

Helpful Tips for International Students

1. ALWAYS remember how to maintain your F-1 Status:

- a) Register for and complete 3 credits every semester (full time)
- b) Get your I-20 signed, if needed, before leaving the U.S.
- c) Never work off-campus without authorization
- d) Update the International Student Advisor with residential and home country address changes

2. ALWAYS consult your international Student Advisor before dropping a class or withdrawing from a course or from the college.

If you withdraw without getting the International Advisor's permission FIRST, you will fall out of status!

3. UNDERSTAND the difference between a visa, a status, an I-20, and an I-94

You have been given a sheet that explains the difference. For example, your F-1 visa can expire, but your I-20 cannot! Ask if you are confused.

4. NEVER ASSUME that other faculty and staff at COA understand all the immigration rules you have to follow as an international student.

Your professor might tell you to drop a class—but it is not their job to know you must be full-time

Other offices are experts at their own jobs (academic advising, student payments, etc.) Your International Advisor is the only expert on immigration issues. Ask me before making any big decisions!

5. NEVER ASSUME that your other international student friends understand the rules you have to follow

Many people make BIG mistakes because “my friend said....” And they assume it's the same for them.

Everyone is different. It depends upon when **you** entered, **your** nationality, **your** grades,....ask your advisor!

6. ALWAYS make extra copies of ALL of your important papers, and copies of papers you mail away.

Keep copies of your I-20, passport, and visa in a separate place in your residence.

Keep copies of any form you submit to a college, immigration, or other offices, for proof of what you submitted. Get proof of all special arrangements (exceptions, extensions) in writing or email, not just verbally.

7. ALWAYS get the name of the person who helps you (in COA offices, with Immigration, etc.)

If something goes wrong, you will know who to talk to right away. It will also help you solve the problem quicker.

8. NEVER put something off until the last minute.

You cannot assume that your International Advisor, or other staff, can give you what you need right away.

Some immigration deadlines are absolute, and your advisor might not be able to help you if you wait too long.

9. TRY to find ways of getting to know Americans, especially if most of your friends speak your language.

Suggestions: Join or start a club or organization. Get involved, take risks, reach out to the entire COA community. There are a ton of opportunities here to do it. Ask other students.

10. Don't be afraid to speak up in class, or to ask the professor a question in class or during office hours.

American professors almost always want you to ask questions or make comments, even if you disagree with them.

If you don't understand something, it is more responsible to speak with the professor early in the semester. Many professors grade you on "class participation". If you are too shy to talk in class or to talk to the professor, the International Student Advisor can be a 'third party' support person for you.

HAVE FUN! TRY NEW THINGS! TAKE RISKS! BE SAFE! GROW!