

Below are questions that have been frequently asked during this time.

If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to email us at iso@collin.edu.

Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

What is F-1 Status?

F-1 status is a non-immigrant immigration status granted for the purpose of full-time study. F-2 status is granted to a spouse or children of an F-1 student.

What is a DSO?

A DSO is a Designated School Official. The DSO is responsible for reporting and updating information about the F-1 international student and their F-2 dependents in the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

What is an I-20?

An I-20 is the immigration document issued by ISO and signed by a DSO after admission and any program updates. The I-20 shows the student's information, program, start and end date, financial information, and more. This is the document the students use to apply for the F-1 visa and to show status when they are in the U.S. Students are responsible for keeping all copies of their I-20s, in case they are needed for future immigration applications.

How does the F-1 ICE Guidance impact my immigration status if I am not an F-1 student?

This guidance does not apply to you. If you are not in F-1 visa status, you do not have enrollment requirements to meet immigration regulations.

I am not an F-1 student. Do I apply as an international student at Collin College?

Students that are not under the F-1 immigration status do not apply to Collin as an international student. They apply under standard application procedures.

Will there be opportunities to become engaged at Collin College?

Yes, please visit Collin College's Student Engagement webpage for virtual activities and events: <https://www.collin.edu/campuslife/studentlife/studentengagementevents.html>

Where can I find more information about life as an F-1 student at Collin College?

We encourage you to review the International Student Handbook (<https://sway.office.com/ZfB8c6KNVDOAxafA?ref=Link>) for more information. If you have any questions, please email iso@collin.edu.

Application Questions

What is an F-1 Initial student?

An F-1 initial student is any F-1 visa holder that is entering the U.S. for the first time on an F-1 visa to pursue their studies at a college or university.

What is an F-1 transfer student?

An F-1 transfer student is an F-1 student that is currently enrolled at a high school, ESL school, college, or university that plans to pursue a degree at Collin College.

I have completed the international online application for admissions, why do I continue to receive “Collin College Incomplete Admission Items” email?

Students who have completed the online application but have not yet submitted all required documents to iso@collin.edu will continue to receive this automatic email. You should stop receiving this email within 3 business days from submitting a complete application. Please see the document below for all required documents for admission.

[Admission Items](#)

Is there a deadline for F-1 International applicants?

To be eligible for F-1 admission, students must complete the online application and submit all required application materials as listed on the International Students Office website by the deadline. Deadlines and required documentation can be found on the ISO Website.

<https://www.collin.edu/gettingstarted/advising/international/>

How will I get my I-20?

Once all admission documents have been received, please allow at least 10 business days for processing. Processing time will vary depending on the busy time of year. We process applications in the order in which they are received.

Due to COVID and the SEVP guidance, we will distribute signed Form I-20's electronically to your Collin email once processed.

How can I demonstrate English language proficiency?

International students planning to enroll in academic programs, including the ESL program, must demonstrate English language proficiency. This can be accomplished by the following exams: TOEFL and IELTS. Or the student can provide documentation demonstrating they meet one of the following exemptions:

1. English 1301 from a U.S. college or university with a C or better
2. Graduation from a high school in the U.S. The student must have spent at least one academic year at a U.S. high school.

3. Citizenship from an English-speaking country. *Subject to approval

<https://www.collin.edu/gettingstarted/advising/international/TOEFL.IELTS%20Exemptions.pdf>

Arrival Questions

What does the program start date mean on my Form I-20, and when should I arrive?

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requires all initial I-20 students (new students) to enter the United States within 30 days of the start date on their SEVIS Form I-20. However, the Collin College International Student Office suggests that students arrive two weeks before mandatory orientation so they can take the required TSI or ESL tests and get registered for classes.

A student must report their entry into the United States before they will be allowed to register for classes.

What do I do once I arrive in Texas?

Once you arrive in Texas, all international students are required to report their arrival to the Collin College International Student Office located at **2800 E. Spring Creek Parkway, Plano, TX, 75074** with your required documents listed on the check-in form in your admission packet.

Am I required to attend international student orientation?

Yes, all first time Collin College international students must attend the mandatory international student orientation.

How do I apply for a Texas Driver's License?

To receive or renew a Texas Driver's License or Texas Identification card, you will need to present the following documents at the Department of Public Safety (DPS) office.

