



New America School
F-1 International Student
Guidebook



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to New America School (NAS). We are delighted that you are attending our educational institution. New America School has a set of expectations and guidelines for all students.

New America School Expectations and Guidelines

1. Students will *only* be admitted for August and January starts.
2. F-1 students are not allowed to enroll in English Language Acquisition courses. The I-20 will be issued for “Secondary – 53.0101 – Regular/General High School/Secondary Diploma Program”.
3. As New America School (NAS) is a public charter school, F-1 students are only permitted to study up to 12 months *total* at any NAS school. (August 7, 2017 – June 1, 2018 or January 8, 2018 – December 20, 2018)
4. F-1 students must enroll in a full course of study, which is at least six (6) credits.
5. Tuition:
 - \$800 tuition is due monthly.
 - Tuition is due as indicated on the payment calendar.
 - Late payments will be assessed a \$100 late fee.
6. Attendance:
 - If a student misses 10 days in a row, they may be terminated.
 - If a student misses eight (8) days in a quarter, they may be placed on probation and terminated if attendance does not improve the following quarter.
7. Academics:
 - Students are expected to keep a 2.0 GPA or better per semester.
 - If a student falls below a 2.0 GPA, they may be placed on probation and terminated if grades do not improve the following semester.
8. You will also need to follow school-specific rules, which will be outlined when you start at NAS.

It is extremely important that you understand and follow these guidelines. If you violate these expectations, you may be terminated and reported to immigration.

UPON ARRIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

Non-immigrant students may enter the United States at any time during the 30 days prior to the program start date listed on the Form I-20. If the student contacts the school to inform them that they will arrive late, the school will defer the program start date in SEVIS and provide the student with an updated Form I-20. If the program start date has passed, the school will not be able to defer attendance. The student should contact the P/D SO for a new Form I-20. While it is possible that the Point of Entry (POE) will allow the student to enter after the program start date, if the record has been cancelled, the P/D SO will not be able to activate it. The student will have to leave and re-enter with a new Form I-20 or apply for reinstatement.

Students who cannot arrive by the program start date must contact the P/D SO to defer their program start date to the next start date and get a reprinted Form I-20.

Upon arrival at a U.S. POE, the non-immigrant student must present:

- A Form I-20, signed by the P/D SO of the school they will be attending
- A valid visa which will have the SEVIS Identification number and the name of the school the student will attend (unless the student is visa exempt)
- Financial documentation
- A valid passport



Students must furnish the above documentation during the primary POE inspection. POE officials may also take students aside for further inspection. This is referred to as *secondary inspection*.

NOW THAT YOU ARE HERE, WHAT DO YOU DO NEXT?

You are now responsible for maintaining your F-1 international status. You need to stay informed about the rules and regulations governing these processes in order to know your rights and responsibilities. If you have any questions about immigration laws for international students, please contact NAS's P/DSO(s) (Principal/Designated School Official). They can help you understand and fulfill your legal obligations.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING YOUR STATUS

It is important for students to understand what *immigration status* is and the consequences of violating that status. Being aware of the requirements and possible consequences will make it more likely that you can avoid problems with maintaining your status. Every visa is issued for a particular purpose and for a specific class of visitor. Each visa classification has a set of requirements that the visa holder must follow and maintain. Those who follow the requirements maintain their status and ensure their ability to remain in the United States. Those who do not follow the requirements violate their status and are considered "out of status." Failure to maintain status can result in serious consequences and violators may be required to leave the United States.

Violation of status can also affect the prospect of readmission to the United States for a period of time. Most people who violate the terms of their status are not allowed to legally return to the United States for years.

MAINTAINING YOUR STUDENT STATUS

As mentioned above, once you enter the U.S.A. in student status, you must meet certain obligations in order to maintain that status. School officials are required to report violations of status to the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) within 30 days of when any student is out of status.

By violating the requirements that govern your immigration status, you may jeopardize your ability to remain in the United States as a student. Examples of violations include the following:

- ✓ Failure to enroll by the date specified by your school or exchange visitor program
- ✓ Unauthorized employment during your stay
- ✓ Failure to leave the United States following completion of your course, exchange visitor program, or program-related employment
- ✓ Failure to maintain a full course load without prior authorization for a reduction from your designated school official

GUIDELINES



Below are some important guidelines to help you maintain your visa status.

✓ **Report to School**

Once you arrive in Denver, you are required to report to New America School International Office to confirm your enrollment in our program. The P/DSO will then activate your SEVIS record. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) uses your SEVIS record to see if you are maintaining your status in the United States.

