FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

F-1 STUDENT VISA

Q: Will applying for an F-1 visa put my current business visa at risk of being terminated?

A: No.

Q: Can I have more than one U.S. visa at a time?

A: Yes. A person may have several U.S. visa stamps in their passport (B-1, F-1, H-1b, etc), but they can only enter the U.S. in one of those statuses. For example, a student may already have a B-1 visa stamp valid for 5 years but they can still apply for the F-1 visa stamp at the U.S. Consulate abroad, and then enter the U.S. using the F-1 visa stamp. In this case, the student should present their I-20, valid passport, and valid F-1 visa stamp to the port of entry official in the United States. Although the student has a B-1 and F-1 visa stamp, the student will only have one immigration status while in the U.S., which would be F-1 in this case.

Q: What happens if I am denied an F-1 visa?

A: There is always a risk of the F-1 visa (or any visa) getting denied. It is important that you prove “non-immigrant intent,” which means that you provide proof that you intend to return to your home country upon completion of the program at Duke and are not intending to immigrate to the U.S. We can never guarantee that a student will be approved for the F-1 visa stamp.

Q: What if my spouse/children will be traveling with me to Durham?

A: If the F-1 student would like their dependents (spouse and/or children) to come to the United States, then the dependent has two options:

Option 1: The dependent applies for the F-2 visa (visa status for a dependent of an F-1 visa holder). If the dependent enters on an F-2 visa stamp, then the Visa Services Office at Duke University would have to issue an I-20 to the dependent. In most cases, this is done at the same time as the F-1 I-20, but dependents can be added later. Upon receipt of the I-20, the dependent would have to apply for an F-2 visa stamp at the U.S. Consulate abroad. The F-1 student would have to show sufficient liquid funds in order to add the dependents to their F-1 record.
Option 2: The dependent applies for a tourist visa (B-2). If the dependent decides to enter on the B-2 visa, then Visa Services does not issue any documents and the F-1 student does not have to verify funding. Foreign nationals entering on a B-2 visa are only permitted to be in the U.S. for a short period of time. This option fits well for dependents of DEL-MEM students since they are in the US for 3-7 days.

Q: How long can I stay in the United States on my F-1 visa?

A: When you enter the United States on a student visa, you will usually be admitted for the duration of your student status.

For a student who has completed the course of studies shown on the I-20, F-1 students may stay an additional 60 days, to prepare for departure from the U.S. or to transfer to another school. That means you may stay as long as you are a full time student, even if the F-1 visa in your passport expires while you are in the United States.

Q: What do I do when I arrive at Duke?

A: Visa holders must check-in with the Visa Services office as soon as they arrive on campus. You will need the following at least the following information (it’s best to bring all visa documents just to be on the safe side):

1. Passport biographical page;
2. F-1 visa stamp in their passport;
3. First page of the I-20; and
4. I-94 printout (available at www.cbp.gov/i94 only after you enter the US).