1. Your SEVIS I-20 Form (continued attendance)
2. I-94 (please see <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>, if you do not have one)
3. Visa and valid passport
4. Three documents that show proof of Texas residency for at least 30 days (i.e. bank statement, an electric bill, and/or cable bill with your name and address). If your name does not appear on the household bills, your roommate can accompany you to DPS with proof of their residency and sign an affidavit form stating you live with them. For more information please visit <https://www.dps.texas.gov/>.

Am I required to have health insurance?

Collin College highly recommends that all international students have health insurance. Please see the International Student Handbook (<https://sway.office.com/ZfB8c6KNVDOAxafa?ref=Link>) for insurance options.

Form I-20/Status Questions

I lost my Form I-20, what should I do?

If you have lost or misplaced your I-20 you can request a reprint of your Form I-20. You will need to complete the [I-20 Request Form](#), check the I-20 reprint box. Send your request to iso@collin.edu

I have not completed my degree program but my Form I-20 will expire soon. What should I do?

You will need to complete the [Request for I-20 Extension](#) form and provide the appropriate documentation listed on the request form. Send completed request forms to iso@collin.edu. Please note, an extension request is approved on a case by case basis. Your request for extension can be denied, so please have a contingency plan in place in the event your request is denied.

What do I need to do if I lost my F-1 status?

If your SEVIS record had been terminated, completed, or canceled you will need to leave the United States to re-establish your student status by re-entering the country with a new I-20 or by filing a reinstatement request with the Department of Homeland Security. Please contact iso@collin.edu for further instructions.

Course Registration Questions

How do I register for classes?

Students may add and/or drop classes using CougarWeb through the first four days of classes during the long semester and during the first day of the summer term. We recommend meeting with an academic advisor before dropping or adding classes.

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLmMn2tphVs&feature=youtu.be>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOfdSfCuFLY&feature=youtu.be>

How many courses am I required to take?

F-1 students must enroll and maintain a minimum of 12 credit hours every fall and spring semester if they are at the Associates level of education. F-1 students at the Associates level are not required to take summer courses unless summer is the first semester of their I-20. ESL students are required to take 15 credit hours during the fall, spring, and summer semesters.

What is the Texas Success Initiative (TSI)?

The TSI is a state exam required by all students to assess college readiness in reading, writing, and math. The exam is mandatory and must be completed before first enrollment at Collin College unless TSI exemptions have been met.

<https://www.collin.edu/studentresources/testing/index.html>

<https://www.collin.edu/studentresources/testing/availabletesting/tsi.html>

What is the English as a Second Language (ESL) test?

The ESL test is an assessment used to determine placement in the ESL courses at Collin College. The test consists of reading, listening, writing, and grammar with an oral component. Students must make a certain score on TOEFL or IETLS to be accepted into the ESL program.

https://www.collin.edu/studentresources/testing/availabletesting/esl_assessments.html

https://www.collin.edu/gettingstarted/advising/international/initial_F-1_Applicants.html

<https://www.collin.edu/studentresources/testing/index.html>

Are there limitations on transfer credit hours?

Collin College will accept credit hours received from college courses taken at an accredited U. S. college or university.

Students wanting to pursue a bachelor's degree should be aware that there may be transfer credit hour limitations on lower-division course work. You are advised to discuss transfer plans early with an academic advisor at Collin College and at the college you would like to transfer. This is to ensure you are taking the appropriate courses for your program.

Does Collin College accept international college credit?

Collin College does not accept transfer credit from foreign institutions.

Can I meet my enrollment requirement by enrolling in classes concurrently at another college?

Yes, you can be concurrently enrolled at Collin College and other colleges to meet your enrollment requirements. At least 6 credit hours have to be taken at Collin College.

What is concurrent enrollment?

There are two types of concurrent enrollment students:

1. An international student with an I-20 from another college or university can enroll in courses at Collin College. The student must have written permission from that college or university.
2. A Collin College international student who wants to take one or two classes at another college or university to complete the required 12 credit hours needed to maintain full-time status. This student must complete the [concurrent enrollment form](#) and provide proof of registration showing the number of credit hours taken at the other institution. Please send the request form and proof and registration to iso@collin.edu.

https://www.collin.edu/gettingstarted/advising/international/Concurrent_Students.html

Can I enroll in a certificate program?