✓ **Full-Time Enrollment**

In order to maintain your status as an F-1 student, you need to be enrolled in full time studies at an institution approved by USCIS for attendance by foreign students, in this case, New America School. Always consult the P/DSO before withdrawing from your course; otherwise, your legal status may be at risk.

✓ **Attendance**

- Consistent attendance is mandatory.
- If a student misses 10 days in a row, they may be terminated.
- If a student misses eight (8) days in a quarter, they may be placed on probation and terminated if attendance does not improve the following quarter.
- If you do not attend classes, you may lose your F-1 visa status.

✓ **Authorization to Drop Below Full-Time**

The requirement of a full-time course of study is one area where the regulations allow for exceptions. There are three circumstances where a student can be authorized to take less than a full course load:

- Academic difficulties
- Medical conditions
- Completion of a course of study

To obtain authorization to drop below the full course load, the student must have the P/DSO's prior permission to grant an exception. The P/DSO must follow specific regulatory requirements and record the authorization in SEVIS.

✓ **Academics**

You must maintain at least a 70% average to remain in good academic standing. If you do not maintain academic progress, you risk being terminated.

✓ **Tuition Payments**

Payments are due as indicated by the payment calendar. If you do not pay within the designated days, you will be charged a **\$100 late fee**. Remember that you provided proof that you could afford to attend school before entering the U.S.

✓ **Change of Address**

NAS requires all students to maintain an updated address on file. Report a change of your address to NAS's P/DSO within 10 days of moving while enrolled at NAS. The P/DSO will update your address within the SEVIS System. Addresses must be a physical location, not a P.O. Box.



✓ **Reporting Requirements**

Students need to report the following types of information to their P/DSO in a timely manner:

- Enrollment at the beginning of **every** session (excluding authorized break periods)
- Address changes within 10 days of the change
- Change in sources of financial support
- Employment
- Change in course load
- Change in program of study
- Change in academic status
- Intent to travel both inside and outside the United States
- Application for change of immigration status
- Need to extend program
- Intent to transfer
- Change in dependent status

✓ **Program Extension**

Students attending any public high school on an F-1 visa are not eligible for a program extension, as they are only allowed to stay for a maximum of 12 months. You may transfer to another school after your period of study at NAS, return home, or change your status.

✓ **Departure**

Following the completion or cancellation of your course of studies at NAS, please speak to the P/DSO for instructions regarding your remaining period of stay in the U.S.

IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

✓ **Passport**

Your passport must be kept valid while you are in the U.S.A. It must be valid for at least six (6) months. You should begin renewal procedures six (6) months prior to its expiration date. Contact your local consulate or embassy for passport renewal procedures, when necessary.

✓ **Visa**

A visa is a stamped endorsement in your passport that indicates that all requirements have been met for entry into the U.S.A. The visa is actually an entry permit. You may have been issued a single-entry or a multiple-entry visa with a certain time limit. If you have an F-1 visa, you will be a full-time student. If you decide to leave the country, you will need to make sure you have a valid multiple-entry visa or you must apply for one while you are outside the U.S.A. in order to return. You will need to follow the same procedures that you initially followed when applying for a visa. You must speak to New America School's P/DSO if you are planning to leave the U.S.A.

✓ **I-20**

The I-20 form was issued to you when you were accepted to NAS. It is used as proof of acceptance and financial certification in order to obtain a student visa. This form must remain valid while you are a student in the U.S.A. It is used to keep track of all school transfers, practical training, permission to work, extensions of stay, etc. The NAS P/DSO must sign it when you want to travel outside the U.S.A. It is your responsibility to make sure your I-20 is valid at all times. You must contact the P/DSO before your I-20 expires.



TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE U.S.A.

If you plan to travel outside the U.S.A. for less than five (5) months, you must make sure all of your documents are in order. You must receive permission from NAS to travel if you plan to return after your leave of absence. Documents you will need include:

- ✓ A passport valid for at least six months
- ✓ An I-20 with a recent signature by the P/P/DSO
- ✓ A letter signed by the P/P/DSO stating that you have maintained and will continue to maintain your F-1 status and that you are in good academic standing
- ✓ A NAS leave of absence form

TRANSFER-IN STUDENTS

In order to be eligible to transfer from a SEVIS-approved school to NAS:

1. You must be a bona fide non-immigrant in F-1 status.
2. Submit:
 - ✓ An application
 - ✓ Payment for \$100 processing fee
 - ✓ A copy of your passport
 - ✓ A copy of your old I-20
 - ✓ Bank statements that show at least \$15,000
 - ✓ Agreement of Financial Support, if applicable
 - ✓ Official transcripts from all previous schools you attended in the United States
3. Complete the NAS transfer-in form, have it signed with a release date by your previous institution's P/DSO, and bring this form to the NAS P/DSO.

