

Polk State College Procedure

| Subject | Reference | Date | Number |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------|
| International Students | DBOT Rule 4.15 | June 4, 2109 | 5014 |

I. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines for working with International Students. An International Student is classified as a student holding an F-1 Non-Immigrant Visa and who comes to the United States for the purpose of attending an English language program or for academic studies as a degree-seeking student.

Other non-resident aliens, such as other non-immigrant visa holders; persons approved for asylum, parole, and refugee status; and undocumented aliens are included in initiatives to reach foreign students but are not subject to this procedure.

II. Procedure

A. International Student Admission Requirements for Degree-Seeking Status:

All documents pertaining to the admission of International Students should be submitted to the College's Assistant Registrar or International Student Advisor. The admission requirements for degree-seeking status include:

1. Completion of the *Polk State College Application for Admission* (online)
2. Completion of an *International Student Application*
3. Submission of an *Affidavit of Financial Support* along with documentation verifying funds are readily available to support the student's education, such as a recent bank statement or bank letter showing that funds are available in US dollars. Investment and money market accounts can be considered after conversion to US dollars using the current exchange rate. (Retirement accounts cannot be considered since they are not readily convertible to cash.)
4. Proof of English proficiency, such as a TOEFL paper test score of 500 or higher or a minimum Internet-based test (TOEFL iBT) score of 61, successful completion of the highest level of an intensive English language program, or any other approved means of proving English proficiency. A student who fails to meet the minimum TOEFL score requirements or who otherwise fails to prove English proficiency may be admitted to the College's English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Program for remediation of skills. Completion of the highest level of EAP Reading and Writing coursework satisfies the English proficiency requirement and allows the student to request admission as a degree-seeking student.
5. Proof of current health/medical insurance coverage
6. Submission of an official high school transcript in the native language, accompanied by a certified English translation prepared by a recognized translation service at the student's expense. A high school transcript from a foreign educational institution must be evaluated as equivalent to a U.S. high school diploma by a recognized evaluation service. If the student has attended a foreign college or university, he or she must have the transcript(s) evaluated by Polk State's preferred evaluation

service or a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). The student may refer to the International Student Information page on Polk State's website for more information on providers (polk.edu → Admission & Aid → International and Visa Students).

All official student records are maintained in the Admission and Registrar's Office and are scanned to the College's imaging system.

Each accepted student is required to take additional tests for placement purposes. A student who does not meet the English, Reading, or Mathematics placement requirements for college-level coursework is required to complete remedial courses in these subjects before being eligible for college-level coursework and for courses that require proficiency in those areas.

B. International Student Admission Requirements for the English for Academic Purposes Program (EAP Program):

All documents pertaining to the admission of International Students to the EAP Program should be submitted to the College's Assistant Registrar or International Student Advisor.

Admission requirements include:

1. Completion of a *Polk State College Application for Admission* online).
2. Completion of an *International Student Application*.
3. Submission of an *Affidavit of Financial Support* along with documentation of support, such as a recent bank statement or bank letter showing that funds are available in US dollars.
4. Submission of an official high school transcript in the native language, accompanied by a certified English translation prepared by a recognized translation service at the student's expense. A high school transcript from a foreign educational institution must be evaluated as equivalent to a U.S. high school diploma by Polk State's preferred evaluation service or a member of NACES (National Association of Credential Evaluation Services). The student may refer to the International Student Information page on Polk State's website for more information on providers (polk.edu → Admission & Aid → International and Visa Students).
5. A student who is accepted into the EAP Program is required to take the Levels of English Proficiency (LOEP) Exam, which is part of the College Placement Test. The LOEP Exam is required to place the student at the appropriate level regarding his or her individual reading, writing, grammar, and communication skills.

C. Each International Student is responsible for the procedures outlined on the International and Visa Student page on the College's website. This page includes all forms and documents the student needs to submit, along with instructions.

D. Immigration-Related Issues:

1. The term "International Student" in this section applies only to those students attending Polk State College on an F-1 student visa (unless otherwise stated).

Each International Student must become familiar with the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and (at minimum) the five forms required by U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. These forms are the *SEVIS I-20 Form (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status)*, the *I-94 Arrival/Departure Record*, the *I-901 Form* to pay the *SEVIS I-20* fee, the *I-539 Form* to request reinstatement or to change visa status, and the *I-765 Form* to request off-campus employment (this is used for optional practical training or employment if there is severe economic hardship) (cf. attachments).

2. US Citizenship and Immigration Services may be contacted through the following address:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
5524 W. Cypress Street
Tampa, Florida 33607
www.uscis.gov

Note: *When forwarding documents to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, they should be sent by certified mail with a return receipt.*

3. An International Student from Canada, Bermuda, Guam, or Puerto Rico (or any other U.S. territory) does not need a visa, but he or she must have a passport and an *I-94 Arrival/Departure Record*. The I-94 number is received at the port of entry (e.g., airport, border crossing, or rail or ship terminal). Even though a visa is not required, the student must go through inspection at the port of entry and have his or her passport stamped, and an I-94 number issued. The I-94 number is the arrival and departure record and is issued by the U. S. Immigration Inspector at the port of entry. The I-94 number is stored electronically on the Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) website at: <https://cbp.dhs.gov/i94>. The student must print the *I-94 Record* from the CBP website and bring it to the College for photocopying.
4. For any immigration problem not covered in this document, the student should contact the SEVIS Help Desk at 1.800.892.4829. Information is also available on the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov, as well as on the Study in the States website at www.studyinthestates.dhs.gov.