No, F-1 students cannot enroll or declare a certificate program as their major.

Travel Questions

Before traveling please be sure you have the following documents:

- A valid passport with at least 6 months validity

- A valid F-1 Visa
- A valid I-20 with the travel signature and remarks

Please Note: The international student office must be notified of any international travel.

Can I travel with an expired visa?

The answer is yes and no. You can travel throughout the U.S with an expired visa. If you leave the country with an expired visa, you will need to visit the Embassy or Consulate in your home country to renew your visa before you will be able to return to the U.S. The visa is an official document that allows the bearer to legally enter a foreign country.

Employment Questions

Can an international student work?

An international student may work up to 19.5 hours per week on campus if they are in good academic standing (2.0 GPA or higher). Special permission is required to work off-campus i.e. Curricular Practical Training (CPT) or Optional Practical Training (OPT).

What is Economic Hardship Work Authorization?

Economic Hardship is a work authorization granted by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) that allows a student who can demonstrate severe economic hardship that was unforeseen to work off-campus with a limitation of 20 hours per week during the school semester. F-1 international students must receive permission from our office before applying for off-campus work authorization.

Points to remember about Economic Hardship Work Authorization:

- Only students who have completed one academic year at Collin College are allowed to apply.
- The application costs \$410 and is non-refundable if the application is denied or withdrawn.
- The price of the application was set to increase to \$550 starting October 2nd. However, there has been a preliminary injunction of the fee rule by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. Please check USCIS.gov for the correct application fee.
- The decision takes 3-5 months to process by USCIS.

Approval is not guaranteed. The burden is on the student to demonstrate and provide documentation that shows economic hardship and how it was unforeseen. An approved Economic Hardship authorization EAD card only provides work authorization. The student is required to maintain a full-time course load and remain in good immigration status. If interested in applying, please email iso@collin.edu for the application form.

Do you offer support for job-seeking international students?

Please visit <https://www.collin.edu/studentresources/career/index.html> for employment assistance.

Can I apply for OPT, CPT, Program Extensions, or get assistance with advising?

Yes, the international student office will continue to process your request while practicing social distancing. We will do so via phone, email, or in-person through the scheduling system bookings at

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/InternationalStudentOffice@collin.edu/bookings/>. To begin the process, request documents are located at <https://www.collin.edu/gettingstarted/advising/international/>. The international student office can be reached at iso@collin.edu.

Fall 2020-COVID-19 Questions

How does Collin College plan to keep me safe during the Fall 2020 semester?

Collin College has created a great webpage for all of your back to school concerns, please visit <http://www.collin.edu/covid19/2020FallRestartPlan.pdf>. The Fall 2020 Restart Plan covers Student, Faculty, and Staff safety, Student and Employee return to campus, Instructional Delivery Methods, Student housing, Student housing meal plans, and many other auxiliary services, and events.

What is the format for the Fall 2020 courses? Can I take classes online?

Collin College is offering Hybrid/Blended, In-person, and Online courses for Fall 2020.

- **Continuing F-1 students:** can take any combination of formats including all online. Credit students are required to take 12 credit hours.
- **ESL students:** are required to take 15 credit hours.
- **Initial/Overseas international students:** for Fall 2020 must take at least 9 credit hours blended or in-person towards their full-time 12 credit hour requirement and one class 3 credit hour can be online.

Can I enroll in more than one online class in Fall 2020?

Yes, continuing or transfer students (in the U.S.) can take more than one online course.

Can I participate in online classes from outside the U.S. and still maintain my F-1 status?

Yes, current F-1 students can engage in online instruction for the fall 2020 term from within the U.S. or outside the country due to COVID-19. **This initial guidance does not apply to new or initial-status students who have yet to enter the U.S.** <https://www.ice.gov/coronavirus#wcm-survey-target-id>

What is the format for Spring 2021?

Currently, F-1 students will be required to return to normal procedures for Spring 2021. Credit students will be required to take 12 credit hours, only one online course towards full-time enrollment. ESL students will be required to take 15 credit hours, no online classes allowed. Please check with ISO for any updates.

What is considered a blended, face-to-face, hybrid, or online course?

Blended

During Fall 2020, the blended course will count as an "in-person" course for immigration purposes. A blended course is one in which the instruction is a combination of the traditional in-person classroom

experience and online classroom experience. Each instructor will determine the specifics of how blended instruction and participation will look for the course they teach.

