum course load of 18 - 20 hours per week.

The following is a list of requirements you must meet in order to maintain F-1 status:

1. Have a valid passport at all times.
2. Attend the school you were authorized to attend (as indicated on your I-20).
3. Continue to carry a full-time course of study.
4. Follow attendance regulations.

5. Follow proper procedures if you must remain in the United States longer than the length of time estimated for completion of your educational program, as stated on the initial I-20 issued to you when you began your program of study.
6. Follow procedures to continue from one educational level to another at the same school.
7. Follow procedures to transfer to a school other than the one on the original authorization. Students can transfer to another school only if they notify the International Student Affairs Office.
8. Limit employment, both on campus and off, to a total of twenty (20) hours per week while school is in session; full-time work is permitted during school breaks.
9. Refrain from off-campus employment without authorization from Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).
10. Report a change of residence to International Student Affairs Office within 10 days of the change. The International Student Affairs Office will update your SEVIS record.
11. Three months tuition (\$1,749.00) is due prior to the start of school for every student.
12. Payment is due every month based on student's enrollment agreement

### **Understanding the Importance Of Maintaining Your Status**

It's important for students and exchange visitors to understand the concept of immigration status and the consequences of violating that status. Being aware of the requirements and possible consequences will make it more likely that you can avoid problems with maintaining your status.

Every visa is issued for a particular purpose and for a specific class of visitor. Each visa classification has a set of requirements that the visa holder must follow and maintain. Those who follow the requirements maintain their status and ensure their ability to remain in the United States. Those who do not follow the requirements violate their status and are considered "out of status."

Failure to maintain status can result in arrest, and violators may be required to leave the United States. Violation of status also can affect the prospect of readmission to the United States for a period of time. Most people who violate the terms of their status are barred from lawfully returning to the United States for years.

### **Recognize & Avoid Status Violations**

By violating the requirements that govern your immigration status, you may jeopardize your ability to remain in the United States as a student or exchange visitor. Examples of violations include the following:

- Failure to enroll by the date specified by your school or exchange visitor program.
- Unauthorized employment during your stay.
- Failure to leave the United States following completion of your course, exchange visitor program, or program-related employment.

- For academic students (visa category F-1): Failure to maintain a full course load without prior authorization for a reduction from your designated school official.

## **Change of Address**

NAS requires all students to maintain an updated address on file with the school. Report a change of your address to NAS's Designated School Official, who will update your address within SEVIS System.

## **Duration of Status**

As noted on the Form I-94, F-1 students are admitted to the U.S.A. for their "Duration of Status," which is defined as:

1. The time during which you are pursuing a full-time course of study and making normal progress toward completing that course, and
2. The time you may be working in authorized "practical training" after you complete your studies (if you qualify and are so authorized), and
3. 30 days to depart the country.

## **Program Extension**

If you are unable to complete your program in the time given on your I-20, you may be eligible for a program extension. There are certain requirements that must be met in order for you to be eligible for a program extension. Contact the International Student Affairs Office if you foresee a problem in completing your program on time.

You must obtain permission from International Student Affairs Office in order for you to extend your program.

If a student must remain in an educational program beyond the date originally estimated for completion of the program, the student must comply with Home Land Security procedures for obtaining a program extension. Application for a program extension must be made prior to the expected completion date noted on the I-20 Form. Extensions are not allowed after the program end date shown on the I-20.

Eligibility for the extension depends upon:

1. You have continually maintained F-1 status.
2. You have a legitimate reason for requesting a program extension.

## **Transfer-In Students**

In order to be eligible to transfer from one school to another, students will be required to meet necessary conditions;

1. Be a bona fide non-immigrant in F-1 status.
2. Have maintained F-1 status and completed all financial obligations at your previous school.

3. Submit photocopies of your I-94 card, your passport, and your old SEVIS I-20 to the International Student Affairs Office.
4. You must complete the NAS Transfer-In Form, have it signed with a release date by your previous school DSO, and bring this form to the International Student Affairs Office.
5. The DSO from NAS will contact your previous school's DSO ensure that your SEVIS I-20 record is transferred to the NAS School SEVIS system.