III. Responsibilities of Polk State College

A. Maintenance of Student Status:

Once the student arrives in the United States, he or she is required to come to Polk State College within 15 days before the start of the semester (but no later than the program start date) to bring in his or her *SEVIS I-20 Form*, passport, visa, and *I-94 Record* for photocopying.

The Campus International Student Advisor is responsible for monitoring the International Student's registration each semester and ensuring that he or she is enrolled in a full-time course load. The Campus International Student Advisor reports that the student is in-status to USCIS via the SEVIS by completing registration for the student, or the Advisor reports that the student is out-of-status by terminating the student's *SEVIS Form* and requiring the student to submit a petition for reinstatement to USCIS.

To maintain status, a student must complete a full course load every fall and spring semester, seek employment only with USCIS authorization, and never let his or her *SEVIS I-20 Form* or passport expire. A vacation period is earned once the student has attended two semesters of the academic year. Vacation periods can only be used in the summer. If a student begins a program of study in the spring or summer semester, he or she must attend a minimum of two semesters of full-time course work before the individual is eligible for the next summer's annual vacation period.

B. Temporary Absence from the United States:

When a student plans to leave the United States, but expects to return for additional study, the Campus International Student Advisor must endorse page two of the *SEVIS I-20 Form*. If there is no space for further endorsement, or if the student has no *SEVIS I-20 Form*, then a new *SEVIS I-20 Form* is given to the student.

C. Transfer to Another College:

A Polk State International Student who wishes to transfer to another school must meet the admission requirements at the new school, be accepted to the new school, and bring the acceptance letter to the Campus International Student Advisor. The Campus International Student Advisor then has the student complete a *Request for Release of the SEVIS Record* and identifies the date the student wants his or her *SEVIS Form* to be released to the new school. The *SEVIS I-20 Form* can be released for activity to only one school, so it is imperative that the Campus International Student Advisor make sure that the student has been accepted to the new school.

A change in the release date can occur up until the date of the release. Once the SEVIS release date arrives and the record is released to the new school, the Polk State College International Student Advisor no longer has access to the student's SEVIS Record. The SEVIS Record is now the responsibility of the new school, and the student must be present to that school for admission by the start date of the transfer semester or depart the country. Once the SEVIS Record is transferred to the new school, the designated school official (DSO) at that school issues a new *SEVIS I-20 Form* for the student to keep with his or her Polk State-issued SEVIS I-20 Record when traveling outside the United States.

When an International Student from another school wishes to transfer to Polk State, the student completes the College's admission requirements, receives an acceptance letter, and processes the *Request for Release of the SEVIS Record* at his or her current school. When the SEVIS Record is released to Polk State, the designated school official (DSO) issues the student a *SEVIS I-20 Form* from Polk State College.

D. Employment for International Students:

An International Student who works off campus without obtaining an *Employment Authorization Document* (EAD) from U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is in violation of F-1 visa status and is subject to deportation. Polk State College's International Student Advisors do not assist with application for the EAD Card except in the case of severe economic hardship or for a student seeking optional practical training in a specific field of study.

An International Student may work on campus up to 20 hours per week during the fall and

spring semesters and may work additional hours (up to 40 hours per week) during the summer and other authorized vacation periods.

E. Extension of Stay:

A student is authorized to study at Polk State College up to and including the Program End Date on the *SEVIS I-20 Form*. This is the date that the *SEVIS I-20 Form* expires. It is the student's responsibility to make sure his or her *SEVIS I-20 Form* does not expire prior to completion of the program of study. Prior to the expiration date, a student may request a date extension from the Campus International Student Advisor for his or her *SEVIS I-20 Form*. The Campus International Student Advisor uses the student's academic record to determine if this is warranted and how long the *SEVIS I-20 Form* must be extended. Failure to ask for an extension before the form expires or attempting to enroll in school beyond the Program End Date places a student out-of-status with USCIS, and the student must request reinstatement to status and pay the required fee.

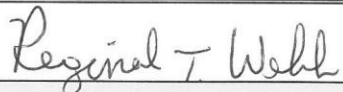
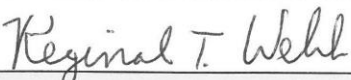
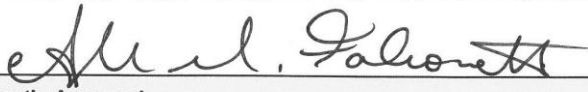
The *I-94 Arrival/Departure Record* is normally valid for the duration of a student's studies while in the United States (i.e., this is usually marked D/S on the *I-94 Record*), provided the student maintains his or her F-1 visa status by enrolling in full-time studies and he or she does not seek employment illegally. If the *I-94 Record* has a specific expiration date, this is the maximum date that USCIS allows the student to remain in the country as an F-1 visa student. It is imperative that the student not stay beyond the date specified on the I-94 card. The USCIS invokes severe penalties when a student stays beyond the authorized date on a date-specific I-94 card.

An International Student is expected to keep his or her passport, visa, and *SEVIS I-20 Form* current and valid. The Campus International Student Advisor impresses this responsibility to each student, explaining that an individual is subject to deportation if the passport is invalid, and that the *SEVIS I-20 Form* must not expire prior to program completion or the student is deemed to be out-of-status. The student must then request reinstatement to status from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

History:

Adopted: August 11, 1982;

Revised: February 5, 1986; November 8, 1993; May 8, 2007; January 24, 2012; June 4, 2019

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|  | 7/11/19 |  | 7/11/19 |
| Executive Responsible for Procedure | Date | President's Staff Member's Approval | Date |
|  | | | 7/15/17 |
| President's Approval | | | Date |