

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**What is the SEVIS I-20 Form?** Your I-20 is the “certificate of eligibility” issued by the Greenfield Community College indicating you are attending (or planning to attend) Greenfield Community College. It is like a pass to stay in the United States while studying. You need your I-20 to obtain your F-1 visa.

**What is the F-1 Visa?** The F-1 Visa is a student visa issued to persons who will be full-time students seeking a degree or certificate at an approved institution. Your F-1 Visa is issued by a U.S. embassy or consulate in or near your country and is on one of the pages of your passport with your picture, personal information, and name of the school on it. It is like a ticket to enter the United States.

**What is the I-94?** The I-94 is the departure portion of the form I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record) you complete it before your arrival in the U.S. At your port of entry into the U.S. the Immigration Officer will write your SEVIS number (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) on your I-94, along with a stamp indicating your place of entry, the date that you are permitted to stay until, and your status as an F-1 student. The Immigration Officer should write "F-1-D/S" (Duration of Status) on your I-94. Each time you leave the U.S you will be asked to return the I-94 at your port of departure.

**Can I get credit for college courses I took at a college in my country? How?** Yes you may be eligible to receive credit for courses that are equivalent to our courses. You will need to have your transcripts translated (if needed), and/or provide us with the course description(s).

**How/Where do I have my transcripts translated and evaluated?** There are many outside agencies that translate and evaluate transcripts. You may obtain help from the embassy/consulate or you may find a list of agencies on the internet at [www.educei.com](http://www.educei.com) or [www.naces.org](http://www.naces.org)

**Do you have on-campus housing?** No. You will need to make your own arrangements for housing.

**When will I get my Form I-20?** Once we have received all required documentation, your file will be evaluated by the Director of Admission. If you meet the minimum admission requirements, you will be issued your I-20.

**What if I am applying to a particular program (Nursing, Paramedic, Massage Therapy or Outdoor Leadership) you must meet the criteria for those programs as well as the minimum admission requirements. You may request more information about a particular program by emailing: [admission@gcc.mass.edu](mailto:admission@gcc.mass.edu)**

**When do I make an appointment with the Embassy?** Because the speed of mail delivery differs by country, we recommend you schedule your appointment only upon receipt of your I-20.

**Can I submit a change of status form (I-539) if I am in the U.S on a visitor's visa?** Possibly but unlikely; Applicants entering the United States on a visitor's visa (B-2) without the “Prospective Student” classification, which is issued only in exceptional circumstances, will find it very difficult to change to student classification. You will need to apply to the college and provide all the required documentation. Your current visa and I-94 must be valid and not expired.

**Can I change my major once I am in the US?** Yes you may change your major, but we must issue you a new Form I-20 with your new major and completion date.

**Can I transfer from another college in the US to GCC? What do I need to do?** You will need to submit all documentation required for new applicants. A completed “Transfer Verification Form” signed by your current college/university and current transcript indicating completed courses and those in progress.

**Can I transfer to another college? How do I go about it?** As long as you are currently in good standing both financially and academically with GCC, we will sign a transfer approval form issued by the school you wish to attend.

**Who can I get to sponsor me? Does it have to be someone in the US?** You will need to obtain your own sponsor. The sponsor does not need to be in the US. Our only requirement is that the sponsor(s) have sufficient funds to meet your financial requirements.

**How much will it cost to attend your college and obtain a degree?** The estimate provided \$21,350 is based on one academic year. Your degree may be completed in two years; however, additional time is required for students who need to improve their English and/or mathematics skills. When planning your financial needs, it is advised that applicants estimate financial need to be between 2 and 3 years.

**Can I seek employment with a student visa?** No. This is why USCIS requires financial documentation that demonstrates sufficient funds available to support your education.

**What happens if I do not complete my degree before my I-20' expiration date?** We can file for an extension to your Form I-20 so you may complete your degree.

**Can I travel outside the U. S. during school breaks? What do I need to do?** Yes you may travel during school breaks. You will need your Form I-20 signed by a college official (PDSO/DSO).

**Can I drive while in the U.S.? Will I need a U.S. driver's license?** If you have a valid driver's license from your country, you may not need to apply for a license in the US. Each state within the US, however, establishes their own requirements and will accept only certain countries drivers' license. For information on Massachusetts driver's license requirements, you can visit [RMV web site](#)

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

### **Admission into US**

Students are admitted for "duration of status" which means that you are authorized to stay in the United States for the length of time during which you are enrolled for a full-time program of study.

### **Extension of Stay**

Students may apply for an extension of stay if they are unable to complete their program of study by the end date listed on the I-20. Students should notify the Office of Admission at least 30 days prior to the end date.

### **Travel**

Any students returning to the United States must obtain a SEVIS issued I-20 and have a valid visa in order to be admitted to the U.S. When you travel outside of the U.S. you will need an I-20 signed by a college official (PDSO/DSO).

### **Transfer**

Immigration transfer is initiated by the school you are currently attending before your last date of classes. You must notify the Office of Admission of your intention to transfer to another school and give us the name of the new school before your last day of classes. **Failure to do so may result in cancellation of your SEVIS record along with your withdrawal leading to out of status.**

### **Release of Information**

Greenfield Community College is required to comply with USCIS regulations governing your student status and must submit information as required.

### **To Open a Bank Account**

In order to open a new account, the international student would have to visit a bank present his or her F1 Visa and passport. Then the student would be asked to complete some forms.

An F1-visa holder does not need to have a Social Security number in order to open an account.