## **Transfer-Out Students**

You need to meet the following criteria in order to transfer to another school:

1. You must have maintained F-1 status, finished your entire NAS program, and completed all financial obligations at NAS.
2. You must be intending to pursue a full-time course of study at the new school.
3. You must register full-time at the school you transfer to.
4. F-1 students should notify the NAS DSO of their plan to transfer not less than 30 days before your NAS program ends.
5. F-1 students must notify the International Student Affairs Office /DSO before your SEVIS record is released to another SEVIS approved School.
6. The International Student Affairs Office will contact the new school to verify your acceptance. The International Student Affairs Office will transfer you out using the release date indicated by the new school. After you have been released, your new school will have access to your SEVIS record. You must report to the new school within 30 days of the program start date.

## **Immigration Documents**

### **Passport**

Your passport must be kept valid while you are in the U.S.A. You should begin renewal procedures six months prior to its expiration date. Contact your local consulate or embassy when necessary for passport renewal procedures.

### **Visa**

A visa is a stamped endorsement in your passport that indicates that all requirements have been met for entry into the U.S.A. The visa is actually an entry permit. You may have been issued a single-entry or a multiple-entry visa with a certain time limit. If you are a full-time student, you probably have an F-1 student visa. If you decide to leave the country, you will need to make sure you have a valid multiple-entry visa or you must apply for one while you are outside the U.S.A. in order to return. You will need to follow the same procedures that you initially followed when applying for a visa. You should speak to the International Student Affairs Office if you are planning to leave the U.S.A.

### **SEVIS I-20**

The SEVIS I-20 form was issued to you when you were accepted to NAS. It is used as proof of acceptance and financial certification in order to obtain a student visa. This form must remain valid while you are a student in the U.S.A. It is used to keep track of all school transfers,

practical training, permission to work, extensions of stay, etc. The NAS DSO must sign it when you want to travel outside the U.S.A. It is your responsibility to make sure your I-20 is valid at all times. If it expires, you will need to apply for reinstatement to student status, which can be burdensome and is not always guaranteed. You must contact the International Student Affairs Office not later than 45 days before your I-20 expires.

### **I-94 Form**

This form is a small white card that was issued to you on the airplane as you flew to the U.S.A. The customs officer stapled it into your passport as you entered. It is the record of your permission to remain in the U.S.A. F-1 students receive a Duration of Status (D/S) notation on their I-94 form at their port of entry into the U.S.A. This means that the student may remain in the U.S.A. as long as he/she maintains a valid F-1 student status. The I-94 form includes an 11-digit Admission Number that is used for the purpose of identification by the Department of Homeland Security. It is used to monitor your arrival in and departure from the U.S.A. You must surrender this card as you leave the U.S.A., unless you are travelling for less than 30 days into Canada, Mexico, and adjacent islands other than Cuba.

## **Travel Outside the USA**

If you plan to travel outside the U.S.A. for less than five months, you must make sure all of your documents are in order. These include:

- A passport valid for at least six months;
- A visa valid for multiple entries beyond your re-entry date. If your visa will expire prior to this date, you must meet with the International Student Affairs Office about obtaining a new I-20.
- An I-20 with a recent signature by the DSO.
- A letter signed by the International Student Affairs Office stating that you have maintained and will continue to maintain your F-1 status and that you are in good academic standing.

If you plan to travel outside the U.S.A. for more than five months, you must receive a new I-20 form. You will need to provide current financial documentation in order to receive a new I-20 form. In some of NAS's programs you will need to re-apply; if so, see your International Student Affairs Office.

## **Employment**

Employment is defined as any type of work performed or services provided in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, food, or any other benefit. If you do not receive compensation in money or in kind for work, this is considered volunteer work, which is allowed in F-1 status. It is YOUR responsibility to comply with all immigration regulations that apply to F-1 students. Employment for dependents in F-2 status is prohibited under any circumstance.

### **On-campus Employment**

As an F-1 student, you are allowed to work on campus, if such employment is available. On-campus employment primarily means work performed on the school's premises. This includes

employment on site with commercial firms that provide services to the students, for example in a school front office or any type of administration work. You must have a Social Security Number to participate.

The most fundamental eligibility requirement for all types of employment is that you maintain lawful F-1 status. You must NEVER work more than 20 hours per week while school is in session, but you may work full time during school breaks. It is YOUR responsibility not to exceed the limit. If you exceed the limit, you will not be maintaining lawful F-1 status. Please note that, if you do not intend to continue your studies in the U.S.A., you may not be employed on campus after you have completed a program of study. The only exception would be optional practical training (see below).