Face-to-Face

A physical class presence is required. Instruction is carried out in-person in a classroom or lab.

Hybrid

Hybrid courses meet half 51% in-class and 49% online. Since the greater part of the course is face-to-face hybrids are considered face-to-face courses.

Online

An online course is any course with more than 51% of instruction online. Courses that require a physical presence for mid-term, and or/final exams will be considered online.

Please Note: Usually, no more than the equivalent of one class or 3 credit hours per semester may be counted toward the full course of study requirement. COVID-19 has allowed an exception to this rule for fall 2020.

What happens if the school transitions back to 100% online during the semester?

F-1 students will remain in valid immigration status if the college transitions to 100% remote learning.

I would like to return to my home country to take my courses this fall. What do I need to do?

If you decide to continue your studies from your home country, you must inform the international student office. We will need to provide you with a “travel signature” on page 2 of your I-20 with the remark “Outside the United States due to COVID-19.” To request a travel signature, submit the request form https://www.collin.edu/gettingstarted/advising/international/i-20%20Request_20Form.pdf. After submitting your request, the International Student Office will contact you once your request has been processed. Please allow 5-7 business days for processing.

Will I be required to self-isolate upon entry into the U.S. before attending on-campus classes for Fall 2020? Please refer to pages 4 and 5 of the Fall 2020 Restart Plan.

<http://www.collin.edu/covid19/2020FallRestartPlan.pdf>

Will I be able to come back into the U.S. if I travel for Spring Break, summer, or winter breaks?

As of now, it is impossible to determine if any further restrictions will be put in place by the U.S. If you are currently outside the U.S. or plan to travel outside the U.S., we recommend that you continue to monitor travel updated from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, and contact iso@collin.edu for a valid travel endorsement signature on your Form I-20. Please complete the I-20 Request Form can check the Travel Endorsement box.

https://www.collin.edu/gettingstarted/advising/international/i-20%20Request_20Form.pdf

Financial Questions

How much is tuition?

Please reference the out-of-state/country section for tuition cost:

<https://www.collin.edu/bursar/tuition.html>

How do I pay for tuition?

You can pay for tuition by check, online, or in person. Please note, you must be registered for classes before you can pay for tuition. https://www.collin.edu/gettingstarted/advising/international/I-20%20Request_20Form.pdf

What is Collin College's refund policy?

<https://www.collin.edu/bursar/refunds.html>

How can I get a refund?

Refund amounts are calculated based on the day you withdraw or drop from a course and the date in the semester. More information can be found on the Cashier's Website.

<https://www.collin.edu/bursar/hours.html>

Are there local scholarships or Financial Aid for F-1 students?

F-1 students do not qualify for Financial Aid, however, they can apply for the Collin College Foundation Scholarships, external scholarship opportunities, or university transfer scholarships.

<https://www.collin.edu/gettingstarted/financialaid/scholarships.html>.

We also offer tuition waivers through the Good Neighbor Scholarship (this scholarship is for students from other nations of the American/Western Hemisphere).

<http://www.collegeforalltexas.com/apps/financialaid/tofa2.cfm?ID=437>

Abbreviations/Acronyms

Abbreviation	Name	Explanation
DSO	Designated School Official	A DSO is a Designated School Official. The DSO is responsible for reporting and updating information about the F-1 international student and their F-2 dependents in the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).
DOS	Department of State	Government department that Processes F-1 visa applications at U.S. Embassies and Consulates
DHS	Department of Homeland Security	Overall purpose is to administer immigration laws; secures and manages border. Overseas CBP, SEVP, USCIS, and ICE.
CBP	Customs and Border Patrol	Protects the border, determines if someone can enter U.S.

SEVP	Student and Exchange Visitor Program	Manages schools, nonimmigrant students in the F and M classification and their dependents
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services	Processes requests for OPT, Economic Hardship, Reinstatement, and change of status
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement	Immigration law enforcement, investigations, and removal
SEVIS	Student and Exchange Visitor Information System	Both SEVP and DoS use the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to track and monitor schools; exchange visitor programs; and F, M and J nonimmigrants while they visit the United States and participate in the U.S. education system. SEVIS is maintained by the DSO at the school.