

## Frequently Asked Questions

### For Advisors of International Students on the F-1 Student Visa Status

- 1. How do I know if my advisee holds the F-1 student visa?**
  - It is the student's responsibility to tell you, but sometimes they need a reminder.
  - Starting with summer 2016, all F-1 students should have a PERC note of FVISA to help you know that they are on an F-1 visa. However they may not have the PERC note until they actually have the F-1 visa, so if you are meeting with them prior to them getting the visa, they may not have it.
  - If you think it is a possibility, you can ask a question such as "Do you have any immigration requirements for registration?"
- 2. Which curriculum programs can F-1 students enroll in?**
  - Students on F-1 visas can only pursue [diploma or degree programs](#). Also F-1 students cannot enroll in programs that we know have many online courses (ex: Opticianry).
  - F-1 students can add certificates to their primary diploma or degree program.
- 3. What are the registration requirements for an F-1 visa student?**
  - For Fall and Spring semesters, the student must enroll in at least 12 credit hours of curriculum courses.
  - Only 3 credit hours (one course) of online course hours are permitted as part of the 12 credit hours requirement (i.e. at least 9 credit hours must be in a hybrid or traditional/seated class per semester).
  - A hybrid course does not count as an online course, since the student's physical presence is required at least part of the time.
- 4. Is summer registration required?**
  - No, if the student has completed two previous consecutive semesters (Fall and Spring).
  - Probably not, if the student has completed the previous Spring semester. (The law is not clear on this issue!) Have them speak to a DSO in the CGL.
  - Yes, if this is the first semester of enrollment for the student on the F-1 status. The full-time requirement is pro-rated to 8-9 credit hours, because of the shortened semester.
- 5. Who are the DSO's? (Designated School Officials) and what do they do?**
  - The Principal DSO (PDSO) is Heidi White, Director of International Student Services & Study Abroad.
  - Gina Perryman, International Student Services Advisor is also a DSO.
  - A student must meet with Heidi or Gina about any visa related issues as only they have the training and authority to advise and/or report on F-1 students at Durham Tech.
- 6. Are there exceptions to full-time enrollment (12 credits in Fall or Spring; 8 credits in Summer)?**
  - Exceptions can only be made according to federal regulations.
  - Only a Designated School Official (DSO) can authorize a reduced course load (RCL), and it must be reported to the Department of Homeland Security.
  - An academic advisor **cannot** authorize a Reduced Course Load. The student must consult with a DSO.

- 7. What are some possible exceptions to full-time enrollment (12 credits in Fall or Spring; 8 credits in Summer)?**
- Academic problem or improper course placement (Only one of these is permitted **for only one semester** throughout the entire program of study.)
  - Medical problem (A physician’s recommendation is required. Permitted for a maximum of one year.)
  - It is the final semester before graduation (must be verified). In a student’s final semester, they only need to take the classes they need to complete their program.
- 8. What are common student requests to enroll in less than full-time enrollment that are not allowed, due to federal regulations?**
- Financial difficulty
  - Academic problem for more than one semester
  - Illness of a family member
  - Tired of studying, need a vacation
  - Fear of a bad grade in a class
  - No class is available in my program of study (Student must find another course outside of the program of study to meet the enrollment requirements. This most often occurs to students who wait and register later so classes they could take are full.)
- 9. Will the student qualify for in-state tuition after one year of residency?**
- No. The F-1 visa student never has the ability to establish “residency for tuition purposes” according to North Carolina state regulations.
  - If a non-profit organization is sponsoring the student, the organization can be charged only the in-state rate. The student needs to consult with Heidi or Gina for specific information about the requirements and how the organization pays the tuition.
- 10. My student is employed. Is that permitted?**
- Students are permitted to work up to 20 hours per week on-campus only. However, it is difficult to find a job on Durham Tech’s campus since F-1 students do not qualify for federal financial aid work-study. In the last few years the *only* jobs F-1 students have found on campus are in the CAE as tutors (if they qualified).
  - Employment off-campus is only permitted after the student has applied to the Department of Homeland Security and has received authorization. This application requires a substantial fee and several months to be processed. For more information tell the student to contact a DSO.
- 11. Can F-1 students do internships/work-based learning?**
- Internships are allowed for F-1 students only on Durham Tech’s campuses (since they are not for credit).
  - F-1 students can enroll in Work Based Learning courses and can be authorized to work in off-campus sites (for pay or not) by one of the DSOs. The student must go through the process to be approved for the WBL course(s) and then a DSO must authorize them for Curricular Practical Training. The student can only work at an off-campus location for the dates of the WBL course. Currently students can only take WBL course(s) for one semester in their final semester or next to final semester.

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