### **Off-campus Employment Based on Unforeseen Severe Economic Hardship**

An F-1 student in good academic standing may qualify to apply for off-campus employment if on-campus employment opportunities are insufficient or unavailable and there are circumstances beyond the student's control, such as severe sickness or economic hardship. Written proof and evidence must be provided to support the hardship.

### **Optional Practical Training**

As an F-1 student, you may apply to the Department of Homeland Security for Optional Practical Training directly related to your major area of study after being enrolled for nine consecutive months. Optional Practical Training may be granted for a maximum of 12 months. This training is granted to complement your degree by giving you experience in your field of study.

Note: Optional Practical Training is only available to students who have completed programs other than the NAS certificate program. ESL students are not eligible for Optional Practical according to HLS regulations for I-20 students.

## **Social Security Number**

You will need to have an available passport, I-20 form, I-94 form, and a letter from the school's Designated School Official/ School Director to apply for a Social Security Number. Do not confuse the Social Security Number with your Admission Number. The Admission Number on your I-94 card is used for immigration purposes to keep track of people arriving in and departing from the U.S.A. The Social Security Number is used for identification while in the United States and keeps track of your income taxes.

Note: NAS is **not** responsible for applying for your Social Security Number.

## **Income Tax**

All F-I students must file both federal and state income tax returns annually if you work off campus with an employment authorization card. For federal income tax reporting, you must use the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) form 1040NR, which is specifically designed for non-

residents. You must also file a state income tax form. Check with your employer to see if they can supply you with the correct forms, or you may call 1-800-829-1040 to have the correct forms mailed to you free of charge. The forms are available after January 1<sup>st</sup> and must be filed no later than April 15<sup>th</sup>.

If you are employed, taxes are automatically deducted from your paycheck for federal, state, and local taxes. Your paycheck stub should show how much is being taken out for each.

When completing the tax forms, you will need to attach copies of the W-2 form that your employer sends to you by January 31<sup>st</sup> for the year you must file (you must file during the current year for last year's taxes). You will discover that you either owe money or have overpaid and are due a refund (rarely does it work out that you paid exactly the right amount). If you owe money, make sure you mail your federal and state tax forms by April 15<sup>th</sup>, or you will be subject to a penalty. If you are owed a refund, you can miss the April 15<sup>th</sup> deadline without incurring a penalty. But if you are owed a refund, you will probably want to file for it as early as you can!

Some countries have tax treaties with the U.S.A. that allow you to earn a certain amount of money tax-free. You must still file a return, but you may deduct the treaty amount from your taxable income. To find out if your country has a tax treaty with the U.S.A., consult IRS Publication 901. You may also wish to consult IRS publications 518-519 that help explain how to complete your 1040NR form.

## **Spouse/Dependent Status**

Your spouse and unmarried minor children may accompany you to the U.S.A. or join you at a later date. Before an I-20 can be issued, financial documentation will need to be provided. A person in F-2 status may never be employed.

## **International Student Affairs Office**

The New America School  
925 South Niagara St., Suite 140, Denver, CO 80224

Craig Cook ccook@newamericaschool.org	Chief of Business Operations	PDSO	Tel: 303-894-3162
Laura V. Fontaine lfontaine@newamericaschool.org	Executive Director	DSO	Tel: 303-894-3167 303-877-7426
Regina Kireva rkireva@newamericaschool.org	Director of Admissions	DSO	Tel: 303-894-3195 303-829-2911

## References:

User Manual for School User of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, November 14, 2002.

Advisor's Manual of Federal Regulations Affecting Foreign Students and scholars, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 1994-2001 Edition.

## Web Sites:

	<b>Abbreviation</b>
Customs and Border Protection	CBP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="http://www.cbp.gov/">http://www.cbp.gov/</a></li></ul>	
Department of Homeland Security	DHS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="http://www.ice.gov/sevis">http://www.ice.gov/sevis</a></li><li>• <a href="http://www.dhs.gov">www.dhs.gov</a></li></ul>	
Immigration and Naturalization Service	INS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="http://www.uscis.gov">www.uscis.gov</a></li></ul>	
Internal Revenue Service	IRS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="http://www.irs.gov">www.irs.gov</a></li></ul>	
Social Security Number	SSN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="http://www.ssa.gov">www.ssa.gov</a></li></ul>	