REINSTATEMENT STUDENTS

1. If your F-1 visa status has been terminated and you are seeking reinstatement at New America School, you must meet with the P/DSO to discuss your options.
2. If your reinstatement is approved by the P/DSO, you must pay the reinstatement fee, tuition, and processing fee before the process can begin.

TRANSFER-OUT STUDENTS

To transfer to another school:

1. You should notify the NAS P/DSO of your plan to transfer before your NAS program ends.
2. You must be intending to pursue a full-time course of study at the new institution.
3. You must have an acceptance letter from the new institution.
4. You must complete the transfer form the new institution gives you.
5. You must notify a NAS P/DSO that you want your SEVIS record released to another SEVIS approved institution.
6. The NAS P/DSO will contact the new institution to verify your acceptance.
7. The P/DSO will transfer you out using the release date indicated by the new institution.
8. After you have been released, your new institution will have access to your SEVIS record.
9. You must report to your new educational institution within 30 days of the program start date.



EMPLOYMENT

Employment is defined as any type of work performed or services provided in exchange for money, tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, food, or any other benefit. If you do not receive compensation in money or in kind for work, this is considered volunteer work. Volunteer work is allowed in F-1 visa status. It is your responsibility to comply with all immigration regulations that apply to F-1 students. Employment for dependents in F-2 status is prohibited under any circumstance.

You may not work without prior approval from the NAS International Office (for on-campus work) or the government (for off-campus work). The most fundamental eligibility requirement for all types of employment is that you maintain lawful F-1 status. You must NEVER work more than 20 hours per week while school is in session, but you may work full time (40 hours) during school breaks. It is YOUR responsibility not to exceed the limit. If you exceed the limit, you will not be maintaining lawful F-1 status. In general, NAS does not offer on-campus employment.

✓ On-Campus Employment

As an F-1 student, you are allowed to work on-campus, if such employment is available. On-campus employment primarily means work performed on the College's premises. You must have a Social Security number to participate. In general, NAS does not have on-campus employment for students.

✓ Off-Campus Employment

Under general visa rules, F-1 students are prohibited from holding off-campus jobs. However, F-1 students may apply for special authorization to work off campus. Such authorization is granted only in cases when the F-1 student meets the criteria for severe economic hardship. Please speak to a P/DSO or visit <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/employment> for more information.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

If you have received on-campus employment, you must have a passport that is valid for at least six (6) months, an I-20 form, an I-94 form, and a letter from NAS's P/DSO to apply for a Social Security number (SSN). Do not confuse the SSN with your admission number. The admission number on your I-94 card is used for immigration purposes to keep track of people arriving in and departing from the U.S.A. The SSN is used for identification while in the United States and keeps track of your income taxes. ****This Social Security number is not for work authorization in the United States.****

If you do not have legal employment, you probably won't be able to get a Social Security number.

Note: NAS is not responsible for applying for your Social Security number.

DRIVER LICENSE

Students may apply for a driver license. In order to apply, you must obtain a letter from the P/P/DSO indicating that you are a full time student at New America School, provide your passport that is valid for at least six (6) months, your I-20, and your I-94. You do not need to obtain a Social Security number in order to get a driver license. Contact your local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office for more details.

SPOUSE/DEPENDENT STATUS

Your spouse and unmarried minor children may accompany you to the U.S.A. or join you at a later date. Talk to NAS's P/DSO about what you will need to apply for an I-20 for your dependents. A person in F-2 status may never be employed.



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REFERENCES

- ✓ User Manual for School User of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, November 14, 2002.
- ✓ Advisor’s Manual of Federal Regulations Affecting Foreign Students and scholars, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 1994-2001 Edition.

WEB SITES

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) http://www.cbp.gov/	Department of Homeland Security (DHS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.ice.gov/sevis • www.dhs.gov
Internal Revenue Service (IRS) www.irs.gov	Social Security Administration www.ssa.gov
United States Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) www.uscis.gov	Student and Exchange Visitor Program – Study in the States https://www.ice.gov/sevis