

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR F-1 STUDENTS



**HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
SEPTEMBER 2006**

# **International Student Handbook for F-1 Students**

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# **International Student Handbook for F-1 Students**

## **Introduction**

Hagerstown Community College is authorized by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to issue I-20s to nonimmigrant students for the purpose of obtaining a student visa (F-1), a requirement for entering the U.S. to begin a program of study.

## **1. Institutional Reporting Requirements**

Hagerstown Community College is required to provide the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) with specific information regarding students attending the College as F-1 visa holders. As such, it is imperative that F-1 students keep the College informed of any important changes regarding the information provided. Examples of such important changes are detailed herein.

## **2. The Designated School Official**

Each college authorized to enroll students with an F-1 visa has a staff member identified as a Designated School Official (DSO). The DSO has the responsibility of providing USCIS with required reporting data for all F-1 students. All F-1 students should meet with their school's DSO to ensure that they continue to be in compliance with federal law. The Designated School Official at Hagerstown Community College is Dan Bock. Dr. Bock's office is in ASA-402.

## **3. Maintaining Status**

As an F-1 student at HCC, students must "maintain status." Accordingly, they must:

- Attend the school they are last authorized to attend (HCC).
- Pursue a full course of study.
- Make satisfactory progress towards program completion.
- Apply for program extensions prior to the I-20s expiration date.
- Follow procedures for transferring from one school to another.
- Limit on-campus employment to 20 hours per week while school is in session (full-time on campus employment is permitted during vacation periods such as summer as long as the student was enrolled full-time in the term before and intends to be enrolled full-time the following term).
- Abstain from off-campus employment without authorization.
- Report a change of address or name to the DSO within 10 days of the change. The DSO must report the change within 21 days.
- Depart the U.S., apply for a change of status, or transfer to another school within 60 days of completing the course of study and any authorized practical training.
- Maintain a valid passport.

#### **4. Full Course of Study Requirement**

Full course of study at HCC is defined as 12 credit hours of instruction per semester.

- Audits are not included in calculation of credits for full-time status.
- Only one on-line course or a limit of three credits per semester apply towards the full-course of study requirement.

#### **5. Change of Major**

A change of major must be reported to the DSO at Hagerstown Community College for the purpose of notifying USCIS.

- Provide the DSO with a new financial guarantee for the new program.
- A new I-20 will be issued to the student, reflecting the new program of study.

#### **6. Transfer to Another School**

An F-1 student who has maintained status may transfer from one DHS-approved school (HCC) to another by notifying the DSO at HCC who will in turn notify USCIS. An F-1 student who has not maintained status at the current school (HCC) is not eligible for transfer.

- The student must inform the DSO at HCC of the intent to transfer.
- The student must identify the school to which s/he will transfer.
- The student must begin classes within 5 months of transferring from HCC or within 5 months of the program completion date on the current I-20, whichever is earlier. Otherwise, the student is not permitted to remain in the U.S.

#### **7. Travel/Re-entry to the U.S.**

Before departing the country, the student must meet with the DSO. The current I-20 should be signed by the DSO. For reentry to the U.S., required documents include the following:

- Valid passport,
- Valid U.S. visa,
- Valid I-20 form (either endorsed by the DSO or a new form), and
- Current proof of financial support.
- Note: Canadians reentering the U.S. do not need a passport or a U.S. visa, but they will need an endorsed I-20 and valid I-94.

#### **8. On-Campus Employment**

F-1 students may participate in on-campus employment should the opportunity arise.

- Students may only work in areas of campus that provide direct services to students.
- Employment off campus is considered as on-campus employment provided the location is educationally affiliated with HCC.
- To be eligible for on-campus employment, students must be in-status.

F-1 students interested in reinstatement must provide the following documents to the DSO:

- A letter to USCIS requesting reinstatement and explaining how the violation of status resulted from circumstances beyond his/her control.
- Completed form I-539 and a check payable to “Department of Homeland Security” for \$200.00.
- A copy of form I-94.
- The current, original form I-20.
- A new financial guarantee.

Note: While the reinstatement application is pending, the student may not work. Also, if DHS denies the reinstatement application, the student will begin accruing time of “unlawful presence” and will become subject to the provisions of INA.

## **12. Your Lifeline at HCC**

Your principal resource at HCC is the DSO—Dan Bock. Should you have any questions regarding your lawful presence at the College, please contact Dan at:

Dan Bock  
Hagerstown Community College  
11400 Robinwood Drive  
Hagerstown, MD 21742  
[bockd@hagerstowncc.edu](mailto:bockd@hagerstowncc.edu)  
301 790-2800, ext. 335  
301 791-9165 (fax)

- Students may work no more than 20 hours per week while school is in session. It may be possible to work more than 20 hours per week between semesters provided the student plans to register the following term.

## 9. Program Completion/Termination

Once the program of study is completed, the student must leave the U.S. or change to another immigration status within the appropriate time frame.

- F-1 students may remain in the U.S. for 60 days beyond their program completion date. Those who fail to complete their program forfeit the 60-day extension. Those who are unlawfully present for more than 180 days but less than one year may not reenter the U.S. for three years. Those who are unlawfully present for one year or more may not reenter the U.S. for ten years.

## 10. Program Extension

F-1 students must complete their academic program by the completion date on the form I-20 or apply for a program extension.

- Program extensions may be given to students who have continuously maintained status and whose completion dates will be delayed due to valid academic or medical reasons.
  - Acceptable academic delays include change in program of studies and lost credits upon transfer to HCC.
  - Delays due to medical circumstances require a physician's documentation.
- Academic probation and dismissal are not considered acceptable reasons for delay. Students who have not maintained status or who have delays due to academic probation or dismissal **must apply for reinstatement.**
- To be granted an extension, the student must provide the DSO with the following: (1) a letter from an HCC academic advisor stating the reason for the delay, (2) current proof of financial support, and, if the delay is medically related, (3) documentation from a physician of the medical condition.

## 11. Reinstatement

F-1 students who overstay the authorized period on the form I-20 or otherwise fail to maintain student status may be reinstated to student status by applying to a DHS district office. To be eligible for reinstatement, the student must:

- Not have engaged in unauthorized employment;
- Not be in deportation proceedings;
- Not have been out of status for more than five months; and
- Not have a record of willful violations.

The student must also establish that any violation was due to circumstances beyond his/her control. Examples of such circumstances include serious injury, closure of the academic institution, natural disasters, or neglect on the part of the DSO.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT INTAKE FORM

**F-1 students must complete the following:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Program of Study \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Country of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Address \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

HCC Student ID No. \_\_\_\_\_

**As an F-1 student at Hagerstown Community College:**

- 1. I will enroll full-time each semester and work towards fulfilling degree requirements.**
- 2. I will not withdraw from classes without the approval of the DSO.**
- 3. I will seek employment only with the approval of the DSO and with written authorization of USCIS when required.**
- 4. I will notify the DSO of a name or address change within one week of the change.**
- 5. I understand that I have 60 days to depart the U.S. after my program completion date.**

**Failure to comply with the above requirements will jeopardize the student's ability to study at Hagerstown Community College.**

**I understand my responsibilities as an F-1 student at HCC and pledge to remain in compliance with the requirements outlined above.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_